




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.36 pm): Community safety is a top priority of the Palaszczuk government. We know that Queenslanders want to feel safe in their homes and their communities without the threat of personal and property crime. We know that more can be done to enhance community safety and reduce the number of victims of crime. That is why our government is committed to advancing Queensland's priority of keeping communities safe by reducing the number of victims of crime. We also want to advance Queensland's priorities by being a responsive government. The measures in this bill will help us achieve safer communities and be a responsive government by supporting our policing service with the laws they need to respond to contemporary community needs.

I am pleased to stand here today to talk to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This bill introduces a suite of amendments aimed at enhancing front-line policing services to the Queensland community and, importantly, keeping Queenslanders safe by taking action for all Queenslanders. The amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act contained in the bill include a number of practical efficiencies and safety measures.

The current existing breach of peace provisions are an important tool for police. They allow police to detain persons who are having a violent confrontation or who are about to have a violent confrontation for the purpose of separating them and de-escalating the situation. In some situations the separation of parties may be all that is required; however, there may be a need for further police intervention in the form of charges. In order to effectively separate some offenders police may have to detain and transport the parties away from the location of the confrontation. Previously, the police had no power to search a person who had been detained and transported for a breach of peace. This is a critical safety issue, as the person being transported may be in possession of weapons which could be used to harm themselves or the police. The amendments will correct this issue by permitting police to search a person they have detained and are transporting for a breach of the peace.

The bill also provides a new simple offence for assaulting or obstructing a civilian watch-house officer. There are many civilian watch-house officers employed by the Queensland Police Service who are at times obstructed or assaulted in the performance of their duties. This new simple offence of assaulting or obstructing a civilian watch-house officer will ensure that offenders are charged appropriately for a minor assault or obstruction offence as opposed to the more serious charges that are currently available under the Criminal Code.

The bill will also separate the existing offence of assaulting or obstructing a police officer into two distinct offences. The assault or obstruction of a police officer is unfortunately a prevalent offence. Currently, the offences are combined into one section. This has proved problematic for the Queensland Police Service in terms of obtaining an accurate statistical analysis for each offence. Separating the offences into two distinct offences will make the statistical analysis of the offences easier and more accurate. It will ensure that a person's criminal history more accurately reflects the particular assault or obstruct offence committed when the court outcome is recorded. I commend the bill to the House.