




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (5.28 pm): I rise to speak as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I wish to thank my committee colleagues and the secretariat for the work that they have done in bringing the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 to the House. I also thank the Bar Association of Queensland, the Protect All Children Today organisation, the Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Council of Unions for their submissions on the bill. I thank the Queensland Police Service officials for their vital contribution towards the public briefings and hearings, as well as for their submissions on the bill.

The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced into the parliament in June 2018 and referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, of which I am a member, to report back to the parliament in August 2018. One of the many amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, the PPRA, focuses on enhancing the efficiency and quality of front-line policing.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has given rigorous consideration to the details within the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the fundamental principles of law and the civil rights and liberties of people. It is my understanding that appropriate safeguards and measures have been thought out and due care and consideration has been given to ensuring the robustness of this bill. Various aspects of its operation will be reviewed by the likes of the CCC and reported on to this House.

Some concerns have been raised by submitters with regard to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Queensland Law Society has concern about police officers having the authority to enter premises without a warrant on suspicion of a crime or the presence of a missing person. With regard to these very valid concerns, in the briefing held by the committee with the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart clearly articulated that the bill enshrines the need for change. He said that the objective is to deliver an integrated missing persons warrant scheme that will assist vulnerable high-risk missing people, most notably the young and those subject to domestic violence and being held against their will. These amendments are needed to improve response times so as to secure the safety of victims of crime and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice.

I cannot imagine any family not wanting to find their missing child, son, daughter, mother or father sooner and not allowing the police the powers and capability to do so. I refer to the Marilyn Wallman case in Mackay. She has been missing since 1972. The reward has just recently been increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000. It is a sad story and a crime that the family would like solved.

These proposed powers have the clear potential to establish the whereabouts of high-risk missing persons, prevent suicide, address serious medical concerns and identify suspicious circumstances to escalate the investigation to a criminal investigation sooner. This bill is pivotal in reaching this objective.

It will also be the first of its kind in Australia. These amendments will deliver our police and justice system the tools needed to stay abreast of the actions and behaviours of criminals in the 21st century. As mentioned, no other jurisdiction has the powers proposed under this bill.

Another concern mentioned was that police would have the power to search persons being transported for breaches of the peace. There is no simpler reasoning for this amendment than protecting the welfare of our front-line officers within the QPS. I commend this power being given to our officers of the Queensland Police Service. It is with considerable due process, attention to the detail around the provisions and through extensive consultation with the public, the legal fraternity, the community safety committee and high-ranking officials from the Queensland Police Service that the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is before the House for debate.

There are some facets where the bill does not entirely keep pace with the challenges of our time, like the rising levels of crime and the severity of such crimes in particular regional areas. I will take the liberty to use an example of what happened in my electorate of Mirani yesterday. A man was shot and the perpetrator stole his vehicle and fled. The RACQ rescue helicopter helped search for the perpetrator and various sections of our roads were in lockdown. These types of crime are not new, though the rise in instances of such crimes is alarming. In this particular case, all resources were needed, including the assistance of the RACQ rescue helicopter, to help locate the offender by air. The man is understood to still be travelling by foot today.

Despite this legislation, the question needs to be asked: how will we resource the Queensland Police Service in the future when the severity of crimes are escalating, when emerging crimes exist entirely online and when perpetrators of crime have no physical presence within state boundaries? I believe this bill serves to go some way to addressing the changing concerns about crime in our communities and serves to better arm our police and justice system with the resources and the appropriate equipment to fulfil their roles in the best interest of our law-abiding citizens. This is a challenge.

The bill in its entirety serves the purpose to give front-line officers more power and responsibilities when it comes to its operations. The legislation is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and quality of front-line policing and will ensure the service reflects the needs of the community. I commend the bill to the House.