




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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**POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION (DISCIPLINE REFORM) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (12.55 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I would like to thank my fellow members of the Economics and Governance Committee for their careful consideration of this bill and for the collaboration and expertise of the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission. This bill has bipartisan support and all key stakeholders, including the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity.

I have had personal insight into the need for the systemic changes proposed in this legislation. The current discipline system is overly complex and does not enjoy the confidence of members of the public, nor members of the Police Service. The current discipline proceedings are adversarial and legalistic in nature and do not have a time limit, in some cases taking several years and many resources for an officer simply to be found innocent. The current sanctions are punitive and there are no legalised provisions for professional development, which is paramount to the evolution of all organisations.

All governments must face the challenge of harmonising and stabilising the complex interrelationship between people, privileges and power. The police force is a perfect example of how hard this balancing act can be. The antiquated us-versus-them paradigm embedded in the current discipline system impairs natural justice and due process. We must all have faith and trust that our interests will be protected, especially from the very people charged with our care.

Of the four key areas of change in this long overdue bill, the first and most glaring need is to reduce delays in finalising discipline investigations. The bill does that by legislating time frames for the commencement of proceedings and the finalisation of investigations, which will now be no more than 12 months. The bill also includes the introduction of an abbreviated discipline process—or ADP—for officers who do not challenge the complaint, a cornerstone of the new provisions, which works in concert with the introduction of the professional development strategy as part of a raft of new sanctions.

This bill modernises the suite of discipline sanctions that can be imposed on a subject officer, building upon the existing sanctions of reprimand, permanent demotion and dismissal. There has been concern raised about the extremity of measures and the far-reaching distance between them in addition to the inconsistencies with which they have been applied to similar breaches in conduct throughout the service. The new sanctions introduce a fairer sliding scale and introduce suspension from duty without pay for a period not exceeding 12 months, disciplinary probation, demotion for a stated period, comprehensive transfer, local transfer, performance of up to 100 hours community service and increasing the maximum fine from two penalty units to 50 penalty units.

As previously mentioned, the role and range of managerial strategies available as part of the discipline process has been greatly enhanced and will help to bring the QPS human resource management system into the 21st century. The bill provides for educational activities and development

opportunities through a new section that provides for the commission to impose a professional development strategy of an officer in response to a complaint as either a risk mitigation strategy or to improve the officer's performance. The QPU—the Queensland Police Union—believes that these reforms will lead to a quicker, fairer and more transparent discipline system that encourages officers to act professionally, yet recognises that occasionally shortfalls can occur that can be quickly and successfully remedied with these new measures. The prescribed inclusion of the professional development strategy sanction on an officer's conduct record was requested by the Bar Association of Queensland as it can be used to support a client's allegation of inappropriate conduct by a police officer.