




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2019

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.25 pm): It is a privilege for me to talk to this bill today. I thank the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee, the member for Logan, for his deliberations and for the opportunities at that inquiry. I also thank all members of the committee, because in that room was more brass than in the Perth mint! It was just wonderful to see them all agree on a way forward to protect the strong reputation that our Queensland police force has and deserves.

This bill, which we support, will further enshrine a better way forward to deal with disciplinary matters that arise from time to time. In any organisation—dare I say, even amongst parliamentarians—disciplinary matters come to the fore. As a person from the Gold Coast, I have seen quite a few matters in the force there come to the fore. They must be dealt with expeditiously and quickly to keep the high integrity required of the police and the respect the community has for our police. This respect has fallen away noticeably—if members watch the news and see that the way some people react to directions from the police. This disciplinary process must and will improve the perception and the regard in which we hold our Queensland police force in Queensland society.

I commend all of the groups for their participation. I mention the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Police Union of Employees. Of course, Mr Levers is doing a wonderful job. The Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity all collaborated as well. Of course, the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr MacSporrán, is to be congratulated on bringing direction and assistance to a better outcome and delivery of timely disciplinary matters to the police force.

As we heard earlier from the minister and the opposition spokesperson, the artificial distinction between the two categories of breach of discipline and misconduct, under which behaviours are categorised in the current system, has been split. Rather than ongoing, long, drawn-out 'I said, she said' fights through the disciplinary system, there is a clear pathway for matters that have been proven and for officers to accept a punishment that they regard as reasonable and fair for their misdemeanour, if you like. This is not to say that misconduct issues are not dealt with in another fashion, of course—and rightly so—but we are looking at a force of around 11,000 people in Queensland of whom 99 per cent would act appropriately and with good intent at all times in the highest possible manner.

With 11,000 members, from time to time issues will be raised, some unintentionally. Police officers work in highly charged areas under great stress. I cannot imagine what it is like to be called to domestic issues, which are high on the agenda of the police force at the moment. I do not know how they get treated. What about some of the vile acts committed on them? How are they expected to respond in a very contained manner to those particular issues?

In terms of discipline, this legislation will be a map to show where they can expect their behaviour to be treated in a fair and equitable manner in a very short period. We do not want people taking stress leave because their case has not been dealt with for a long time. We want matters clearly defined and clearly determined. We want the reputation of the police force upheld to the highest degree and cleaned up as quickly as possible should matters arise.

A matter arose through a case such that the CCC required this bill not to come to the House—I think that was fair—so that appropriate amendments could be made. The minister outlined that in his second reading speech. I think that is appropriate. We should get the best legislation possible out of this House. While it was a reasonable time ago that the committee examined this bill, it is now in better shape as it comes to the House for consideration. I am very pleased that we as a parliament are supporting this legislation together, that we as a parliament are supporting our police with the best possible outcome and that we as a parliament recognise the important role our Police Service plays in our communities in keeping standards as high as possible. On that basis I will be supporting this bill 100 per cent. I join with all other members in the House in recognising this good piece of legislation.