




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (12.42 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to relate some of the issues that the bill seeks to address to the part of the Gold Coast that I represent. I was proud to be part of the committee that undertook the report into this bill—the Economics and Governance Committee—and I thank my fellow committee members and, of course, the wonderful secretariat staff. The overwhelming majority of police officers in Queensland do a fantastic job in that they are dedicated to their duties, they believe in making our community safer for everyone and they put themselves on the line to do that, and I am sure that that is a sentiment that all members of this House would agree with. For those very few who do not have this ethic and put their own needs before those of the community, it is imperative that we have systems in place to deal with them swiftly and efficiently, demonstrating to the public that our Police Service has integrity and can be trusted.

The amendments in this bill bring the disciplinary system up to date to ensure that people are held to account for their actions. The current system has been under numerous reviews by the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission, which found that there was a lack of public confidence, outdated resources and a lack of consistency when it came to police discipline. Through the support of all stakeholders involved, the bill makes significant improvements to the police disciplinary system. These amendments modernise and expand the range of disciplinary sanctions, reducing time frames and formalising educational activities to improve performance. These changes will help ensure that members of the QPS adhere to the highest standards of conduct so that the Queensland public can continue to trust and have confidence in their Police Service.

The reduction in time frames for these issues is an essential part. These matters need to be dealt with swiftly to communicate the seriousness of breaches by officers. It ensures the right outcome is reached without unnecessary delay, freeing our police resources to go to the right areas. The provision to ensure current operations are not compromised is a helpful clarification and puts community safety as a top priority. The modernisation of the discipline sanctions is important to keep them realistic and beneficial for all concerned, as are the educational opportunities provided. However, one of the bill's objectives is to improve police officers' performance and it has to be recognised that one of the biggest things that could aid this is for more personnel on the ground. As I said, the vast majority of our officers work hard every day for the benefit and protection of our communities. They do all of this despite having very limited resources at their disposal. I have heard repeated stories from residents in my part of the Gold Coast who have ongoing issues in their neighbourhoods and struggle to get the required police presence.

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is disappointing that someone on the committee, who should know the long title of the bill, does not know that this is outside the long title of the bill. You have already ruled on this. I think this is disrespectful.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Bonney, I draw your attention to the long title of the bill.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. These people have been told by police at their local station that they are aware of issues and aware of crimes happening but do not have the resources to get out there. I have had residents tell me that they feel helpless. They appreciate the efforts of the police—

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have made a number of rulings already. The member was in the House when you made those rulings. You made a ruling only five seconds ago and the member is still venturing in areas that you have warned him to avoid. I ask you to make a ruling on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member to come back to the long title of the bill regarding disciplinary procedures.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. One of the main objectives of the amendments in the bill is to improve police performance, but police performance is going to continue to stall without adequate numbers to keep our community safe. We need more police on the Gold Coast and we needed them yesterday. I firmly believe the amendments in the bill are required. However, it is important to remember that, while we expect our police officers to hold themselves to the highest conduct, they expect the Queensland government to allocate the resources they require to do their jobs efficiently.

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is now the fourth time that he has ignored your directions. I would ask you to sit the member down. This is disgraceful.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your point of order, member for Logan. Member for Bonney, you do remember the long title of the bill. I would ask you to come back or otherwise we will go too far.

Mr O'CONNOR: Much appreciated, Mr Deputy Speaker. They do not like to hear those criticisms, do they? I will conclude by saying that if we want our police to improve their performance they need the government to also improve its performance to back them up.