




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. As indicated earlier by those on the LNP benches, we will not be opposing this bill. Firstly, as many members have done, I want to give thanks for the amazing job that our local police services do in our local communities. Being a police officer out on the front line can be a very ungrateful job dealing with some of the toughest situations in our society, but that is something that we need to acknowledge and we need to be a lot more grateful for the work that our local police officers do in our communities. Many officers would certainly appreciate the fact that people would thank them for their hard service and their hard work for our communities.

One issue that members of my community talk about on a regular basis is the revolving door of crime. They feel that legislation is not keeping up with criminal activities and unfortunately those individuals are getting off scot-free. For a start, legislation needs to keep up with technology and I welcome the fact that there are changes in this bill that will enable that, especially when it comes to storage devices where people can keep information, whether that is for child pornography or terrorist activities or criminal activity. The problem is that the Queensland Police Service and all police services around the world are continuously playing a catch-up game with technology. As technology evolves and becomes more secure—because the commercial world and the private world are demanding more secure technology—it makes it very difficult for our police enforcement agencies to keep up.

Unfortunately, criminal gangs and crime outfits throughout the world and child pornographers will continue to exploit that weakness. I welcome any changes to bring our policing services into the modern era to keep up with this technology. However, my fear is that as technology continues to evolve we will always be one step behind these individuals. Therefore, we need to be abreast of these issues to ensure that we keep up with recommendations from law enforcement agencies across the world to make sure that our laws in this state protect the most vulnerable in our community—our children—and deal with these criminal activities. I appreciate the fact that the government is looking into this issue with this bill in order to make these changes.

The bill amends the Weapons Act 1990 where a person's licence has been suspended because a person in authority believes that the person is no longer fit to have a licence. I can certainly understand why there should be a change in terms of the period of time, especially in regional Queensland where it may be very difficult to obtain a medical practitioner within a reasonable time if the person is on a remote station or something like that. Given the extensive load that QCAT is dealing with—I hear this on a regular basis from people who want to take their matter to QCAT—having the period in which to deal with this issue extended to 90 days is welcomed.

Referring again to concerns that residents have with the revolving door of the legal system, giving police the necessary powers to deal with these individuals is welcomed by the police. There is nothing more frustrating for a police officer than to see an individual who they know is guilty—that they know has committed the crime—get off on a technicality. That is why we need to ensure that for these

individuals there should be consequences for their actions. That is very important. I was speaking to a police officer just recently who stopped at one of my regular roadsides. He said, 'Mark, it is very frustrating when you know for a fact that these individuals are out and about and they know the law just as well as the police, if not better, and they will go out of their way to undermine the police as much as possible.' We need to ensure that laws are in place to make it more and more difficult for these individuals and, therefore, I welcome any changes that the government makes when it comes to tightening up these issues.

I want to give a big shout-out to my local police at the Coomera station. They do a fantastic job servicing the northern Gold Coast, which is a very large area. We welcome the fact that a new station is coming in the near future at Pimpama, but it can take upwards of 45 minutes for an officer from the Coomera station to drive from one end of the police district to the other, and that is a long distance—that is, from, say, Cabbage Tree Point down to Wongawallan. That is a vast area that these individuals have to travel. We seem to forget that whilst they are doing that travelling there may be other crimes committed in the area. Unfortunately, my area has a very high DV rate. I recently put a question on notice about calls of service to DV and, unfortunately, over the years DV rates have continued to climb. The latest figures showed that it plateaued a little bit, but it is a big concern that DV is still climbing in our community and in our society. It is not just the police who have to deal with this issue; we as a society need to deal with this issue.

As one of my local officers once said to me, 'Mark, if you took drugs and alcohol out of the system then you would actually have a situation where you would have a 50 per cent drop in DV rates.' We need to ensure that police have adequate resources. As I stated, my area is very much a growing area and we would love to have additional officers to protect the northern part of the Gold Coast.