




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (11.36 am): I rise to make a short contribution to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I see the short title of the bill is precisely that. Under ‘Policy objectives and the reasons for them’ the explanatory notes state—

The main objectives of the Bill are to:

- clarify powers of law enforcement to access information on or through electronic devices so there is no ambiguity as to the scope of information that can be lawfully accessed;
- enhance the operations of the Prostitution Licensing Authority ... and the Weapons Licensing Branch of the Queensland Police Service ...; and
- create efficiencies for the QPS in general and increase community safety.

I notice throughout the report on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, report No. 55 of the 56th Parliament from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee that the comments from various submitters were quite supportive. Certainly we on this side of the House are supportive of the general thrust of the bill. I note the Queensland Police Union of Employees, for example, welcomed the proposed amendments to the provisions that enable access to information on or through electronic devices. It stated—

The existing powers are extremely useful when investigating serious crimes such as paedophilia, terrorism and sexual offences such as rapes. Unfortunately, with advances in technology and the increasing use of widely available encryption, criminals have become more sophisticated in their attempts to avoid apprehension.

In that respect what we see happening now is a delay in proceedings, a delay in the prosecution of cases before the courts, because of the long delays in applying for approval to access data on electronic devices. It takes up a lot of time in our courts. It certainly takes up a lot of time in terms of police resources to take it through.

For example, in the Coomera police division where we recently fought the good fight for an additional 14 officers—still about 25 officers short of what we really need—police tell me that the amount of time it takes to process matters such as domestic violence can be up to an average of four hours for two officers. We are talking about a full eight hours involved in the process. Often in those circumstances we find that electronic devices were used to abuse people. Domestic violence is not always just about physical violence—although that is a huge part of it—but also about psychological abuse and the abuse that can come from the use of electronic devices in terms of making threats about putting certain pieces of embarrassing material from someone’s device onto the World Wide Web and social media. It really is important for these particular access rules to be put into place.

In terms of those 14 extra officers, four people are moving out of the division. Sadly, there will be a delay in replacing those officers. We are understaffed as it is. The types of cases to which I refer can have a quite significant impact in terms of the time taken by police to gather the required evidence and to process the evidence required to finally bring a case to the courts.

I refer to Soroptimist International, a fine organisation with which I have had a lot to do over the years at Beenleigh. It has some great programs for young women in particular and strongly supports the objectives to clarify powers of law enforcement to access information on or through electronic devices so that there is no ambiguity as to the scope of information that can be lawfully accessed. It is about creating efficiencies for the Queensland Police Service in general and about increased community safety.

As well, Bravehearts supports the proposed amendments to clarify the definition of the PPRA and the CPOROPOA to resolve the ambiguity around the meaning of the term 'stored' in relation to information. Bravehearts also notes and supports the amendments in line with recommendations of the 2015 Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry to clarify necessary powers to allow police to access information on or through any electronic device.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of this bill having expired, I now call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.