




Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**

**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.30 am): In rising to talk to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019—

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Order! Member for Buderim and member for McConnel, please cease your cross-chamber interaction.

**Mr BENNETT:** I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is important that we give a shout-out to those emergency services workers because, as the minister has articulated, this week has been a tough week for them across the state. More importantly, we continue to see these issues in our community. I do concur that we all have to do so much more to protect those who are most vulnerable.

We know that policing is not an easy job. As we move around the state we see these sorts of issues confronting us. We know that sometimes police officers feel they are not having a win. However, they should know that we in this House support them, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women in the Police Service.

The issues around the interactions with offenders in our communities, particularly those who commit child sex offences, make us all very uneasy. We all want to do the very best we can to protect those kids. When we are dealing with child sex offenders, as representatives of the community we have a responsibility to ensure our legal system is properly resourced and that the full force of our legal system is applied.

The bill deals with changes in technology, and those changes seem to be happening at an ever-increasing rate in our society. Police not having access should not be a problem because we want them to have every possible technological advancement to make sure we can get on top of child sexual offenders. I am sure that is something we all support.

Changes to the Weapons Act are another important part of the bill. Where I live in regional Queensland quite often weapons are used not only for recreation but also on farm; they are an important tool for many farmers. We have mentioned many times in this place the challenges in increasing medical services in the regions. Those challenges make issues around the suspension periods even more relevant. Other members have spoken in their contributions in the last couple of days about the backlog in QCAT. We want to ensure that licence holders have access to the required medical practitioner to support their application for a weapons licence. The requirements for an armourer to sight an appropriate weapons licence for any weapon that is modified is logical, and many who use firearms would agree. Whilst the vast majority of weapons licence holders are law abiding, we must ensure that we address any opportunity for criminals to access firearms.

I turn now to child sex offenders, and I want to go back to the committee report. An important part of my shadow portfolio responsibilities is the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act and the proposed amendments that relate to it. I note some of the submissions to the committee were very brief but very enlightening. We talk to people we respect like Bravehearts, and they are always talking about the safety and protection of those affected by domestic and family violence including children and young people. Bravehearts fully supports the proposed amendments in the bill. They also talk about the findings from a number of inquests that have identified the lack of effective information sharing, and we know the bill goes a long way to try to instil better information. Bravehearts go on to talk about the amendment. They believe it will go a long way to improving the effectiveness of information sharing.

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia stated it is necessary to legislate that information sharing be in the context of domestic and family violence. Also within the committee's report on the bill there is talk about child sex offenders and the changes that relate to them. Of course we will be supporting those. On the subject of the amendments to the child protection orders, Rape & Domestic Violence Services is supportive of the definitions of 'access information' and 'device information' within the bill. When we read through the submissions to the committee, overall we can see that the proposed legislation is a positive step forward. I note amendments were circulated yesterday that omit those parts of the bill dealing with prostitution and other matters; they are not being discussed at this point, which cuts down a lot of my speech.

In conclusion, I want to ensure that those in my community understand this bill is going to do a lot more to deal with child sex offenders and organised crime. Of course we want to make sure that child sex offenders using those cloud services and other new technologies will be dealt with under this legislation. We had to shine a light on access to storage of incriminating information, the storage of memory sticks and all those issues. I am glad this bill removes any ambiguity and allows us to get on with the job of protecting those most vulnerable.