




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.52 pm): Before I start, I want to make a comment in relation to the member for Mackay's contribution. If the member for Mackay wants to know why I looked up in aghast when she mentioned those beautiful people Leanne and Gary Pullen, the member only need go and speak to her colleague, the police minister, to understand why we on this side of the House get so upset when the Pullens are used as political pawns by the Labor government. That is why we get upset. It is thanks to the member for Everton who fought hard for the Pullens to make sure the no-body no-parole framework came into this House. It was politicised by that police minister and the Pullens were politicised by that police minister, and that is why we get upset on this side of the House. I say to the member for Mackay: not only did I not interject, but I am more than happy to give my whole speech to this because it is offensive that the Labor government continue to use people as political pawns for their own publicity.

I rise to contribute to this bill that is before the House. The shadow police minister and the shadow Attorney-General made comprehensive contributions to this bill, but there are many important issues that I would like to address.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to take that interjection from the member for McConnel because it is the member for McConnel who does not even believe that people are real—the people who are the whistleblowers who come to us—because the government is not listening to them.

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. There are two issues relating to this bill that I will address today—or maybe three—that would not have been here had it not been for the tragic murder and death of not just children but people and the advocacy of two very brave and very strong families fighting for change so no other families have to go through what they have been through. This bill is nowhere near enough, but it is a start. This bill needs to do more than the limited window-dressing to achieve an outcome that will reduce crime in this great state.

Among the many people whom members in this House wish to remember, I want to put on record the families of Sian Kingi and Jack Beasley. I would like to add my voice in support of what we in the opposition are calling 'Sian's Law' in honour of Sian Kingi. So many of us remember the story of Sian Kingi—a beautiful, young 12-year-old girl from the Sunshine Coast who in 1987, 34 years ago, was abducted, brutally raped, tortured and murdered by Barrie Watts and Valmae Beck. At the time, I was not much older than Sian, and this horrendous murder changed so much for young women. It was the stuff of nightmares. I was in an all-girls school at the time, and this tragic case highlighted the need for so many of us to change our ways, to change our patterns and to become wary. We followed the case with horror on a daily basis, but we have a chance here today to provide a lasting legacy to Sian Kingi and her parents, Lynda and Himi.

'Sian's Law' is the result of an important petition—a petition which was launched by Sian's family, friends and teachers when Barrie Watts became eligible for parole in November 2020. Just 10 days after that petition started, it had been signed by 72,000 people. That is an astonishing number of people. We never hear about that number of people signing petitions here in parliament. I want to put on the record our thanks to the member for Ninderry who, on 16 June this year, tabled that petition. He fought on behalf of the Kingis for that petition to be brought to the attention of this government. It was to send a clear message to the Queensland Parole Board to keep Barrie John Watts behind bars for that atrocious crime. We now see this bill before the House.

I congratulate everyone involved in the petition for their determination to make this happen. Until then, Sian's family had been stonewalled and ignored for almost a year, awaiting word of whether Barrie Watts would be released. It is simply hard to imagine the pain that must have caused them. The Parole Board is supposed to finalise applications for parole within three months, but the backlog and the broken parole system here in Queensland under the incompetent Palaszczuk government meant the family endured a full year of uncertainty. It was not until 14 October that they finally learnt that Barrie Watts's parole bid was rejected.

I am honoured to stand here to support Sian's family, friends and the broader community to back this bill, but I also want to put on the record my thanks to the member for Ninderry for being such a passionate fighter for the community and for the determination he has shown to keep people like Barrie Watts out of our community. I will return to the Parole Board if I get time.

I want to turn to another section of the bill that amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to expand the scope of banning notices to include persons who unlawfully possess a knife. The objective is apparently to reduce knife crime. A couple of years ago, thanks to the strong advocacy on the issue of knife crime by Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney, I met two of the bravest people I know. They are Brett and Belinda Beasley—an incredibly strong couple, friendly, quick to smile, generous and salt of the earth people.

Brett and Belinda are the proud parents of Mitch and Jack. Jack was always the life of the party, the energy in the room and was loved by everyone, say his parents. He was a talented footballer and had just started his apprenticeship and had the whole of his life ahead of him. Tragically, on 13 December Jack's life was cut short in a senseless act of violence. Jack was 17. Jack and his mates stopped at an ATM on the way to their night out and he was stabbed to death. His alleged killer was carrying a knife. Brett and Belinda Beasley have established the Jack Beasley Foundation with the catchphrase of 'Detect knives, save lives'. This foundation provides education to schools around the dangers of carrying knives. I encourage everyone in this House to promote the Jack Beasley Foundation to their local schools.

In the future, we in this House need to do more to reduce and stop knife crime on our streets. One trial is in place—an initiative at the Beasleys' suggestion to the government. The trial is in place, allowing police to wand a person to ascertain if they are carrying a knife. This as well is thanks to the Beasley family. Here is where we know that this bill simply falls short. It does not go far enough to do what needs to be done here in Queensland: to ultimately reduce crime in this great state of ours. I note that the statement of reservation to the committee report states—

Unfortunately, this legislation, to a significant extent, appears to be little more than window dressing to convince Queenslanders that the state government has a commitment to making communities safer and ensuring that those who commit crimes are subject to adequate penalties.

The proposals appear to be a disparate collection of measures bundled together to give the appearance of a concerted response to curb crime.

As we have heard from the shadow minister, the member for Burdekin, more needs to be done in this House to curb crime in this state. The Palaszczuk government need to get their head out of the sand. They need to listen to more people. They need to see what is actually going on in front of them, not wait years and years to implement federal ministerial council directions. Nothing will bring Sian and Jack home to their loved ones, but hopefully today we will make a small step towards letting them both rest in peace.