




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 18 November 2021

**POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT
BILL**

Second Reading

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.57 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has examined the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. The committee tabled its report on the bill on 1 November 2021. The report of the committee makes a single recommendation—that the bill be passed. I take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their examination of the bill. I also wish to express my gratitude to the work undertaken by the committee secretariat in supporting the committee.

As all in this House are aware, the Queensland Police Service continues to do more and more every day to keep the Queensland community safe. The debate on this bill occurs against the background of a global pandemic in which the Queensland Police Service continues to play an integral role in responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This government has supported our frontline police by delivering record funding to facilitate their quest in ensuring community safety.

This bill builds upon our support for the Queensland Police Service in the delivery of policing services to Queenslanders by optimising existing systems and processes. It is all about enhancing both the efficiency of police officers and their effectiveness. As I indicated in my introductory speech, enabling senior police officers to witness specified affidavits made by other police will save well over 20,000 hours of frontline officers' time annually. Efficiencies are also gained by enabling saliva testing as an alternative to urine testing for the purposes of targeted substance testing of police officers and certain civilian staff.

The bill enhances the effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service in investigating and prosecuting serious offences. The bill achieves this by expanding the circumstances in which a magistrate or Supreme Court judge can issue a digital access order requiring a person to unlock their digital device or provide police with access to their digital device which, of course, includes items such as smartphones and laptops.

Another change that will improve the effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service is the expansion of the definition of 'critical incident' for the purposes of conducting alcohol and substance testing of police and certain civilian officers. The amendments ensure effective oversight of an officer's actions and aids in ensuring public confidence in the Queensland Police Service is maintained.

The effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service is further supported by ensuring that the Commissioner of Police can authorise special constables and non-state police officers to exercise any or all of the powers that are available to a Queensland police officer. Importantly, the bill also improves the effectiveness of the permanent firearms amnesty in Queensland. This is achieved by enabling the

Queensland Police Service to authorise participating firearms dealers to retain and deal with anonymously surrendered firearms and prescribed things where they are approved to do so by an authorised officer within the weapons licensing area of the Queensland Police Service.

Further efficiencies are gained through amendments to the Weapons Act that will enable approved civilian officers to use evidentiary certificates and the extension of the temporary safekeeping of firearms period from three months to six months. Regarding the permanent weapons amnesty, the government consulted closely with all stakeholders to ensure the amnesty not only supports community safety but also works in a way that is in everyone's interests. It is important to note that to support these amendments the Queensland Police Service has engaged with dealers and put in place an operational process for the collection of certain categories of weapons surrendered under the amnesty. I am advised that there is strong support from stakeholders for this process. The Shooters Union Australia president Graham Park has said—

We support the amendments put in place today to assure a workable national firearms amnesty. The shooters union looks forward to continuing to work with government and the Queensland Police Service to assist legitimate firearms users.

Jade Cleaver from the Firearms Dealers Association of Queensland says—

The firearms dealers industry has worked closely with the government to ensure these changes are in the best interests of our members. I'm pleased with where these changes have landed. We have always been a willing partner, working with government to ensure weapons don't end up in the wrong hands because our members are responsible and remain committed to community safety. And we believe the framework in place in Queensland is the best in the nation.

The safety of Queenslanders is paramount to the Palaszczuk government. The vision of the Queensland Police Service is 'Queensland—the safest state', and we will do all we can do to help the Queensland Police Service achieve this goal. This bill serves to underscore the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring our police are operating within an effective and efficient legislative framework so that Queensland communities can continue to enjoy the safe and secure lifestyle we all seek to protect.

I take this opportunity to thank the Queensland Police Service legislation team for their hard work. I thank all departmental staff who have been involved in getting the bill to this point. I thank the committee, the committee secretariat and all those witnesses who appeared before the committee to provide their comments in respect of the bill. I commend the bill to the House and I encourage all members to support it.