




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2021

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (6.33 pm), in reply: Under this bill, Queensland will have the toughest parole laws in the nation—tough parole laws for child killers and multiple murderers, the worst of the worst, and tough parole laws that will keep them behind bars for longer. This bill is about putting victims first. It is about protecting victims, their families and local communities—shielding them from further trauma. This bill means that a person convicted and serving a life sentence for killing a child or a person convicted and serving a life sentence for multiple murders and eligible for parole can be blocked from obtaining parole for a period of up to 10 years, with the potential of further periods of up to 10 years and so on for decades.

The bill has a range of important reforms. I note the comments of those opposite, including the member for Burdekin's positive feedback that these amendments are needed. For example, there is tougher action on knife crime by expanding the police banning notice regime to apply to an adult who unlawfully possesses a knife in a relevant public place, such as a licensed premises in a safe night precinct. It builds on the police campaign of 'I live my life ... without a knife' which a few members spoke about, including the member for Logan, and the government's police wandering trial in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts. They are both important initiatives to boost community safety.

Interestingly, what the member for Burdekin did not say about safe night precincts is that the LNP in government failed to fund the extra police and police training to patrol safe night precincts. They reneged on a \$20 million promise to the Queensland Police Service to support policing in those safe night precincts. We remember that the General President of the Queensland Police Union, Ian Leavers, took out a TV ad in 2015 criticising the truthfulness and lack of support of those opposite.

This bill creates a new indictable offence for a person who wilfully and unlawfully kills or seriously injures a police dog or horse or a corrective services dog. They are faithful servants of community safety and they deserve our protection and support. This offence will be punishable by a maximum of five years imprisonment. I again refer to the General President of the Queensland Police Union, Ian Leavers—

Mr Fumer: A great man.

Mr RYAN: I take that interjection from the minister, who is a former employee of the Queensland Police Union. I commend Ian Leavers for his strong advocacy on this aspect of the reforms we are debating today.

This bill also includes important reforms to protect children through Commonwealth Criminal Code offences around the grooming of a child, child abuse material and child sex exploitation. A number of these offences were only introduced by the Commonwealth this year. Our government is moving

quickly. We had an election and we have introduced this legislation as quickly as possible. Over the past four years, Queensland police who work in this area have helped rescue 774 children nationally and worldwide through the investigation and analysis of seized data from over 150 million media files. I take this opportunity to commend our world-leading Taskforce Argos and their colleagues within the Queensland Police Service for their excellent work.

We have heard a lot from the opposition about aspects of this bill. I have often said in this House that we have to look at what they do and not what they say. On the issue of protecting children, particularly around those sex offences against children and how to ensure that those who commit those heinous crimes are held to account, I note that one of the greatest travesties in the statute books of Queensland was when the LNP changed the monitoring regime for child sex offenders. Overnight, 1,700 child sex offenders were removed from monitoring. These are criminals who rape children. Because of those opposite and the legislation and amendments that they passed, we saw that overnight 1,700 of those heinous criminals were not monitored by police. It is extraordinary. It is one of the greatest travesties to ever be seen in this parliament and on the statute books of Queensland.

I now turn to amendments to the Corrective Services Act in relation to parole which are included in this bill. Parole is not an automatic entitlement; it is not a right. There is no guarantee that a prisoner eligible for parole will get parole. The Parole Board Queensland is independent and makes its decisions in the best interests of community safety. Because of this government's strong laws and the relentless efforts of the police, there are now more offenders spending longer in custody and detention more often. This, in addition to an increase in exceptional circumstances parole applications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to an increase in the number of parole applications.

The government continues to provide the independent Parole Board Queensland with substantial support, just as it has done right from the board's establishment. Since the Queensland parole system review, the government has increased Parole Board funding by over \$6.1 million—going from \$4.2 million in 2016-17 to over \$10.3 million in 2020-21. This represents a 145 per cent increase in funding and is indicative of this government's significant and ongoing commitment to deliver an effective parole system. Extra funding announced this year will support the continued operation of a fourth temporary operating team and has enabled the establishment of a fifth temporary operating team.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the president, CEO and members of the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group for their collective strong advocacy around changes to the parole system to better protect victims and their families.

To complement the reforms in this bill, updated ministerial guidelines will come into effect around the timeliness of prisoners' cooperation in no-body no-parole matters before the Parole Board Queensland. This means the board must place greater emphasis on whether a prisoner gave information to the authorities in relation to the location of a victim's remains in a timely manner. This government will always put victims' families first. It was a Labor government that reformed the parole system—the biggest parole reforms in recent history—and it was a Labor government that heavily invested in a professional and independent parole board.

I will now address some of the specific issues raised by members during the debate. The member for Burdekin referred to protection for civilian staff with regard to the monitoring of surveillance devices. I am advised that civilian monitors will be operating from a desk in a police establishment. There is no change from current practices in this regard. Further, the civilian monitors will be appropriately supervised. This amendment simply removes the need for constant and individualised police supervision.

I thank all members of the parliament for their contribution in this debate. I also acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the very committed members of Queensland Corrective Services and the Queensland Police Service for their valuable assistance in the development of these reforms. I would like to particularly highlight the efforts of Tom Humphreys, Annika Hutchins, the team from the Queensland Corrective Services Legislation Group, Paul Friedman, Tony Brown, Ian Carroll, John Henderson, David Flynn and the Queensland Police Service legislation team for their significant efforts in not only supporting the development of this policy but also ensuring that this bill comes before the House and, in turn, becomes good law which keeps all Queenslanders safe. I commend the bill to the House.