




Speech By  
**Peter Russo**  
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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## JUSTICE LEGISLATION (COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE—PERMANENCY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (6.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Permanency) Amendment Bill 2021. As stated in the explanatory notes—

The objectives of the Bill are to make amendments to legislation in the Justice portfolio to make permanent particular parts of the following temporary measures introduced during the COVID-19 emergency:

- the *Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Regulation 2020*—referred to as the “Documents Reforms”; and
- the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020*—referred to as the “Domestic and Family Violence Reforms”.

The Bill will also amend the Liquor Act to allow licensed restaurant operators to apply for a permanent condition of licence authorising the sale 1.5 litres of wine (i.e. two bottles) with a takeaway meal up to 10pm.

The Bill also extends the expiry of the *Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (Leases Regulation).

The COVID-19 pandemic of the last almost two years has raised a number of challenges for us all. As a parliament, it was critical we put in place measures to minimise, as much as possible, the impacts caused by this pandemic. The introduction of a range of temporary measures has revealed that beneficial outcomes could be achieved through the continued use of at least some of these temporary measures. The measures supported by this amendment bill we are debating today include reforms for the making, signing and witnessing of legal documents such as affidavits, statutory declarations, oaths, deeds, certain mortgages and general powers of attorney through electronic means or by allowing witnessing over audiovisual link. The bill also allows for permanently implementing arrangements to allow nurse practitioners to sign certification forming part of an advance health directive. These are practical and effective actions. It is encouraging to note the support given by stakeholders in considering the proposed reforms.

The pandemic provided us all with opportunities to look at new and sound ways to manage how we interact and how we engage, and it allowed us to review what we can do to make things better. The pandemic stripped away things we might have thought important, but it turns out there were some things that could be done in a way that provided better and more beneficial outcomes.

The pandemic brought the issue of family and domestic violence to the forefront. It is a good thing we are speaking out about and looking more closely at the menacing and deceptive behaviours these perpetrators are inflicting on their victims, often on a daily basis. The bill also clarifies that it is at the magistrate’s discretion as to whether to conduct all or part of the proceedings by AV link or audio link. Everything we can do to make it easier for victims of domestic and family violence to seek assistance to deal with the behaviours of offenders must be done. We would not be in our strong position today without the decisive and effective action taken by the Palaszczuk government over the past 22 months.

Debate, on motion of Mr Russo, adjourned.