




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Youth Crime; Beasley, Mr J

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.07 pm): Tonight I rise again in this parliament to remember Jacko, Jack Beasley, the young man from Parkwood who was taken far too soon in an horrific stabbing in the middle of Surfers Paradise. It devastated his parents, Brett and Belinda, his brother, Mitch, and our whole community. In the just over a year since, I have been proud to stand with them to call for change under their motto 'detect knives, save lives'. Earlier this month the government finally acknowledged there is a problem with youth crime.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): We are unsure whether this matter is still before the courts so the advice in relation to the Alexandra Hills matter stands in relation to this. Members are very welcome to note sympathy but getting into the specifics of cases does potentially offend the standing orders of the parliament in relation to sub judice.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am aware of that. What was announced was that in party precincts, starting on the Gold Coast, police will be given metal detector wands and the ability to search potential offenders. This is the first time parliament has sat for the year so we need to see more detail on these changes and we need to see it this week. We do not know yet whether this will involve changes to their powers or if it will be based on the successful hotspot model adopted in the United Kingdom.

What we do know is that it should not have taken this long. It should not have taken more tragic deaths in our city. Five people have been stabbed to death on the Gold Coast since late 2019. Many more have been seriously injured by knife crime. Just last week a 14-year-old allegedly stabbed a 16-year-old during an altercation at Coomera station. Thankfully the wounds were not fatal. Where are we as a society if we have 14-year-olds carrying around knives and pulling them out in a fight? There is a toxic culture amongst some young people to think that they need to carry a knife for protection when they head out.

Brett, Belinda, Wayne, Debbie and everyone who forms the basis of the Jack Beasley Foundation have channelled their grief into an inspirational passion to do everything they can to make sure that no other community goes through what they have. They have not reached that goal yet. This commitment for policing changes is a good start, but if we do not fix the knife or gangster culture it will all be for nothing.

The JBF is working on an education program based around Brett's and Belinda's story, which they want to see in local schools. That is how we can show young people the consequences that those split-second decisions can have. That is how we can show that those decisions can rip apart communities. The Queensland Police Service, under the exceptional local leadership of Chief Superintendent Mark Wheeler, who has been alongside the Beasley family since the very start, is helping but more support is needed to get the program up and running. The rest of the changes

announced by the government are ones that I genuinely hope make a difference because our community is sick and tired of seeing families such as the Beasleys ripped apart by senseless youth crime.