




Speech By
Adrian Tantari

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

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POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.07 pm): I rise in support of the Police Service Administration and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The main objective of the bill is to modernise the legislative framework underpinning Protective Services, which manage the security of Queensland government buildings and assets, and to increase efficiencies for police officers acting as public officials under a number of acts including the Forestry Act, the Marine Parks Act, the Nature Conservation Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act and the management of identity card administration under these acts.

By way of a little background to this bill, the state government of the day passed into law the State Buildings Protective Security Act 1993, the SBPSA, which established the protective security service, better known as Protective Services, with the main task of this service being to provide security services for Queensland government buildings. Protective Services today comprises over 400 staff providing mobile and static security for government across Queensland. The excellent services provided by these officers include onsite security of government property assets, alarm monitoring and response service, mobile patrolling of property assets and government identification card production.

Protective Services is responsible for the managing of security services across a large portfolio of over 80 Queensland government buildings across our state, including those in the regions, and over 400 educational facilities, including the provision of static security for our 38 courts. This is achieved in part through providing building services coordinators who manage security procedures in 47 major government owned or leased buildings. I would particularly like to give a shout-out at this time to those hardworking men and women of Protective Services across the regions at the many regional government buildings, like the Brendan Hansen Building in Hervey Bay and our regional courts. They do a great job and work hard to keep our community members safe.

Our Protective Services' operations centre monitors over 2,500 alarms within Queensland and northern New South Wales and over 5,500 duress alarms across Queensland, including our electorate offices across the state. I have no doubt that members in this place are grateful in the knowledge that this service is ready and available to protect not only ourselves as members but our staff, who can at times be subjected to the most disgraceful and threatening behaviours from individuals who believe it is their right to abuse and threaten. I must add, it was heightened in recent times by activism around COVID determinations and a small proportion of the community that sought to elevate their protests by confronting electorate officers with their point of view, which in some instances became very untidy.

Protective Services also monitors about 700 fire detection devices as well as facilities' alarms, which include power and air conditioning monitoring for critical government buildings such as the Queensland State Archives and Queensland radioactive waste storage sites, protecting the condition of those buildings to keep Queensland's records and waste safe. To provide for the appropriate security of these state buildings, the SBPSA authorised security officers to exercise certain security powers in

relation to persons entering the places I have just mentioned. Various powers given under the SBPSA include screening persons, inspecting vehicles, demanding details from persons, seizing contraband and the directing and/or removal of persons. Senior protective security officers also have the power of detention and other powers equivalent to a police officer except the power of arrest. These appropriate actions are vital to give protection to users of these buildings. This is why this bill provides enhanced mechanisms for protective services officers to undertake these duties.

This bill aims to give effect to changes by: repealing the SBPSA; simplifying and streamlining the powers of protective services officers, including removing the distinction between PSO and senior PSO to provide a consistent set of powers for all officers; consolidating and rationalising the powers of PSOs and police officers operating alongside them in state buildings; clarifying provisions authorising PSOs to use body worn cameras; and applying the Queensland Police Service alcohol and drug testing regime to PSOs.

The bill also contains amendments to simplify or clarify identification requirements for police officers and other government employees, including addressing the existing duplication in identity card arrangements for police officers appointed as public officials under Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service legislation who are currently issued identification under both this legislation and police legislation. In the minister's introductory speech, the minister advised that the two key objects of this bill have a commonality, and that is to deliver efficiencies and provide improvements in administration for officers engaged in public safety and enforcement duties.

In transferring the powers of PSOs from the SBPSA to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, the PPRA, the bill also proposes to establish a single consistent set of powers for Protective Services staff who provide security services in state government buildings. Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction that differentiates between PSOs and senior PSOs according to the powers that each group may exercise. Currently, protective security officers are only able to engage some of the powers available to senior protective security officers who, under the SBPSA, hold all the powers of a police officer within state buildings except the power of arrest. PSOs may only ask a person entering a building if they will participate in electronic screening and allow for belongings, including their vehicle, to be searched. They may not require a person in or entering a state building to comply with these requests, nor are they authorised to do so. As a result, PSOs may only function effectively in the presence of a senior protective security officer who is able to engage the full range of powers under the SBPSA.

In its submission to the committee the Queensland Police Service stated that this has led to most Protective Services clients requesting the presence of a senior protective security officer with a mix of officers skewed to reflect this demand. The QPS identified that the ongoing differences between the powers of these two categories of officers potentially compromises community safety and may lead to unnecessary risks for protective security officers. The QPS reported that the disparity in powers posed on staff allocation created challenges, adding complexity to rostering arrangements. This bill proposes to resolve these issues and promote consistency with other jurisdictions by amalgamating PSOs and senior protective security officers into one group of officers called protective services officers, or PSOs. PSOs would be authorised with the powers currently afforded to senior protective security officers.

This bill provides PSOs with a uniform set of powers that are applicable irrespective of the officer's rank. This means that PSOs, including those currently engaged as protective security officers, would be authorised to discharge powers currently reserved for senior protective security officers. Again it is important to note that PSOs, unlike senior protective security officers, would not have all the powers of a police officer in a state building. For example, a PSO would not be able to give a lawfully issued direction to allow the officer to inspect an entrant's belongings, remove outer garments, remove articles from the entrant's pockets, or a range of other powers otherwise given to police officers. The PSO would be empowered to ask an entrant to undertake or submit to all of these actions but cannot require them to comply. Senior protective security officers currently can. If the entrant declines to comply, the PSO would be able to direct the entrant to leave the building or not enter the building. The Queensland Police Service advised that the bill provides the specific powers that provide an appropriate level of security at state buildings.

The bill also covers PSOs being permitted to use body worn cameras. The bill proposes to amend existing provisions in the PPRA which authorise the use of body worn cameras by police officers to extend their application to PSOs. For practical purposes, these provisions include authorisation for usage that is inadvertent or unexpected or is incidental use while acting in the performance of the officer's duty. In its submission to the Economics and Governance Committee, the Crime and Corruption Commission welcomed the bill's provision for the use of body worn cameras by officers, acknowledging the forensic value of body worn camera footage as evidence in investigations.

Whilst reviewing the legislation the Economics and Governance Committee heard from submitters, including the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Queensland Law Society, and held a public departmental briefing which included the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Environment and Science. I would like to thank all of those participants for their contributions to this legislation. I want to acknowledge the work done by the committee secretariat and Economics and Governance Committee, ably chaired by the member for Logan, the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, and my other colleagues who were on that committee.

This legislation meets its intention. It does create a more modern legislative framework to underpin protective services and does increase the efficiencies for police officers acting as public officials under the various acts I mentioned earlier. I support the bill.