




Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**

**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

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

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.59 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021, a bill with the stated objectives of improving the delivery of policing services; reducing administrative processes; increasing productivity; improving the detection, prevention and disruption of crime; and optimising existing systems and processes.

At the outset I would like to thank the men and women of the Queensland Police Service for all that they do to keep our communities safe. Their job is a difficult and dangerous one. I am grateful to the police officers who go above and beyond in their job, especially when their resources are too frequently limited. Their job has become even more difficult in recent years due to the increase in crime and, in particular, youth crime across Queensland. We have seen young thugs thumb their noses at the law and cause chaos in communities, all too frequently making Queenslanders feel unsafe in their homes or out and about in their communities.

My electorate of Buderim has experienced this. There has been a recent spike in break and enters and car thefts in Sippy Downs, Palmview and Brightwater. No community should have to live with this. Despite the best efforts of our local police, crime continues to be a problem which is frequently a cause for concern among residents in my electorate. It is an uphill battle for our Queensland police who have inadequate resources to do the job that is asked of them. There are too few police on the Sunshine Coast, and the number of police on the coast is not keeping up with the considerable population growth that we are experiencing. Those few police who are out on the beat fight against a system plagued by weak laws and the state government's catch-and-release approach to crime.

The effect of a failure to provide adequate police on the Sunshine Coast is that our police are too stretched and are unable to do sufficient work proactively engaging with our community to deter crime. It is important that we free up more police resources by reducing administration processes and get officers back to doing what they signed up for—fighting crime and making our communities safe. This bill seeks to achieve that but, like so many policy announcements that this state government seeks to trumpet, the proof will be in the pudding.

My constituents are concerned about a lack of police presence in our community. Those few police that we have are too frequently tied up doing administration, rather than being on the road. The LNP will always support measures to get our police back on the streets and in the community. I know that our local police officers want to be out there on the road, not stuck at their desks doing unnecessary paperwork.

Access to police is becoming more and more difficult for people in my community. People in my electorate of Buderim want to see our police on the streets patrolling and responding to calls for service—not just the most serious offending but all calls for service—and they want to be able to walk into a police station and talk to an officer to report crime or to discuss how to keep our community safe. Buderim residents value their local police beat, which this Labor state government closed and sought

to hide the decision from our community. Our police beat, which has been there for many years and was manned for five days a week, has now been reduced to an occasional mobile police beat—and I had to fight to even get that—and is manned two days a week. It is a cut to police resources in Buderim and it makes our community feel less safe.

My office has also received several complaints about the Sippy Downs police station, which is open to the public only for short hours and perhaps most disappointingly, frequently during those hours it is open, people are not welcome to come in and report and are instead told to call Policelink. I understand the use of Policelink to free up resources, but I also believe it is important for people to have the option of attending their local station for face-to-face communication. This is particularly vital for our elderly population.

This is not a criticism of the hardworking police officers at Sippy Downs or anywhere else on the coast. This is about a lack of resources and a lack of staff. I know that our local police leadership are working to address the issues that have presented at Sippy Downs Station, but our community for too long has not had the level of service required to instil public confidence and to keep our community safe. I ask the Minister for Police to ensure that local stations like Sippy Downs have the resources they need to be able to meet the needs and expectations of our growing communities.

This bill aims to improve the delivery of services, and I hope it means we will see more old-fashioned policing, with police having the time and the inclination to work collaboratively with the community to tackle community safety. We do have some great community minded police officers who help groups like our various local Neighbourhood Watch groups—Neighbourhood Watch groups like the Mountain Creek Neighbourhood Watch, which has been capably led by Wendy Walker for many years and which has strong engagement across the suburb of Mountain Creek. We have also seen the Sippy Downs and Palmview Neighbourhood Watch re-established under the leadership of Margaret Bertoldo recently. Given the property crime, hooning and antisocial behaviour that we have seen in suburbs like Sippy Downs, I believe that our Neighbourhood Watch groups perform an important link between the community and the Queensland police, and I will continue to support them.

I have been disappointed that the state government has not appointed a school based police officer to Chancellor State College or to Mountain Creek State High School, which the LNP has committed to and I will continue to fight for. School based police officers are an important way to connect with communities, especially with young people who might be heading down the wrong track. At those two schools we have more than 6,000 students who could be connecting, working and developing a positive relationship with police rather than their first interaction with police being when they are in trouble. Our school based police officers do a great job at being proactive and perhaps, if more resources become available, the state government may revisit this issue in the future.

Before I finish my contribution today, I would like to address the amendments around alcohol and targeted substance testing. I support these measures, but I believe that, as elected representatives, we should be leading by example with respect to measures such as substance testing. I find it difficult to accept that we can be here debating the requirement for police to subject themselves to alcohol and targeted substance testing when neither the Premier nor the police minister or any member of parliament are subject to the same requirements. We all should be. All members of parliament should be required to submit themselves to alcohol and targeted substance testing on a regular basis just as our police are. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the same standards should apply to us as apply to them.

Again, on behalf of my community and the electorate of Buderim, I would like to thank everyone who puts on the blue uniform each and every day to keep our community safe. We need to do more to support and provide them with the resources that they need to make their job easier and more efficient.