




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.41 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. I wish to begin my contribution today by acknowledging the incredible service and dedication of the men and women of the Queensland Police Service to our state of Queensland, in particular, the western suburbs of Brisbane and the electorate of Moggill. These men and women go above and beyond the call of duty each and every day and this was on full display in the electorate of Moggill during South-East Queensland's recent severe weather and flood event. On behalf of our local community I would like to thank Senior Sergeant Shane Hancock, Senior Constable Paul Bagnall, Senior Constable Chris Tetley and Senior Constable Lachlan Scott-Preimonas for their tireless efforts to support and assist residents in suburbs across the electorate of Moggill. Can I also specifically acknowledge and thank Senior Constable Michelle Schreiber and Constable Belinda O'Brien, and so many other Queensland Police Service officers, who were invaluable to our communities of Karana Downs, Mount Crosby, Lake Manchester and Kholo during the recent flood event.

I know the Minister for Police, Hon. Mark Ryan, and also the shadow minister for police, Dale Last MP, would be incredibly grateful for the service provided by not only those officers, but all officers across Queensland. It also needs to be acknowledged that our local Queensland Police Service officers and all of those across Queensland are part of a larger emergency service effort to protect and serve residents during such natural disasters. To that end, I also take this opportunity to acknowledge local volunteer members of the Moggill State Emergency Service unit, including Colin Alley, Julie Francis and the Bellbowrie-Moggill Community-led Disaster Management Group Coordinator Mark Kerle, as well as all the members of the Queensland Ambulance Service and also the Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade, including First Officer Mark Farmer, Brookfield Show Society President Cath Fullerton, also Jaimee Morgenbesser and many more for their efforts.

In turning to the legislation currently before the House, the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 16 September 2021. As outlined in report No. 16 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the key policy objectives of this legislation are to: improve the delivery of policing services; reduce administrative processes; increase productivity; improve the detection, prevention, and disruption of crime; and finally, free up valuable police frontline time by optimising existing systems and processes. To achieve this an oaths regulation will be created along with amendments made to the Oaths Act 1867, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Weapons Act 1990.

Perhaps one of the most transformative aspects of this legislation is the creation of an oaths regulation. The enacting of such a regulation and amendment to the Oaths Act will enable senior police officers to witness affidavits of other police officers, specifically concerning affidavits which prove the service of documents, affidavits that are used in bail proceedings under the Bail Act and Youth Justice Act and sworn applications that are made in compliance with Section 801 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

It is envisaged that this change will achieve significant time savings for our frontline police officers, as will the removal of the requirement for police officers to locate and attend before a justice of the peace or commissioner for declarations to swear an oath of service. Whilst it is expected that such efficiencies will be created in a genuine attempt to ensure that our police officers are afforded more time in an operational capacity than performing administrative functions, this regulation cannot and should not be in place merely as an attempt by the Queensland state government to make up for any shortfall of resources available for our police service.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the concerns raised by stakeholders in relation to this amendment and regulation and the authorisation of senior police officers to witness specified affidavits. I note that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has commented in its report, advising that the Queensland Police Service will introduce a policy framework to guide senior officers in undertaking their new witnessing duties and that the Queensland Police Service will conduct an independent review of the amendments after 12 months.

In my remaining time I wish to address those amendments pertaining to the Weapons Act 1990. Before I do that I declare that I am a member of the Shooters Union of Australia in accordance with my declaration of interests on the parliamentary register. As advised by the Queensland Police Service to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the purpose of the amendments to the Weapons Act is to streamline the operation of the permanent firearms amnesty that Queensland currently has in place. These amendments are recognition of the fact that the current firearms amnesty framework in Queensland is significantly more onerous than it needs to be, with participating dealers currently unable to retain firearms that have been surrendered to them anonymously.

It is disappointing that it is only now that such amendments are being legislated: two years after the National Firearms Amnesty was agreed upon. In this time the Queensland state government has placed unnecessary burdens on both our Queensland Police Service and licenced firearms dealers. It has been widely reported that the Weapons Licensing branch under the Queensland state government continues to suffer serious processing delays and as the local state member for Moggill I have received plenty of correspondence from licensed firearms owners and firearms applicants detailing a range of issues as they genuinely attempt to do the right thing and abide by all regulations and procedures that are in place.

In no way is this a criticism of the staff of the branch, but rather it is an acknowledgement of the growing erosion of their ability to provide the necessary service and support to their customers and applicants. It is imperative that the Labor Minister for Police and Corrective Services acknowledges the significant shortfalls of the Weapons Licensing branch under the Queensland state government and ensures that sufficient resources are made available in order to provide the level and efficiency of service that Queenslanders deserve.

Finally, I once again wish to place on the parliamentary record my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our Queensland Police Service officers, as well as all emergency service officers and local volunteers who worked around the clock in extraordinarily challenging circumstances to protect our community during the recent South-East Queensland severe weather and flood event. Whilst acknowledging their exceptional efforts during this significant natural disaster event, it must be said that these men and women perform an invaluable service to our local community each and every day, rain, hail, or shine. For that both I and the entire Moggill electorate community are eternally grateful.

In closing, I thank all stakeholders who contributed to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's consideration of this legislation and all committee members, including the deputy chair, the Liberal National Party's member for Currumbin, and the member for Glass House.