




Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**

**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2022

**POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (6.46 pm): I also rise to speak in support of the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. We have here an opportunity to recognise the white shirts—the protective services personnel who work throughout the state, and I do not think they get the recognition they deserve. We heard the member for Macalister point out that they have over 400 staff who provide mobile services and static security services. We have seen them here at Parliament House. I am aware that they also work at our 38 courthouses across Queensland. As we all know, courthouses can get very hectic at times. There can be conflict and they can be stressful. I have no doubt that our protective services officers who work in our courthouses work hard. They are always attentive in providing security for the variety of people going into court, some of whom perhaps do not want to talk to other people. They also ensure that no dangerous objects or weapons are taken into court.

They work at 400 buildings and educational facilities and they manage security procedures in those 47 government owned or operated buildings throughout the state. Obviously there are a lot more here in the CBD, but I do not underestimate the level of service and how necessary they are at regional locations throughout Queensland. Once again, the work they do is tremendous and I do want to pay tribute to them.

When we have chatted to them we know that many, as we have heard, have been in the police or are going into the police. For those students, for example, studying enforcement officer studies at Griffith University, this is a good career path for them.

I also want to pay tribute to those police officers who have been appointed as public officials under the Parks and Wildlife Service legislation. Some 120 police officers are authorised under these particular acts. What we are increasingly seeing is that they are needed on those sites to not only protect public safety but also protect the natural and cultural values in those areas. South-East Queensland is becoming incredibly popular, as is the rest of the state. Our camping areas are becoming more and more popular. More and more people are coming into our natural areas. It is getting quite competitive to get good camping sites and other sites needed for recreational activities. We are hearing increasing stories of conflict or competition at camping facilities as they become more crowded. Through the State Development and Regional Industries Committee we heard some stories of people perhaps taking action into their own hands in trying to enforce what they see as the laws within these natural areas. I do not underestimate how officers are needed in those natural areas. They are increasingly needed. As Queensland becomes more and more popular and those natural areas become more and more popular, we will need people authorised under legislation to take action.

I want to speak particularly about some of the new legislative safeguards that have been brought in to assist the protective services officers and police officers to maintain their standards and to increase public confidence in their professionalism. As we have heard, maintaining public confidence in those who ensure our safety and wellbeing is very much a crucial part of the law and order regime that we

have in this state. It is very clear that the public must be certain that police and protective services officers are performing their tasks to safeguard our rights as individuals and those of the people they are protecting. It is very clear that police officers will continue to be subject to the safeguards outlined in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, but a further safeguard will be introduced in this bill in relation to the proposed powers to require the name and address of a person in or about to enter a state building and to direct that a person leave a state building. These powers may only be exercised if the police officer reasonably suspects the requirement is necessary to maintain the security of the state building.

**Mr Healy:** That is very important in this day and age.

**Mr WHITING:** Indeed, member for Cairns. I know he has a great interest in security matters in that he always keeps an eye on what is happening around the place just in case, and I will not speculate on the reasons why. The direction to leave a state building with an enforcement act will be required to be recorded in the enforcement register. There are some major changes with regard to the protective services officers and they will be subject to the following safeguards. A protective services officer who is not in uniform must clearly display the officer's identity card or produce that for inspection—that is, their identity card—before exercising a power unless it is reasonably practical not to do so. If it is not reasonably practical, the protective services officer must produce the identity card for inspection at the first reasonable opportunity. In relation to requesting people to state their name and address, this power can only be exercised if the protective services officer reasonably suspects the requirement is necessary to maintain the security of that state building.

With regard to screening, a police officer or a protective services officer or an adult assisting the officer may touch a garment the person is wearing only if the person is of the same sex. The new section of the PPRA will require a police officer or protective services officer inspecting the belongings of an entrant to ensure that that person is caused minimal embarrassment during the examination and reasonable care is taken to protect the dignity of that person. They are both important safeguards for people entering those buildings. An officer may ask the entrant to allow an inspection of their belongings out of the public view if the officer reasonably suspects it is necessary to protect the dignity of an entrant and it is reasonably practical.

In relation to directions, if an entrant to a state building fails to comply with the screening or inspection process, a PSO or police officer may direct the person to leave the building, so they will have that power or what I see as an equivalent power. However, the PSO is not to give the direction if the entrant tells the PSO that they do not want to be screened, they do not want their belongings inspected and they are prepared to leave the state building immediately with their belongings, or if the PSO has started to screen the entrant or inspect their belongings and the entrant does not want the screening or inspection to continue and is prepared to leave immediately with their bags.

Similar to a police officer, a PSO giving an oral direction must warn, if practical, the person that it is an offence to fail to comply with the direction without a reasonable excuse and give that person another opportunity to comply with the direction. The direction to leave a state building must only be given where the PSO reasonably suspects the requirement is necessary to maintain the security of the state building. This is a fairly comprehensive description of the powers that the PSOs and the police will now be sharing or will have increased to once again maintain the security of the buildings in which we work. These are only some of the important changes, but they are absolutely critical to maintain the safety of the buildings in which we work. I also point out that this is for our staff as well. In recent times, in our electorate offices some of us have experienced incidents that have led us to fear for our safety. Those incidents emphasise to us why it is necessary to make sure that our PSOs and police officers have a broad range of powers to ensure that they can keep us all safe. I commend this bill to the House.