




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.57 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill seeks to update the legislative framework of the state government protective security services and increase the efficiency for police officers acting as police officials under the Forestry Act, the Marine Parks Act, the Nature Conservation Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act. I thank my fellow members of the Economics and Governance Committee and endorse a lot of what the member for Macalister just said in terms of how the relationship between the Queensland police and the 'white shirts' has been long and long valued. As the member for Macalister mentioned, often it is a bit of a pathway to the police, but more often than not police, who are compelled to retire at 60, end up in that position.

The committee's consideration of this bill extended to only two publicly available submissions, from the Queensland Law Society and the CCC. While the CCC supported the bill, the Queensland Law Society expressed concerns around the need to ensure adequate training in the expansion of powers. I will come back to that.

As I mentioned earlier, the legislation serves a primary purpose of streamlining Protective Services by repealing the State Buildings Protective Security Act and the State Buildings Protective Security Regulation and relocating the relevant provisions to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the Police Service Administration Act 1990. It also makes amendments to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service legislation to improve administrative efficiencies for police officers exercising powers under the Forestry Act, the Marine Parks Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act.

The amendments to modernise Protective Services could be considered long overdue when we consider the important role of this government institution. Protective Services is responsible for the management of security services for over 80 Queensland government buildings and 400 educational facilities. It also monitors over 2,500 alarms and over 5,500 duress alarms, including those in our electorate offices. Its role also extends to monitoring around 700 fire detection services and alarms in key government facilities.

The State Buildings Protective Security Act, the SBPSA, authorises security officers to exercise certain security powers in relation to persons in or about to enter state buildings. Under the act, protective security officers are authorised to conduct basic safety checks while senior protective security officers are granted greater powers, including the authority to request personal information, seize prescribed materials and detain and remove individuals. From 1984 to 2000 police had the same powers as senior protective security officers under the SBPSA until their powers were relocated to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, the PPRA. This authorises police officers to exercise similar, but not the same, powers as senior protective security officers.

In 2016 Protective Services was integrated into the Queensland Police Service in response to a review into the Public Safety Business Agency. Since then QPS has reviewed the SBPSA and regulation and found that the amendments proposed in this legislation will increase efficiencies and

savings and further promote the integration of Protective Services into the QPS as well as ensure the government meets its obligations to provide for the safety and security of people in government buildings. Given this is such a fundamental role of government, it does raise the question: why has it taken so long for these amendments to be made?

The bill will repeal the SBPSA and the regulation and the appropriate provisions will be reallocated to the PPRA, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, and to the PSAA, the Police Service Administration Act. While this will result in a number of important reforms, there are a few key elements which have not been clearly defined, including clearer definitions around what adequate training will entail and ensuring these officers have access to body worn cameras.

In terms of training, by amalgamating protective security officers and senior protective security officers into one group called PSOs, it will effectively mean all PSOs will have the same higher level security powers currently exercised by senior officers. However, existing staff will be provided with only an additional one week of training as per the transition, while new staff will undertake just five weeks of training compared to the six weeks of training currently required for senior protective security officers. Reference is also made to computer-based training which cannot, in any circumstance, be expected to replace or simulate face-to-face learning which is crucial in these roles.

These amendments will also introduce a new offence prohibiting the impersonation of a PSO which will carry a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units. They will also clarify the use of force of a PSO and that the offence to assault or resist a PSO includes obstruction. Other key aspects include expanding alcohol and drug testing to PSOs and authorising them to use body worn cameras. Given the slow rollout of body worn cameras to our frontline police officers, I question the government's capacity to ensure the timely supply of this essential equipment to the fleet of 400 protective services officers.

During the committee's public hearing, Assistant Commissioner Platz said that 'aligning Protective Services with QPS is, and was, a logical and practical arrangement as both agencies are dedicated to providing safety and security across our communities'. She also said that the significance of the security services that Protective Services provide cannot be understated. She stated—

Their services go beyond simply protected bricks and mortar. Importantly, the role of this group extends to protecting government employees who use these buildings and the visitors who frequent them. Government buildings must be maintained as a safe environment. Without this, the business of government may be compromised, adversely affecting our community and way of life.

The amendment to the Police Service Administration Act 1990 included in the bill which classes protective services officers and those in training as members of the QPS also raises some red flags, as we know how this state Labor government operates. Will these extra officers be included in the government's commitment to deliver 2,025 extra police staff by 2025?

Another element of this bill will improve administrative efficiencies for police officers acting as public officials under Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service legislation and in the administration of identity cards. As part of PPRA, QPS officers may be trained as public officials, which gives them a range of authorities when carrying out duties in protected areas such as marine parks, forests and other declared areas. Since 2018 more than 120 police officers have been appointed as public officials, which has resulted in positive outcomes with respect to protecting public safety and natural, cultural and marine resources, including wildlife poaching and trafficking. Currently, police must produce an identity card when exercising such powers. However, it has been recognised that the administrative processes attached to this requirement are out of date and burdensome.

By amending the QPWS legislation, it will remove the requirements for police to be issued with an identification card under the Forestry Act, the Marine Parks Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act, along with the requirement to produce the identity card when exercising their powers under these acts. Further, the bill will also streamline identity card requirements for other departmental staff appointed as public officials by listing all relevant appointments under different acts on the one card. For QPS officers, this means they will only need to show their police ID when not in uniform if they are exercising their power under QPWS legislation.

In the case of forestry officers, the bill clarifies the requirements for identification when they are issuing a direction as being the wearing of a departmental issued uniform and badge and the activation of lights on a departmental vehicle. All other conservation officers will be required to show their ID at all times when exercising their powers under the act, regardless of whether or not they are in uniform.

While the bill does create efficiencies and implement some practical improvements, there remains some fundamental issues that have been simply overlooked or ignored in the drafting of this bill, some of which have raised more questions than answers. I will not be opposing the bill.