




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.53 am): I rise to speak in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. This bill proposes a number of important amendments to boost the capabilities of our police to do what they do best: keep our communities safe. The Queensland community witnessed their great work throughout the global health pandemic on our borders, in our airports, on our roads, at quarantine hotels and in our communities through compliance checks. In fact, there has been such demand for these services that the QPS is now allocating specially trained Queensland protective services officers for courthouses, quarantine facilities like Wellcamp, and many other key locations right throughout Queensland. This ensures that this work is carried out by highly trained and specialised professionals under the umbrella of the QPS. They are keeping us safe.

I have nothing but praise for the work of our local police in protecting my community during the recent floods. They worked hand in glove with other emergency services in my community and many others. When I raised the concerns about looting in my community that community members had raised with me, the police were very swift to respond. They set up a command centre in Oxley. They were highly visible, and that presence was so reassuring. I commend the police in my local area for their proactive patrols of my flood-affected areas. They worked around the clock to disrupt and prevent opportunistic looters from targeting local homes and businesses in my community. People who prey on vulnerable Queenslanders are the worst of the worst. The police minister was right in saying that they are not Queenslanders. In fact, at that press conference with the Premier he said more but, Mr Deputy Speaker, it would be unparliamentary of me to repeat those words in this House and so I will not.

Looters stole from people whose homes and livelihoods were devastated by the floods. As I walked around the streets of Oxley I was disappointed to hear not only of people taking things from the kerbside but actually going into people's properties and taking jewellery that community members had hidden and concealed really well. They rifled inside their homes for the last vestiges of their personal property and they took it. It is disgusting! I back the minister and support the police in taking a zero tolerance approach when it comes to looting. I am advised that, since Operation Nash commenced on 1 March, 10 people were arrested on 14 anti-looting charges. Six others were arrested on various other charges.

While I do not know the locations of these arrests, the police have had a very strong presence in my community and it had a very strong deterring effect. As I walked through the streets of Oxley and Corinda in recent weeks checking on those flood-affected residents, the officers were on horseback right there beside me to ensure that anyone driving through those streets with nefarious intent was deterred by their strong presence. Locals in my community told me how happy they were to have this visible show of support. Operation Nash conducted more than 1,000 deployments involving more than 800 land based deployments and almost 200 water based deployments. There was a highly visible police presence right throughout flood-affected areas in Queensland because they were out and about helping people, supporting other—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Mount Ommaney, can I draw you back to the long title of the bill, please.

Ms PUGH: Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker; thank you for your counsel. Police were out and about helping people, supporting people in the worst of times, and that is what this bill is all about. It is about making sure that our police resources are free to conduct operations like Operation Nash. We need our police out there on the front line, not doing paperwork. That is what this bill is all about.

I now turn to the changes proposed in the bill to provide more support to the police. These changes include measures that will make it easier for certain documents to be witnessed. That has already been canvassed by other members of the House, and I join the member for Bundamba in his fervent appreciation of JPs and the good work they do in our community. That was once a job that was often performed by local members and local police, and having those volunteers in our community frees up man-hours for a lot of different public servants. It is very important. This measure is expected to free up 22,000 hours of valuable police time. It means they can spend more time on the front line in our communities with things like Operation Nash.

This proposed measure will strengthen the ability of police to obtain orders that allow access to devices such as mobile phones. This is going to enhance the ability of police to investigate crimes like the non-consensual sharing of images, upskirting and filming in change rooms. Criminals need to know they cannot conceal their crimes behind a pass code.

The Palaszczuk government backs our police. We back our police by delivering a record investment in more police and more police resources. We have delivered a record \$2.6 billion overall police budget—an increase of almost 20 per cent since we came to government. We will have 2,025 extra police personnel, including 1,450 sworn officers who will be deployed to the front line. We will have more police liaison officers active in my community. We will have more support personnel, including injury management officers for a new QPS wellbeing centre, and more mobile police beats.

As I said, it was great to see these police stations on wheels in my electorate. They could be specially deployed to flood-prone areas so they were right there at the end of Oxley Road in the worst, most ravaged, most hard-hit flood areas. It was so reassuring for my community. Our \$300 million investment in the police infrastructure pipeline will deliver new police facilities across the state.

This government will always back our police. We are investing in jobs. We are investing in infrastructure. We have had COVID, we have had floods, but the Palaszczuk government is delivering an economic plan to keep us on the road to recovery—and that includes our fantastic QPS. We are modernising our laws so that we can stay one step ahead of the law-breakers and criminals. We are creating a better, more efficient operating environment for our police so they can spend more time on the front line and in our communities.

Members on this side of the House with flood-affected communities like mine have been speaking in recent days. There are a lot of Queenslanders doing it tough right now. These everyday Queenslanders who have experienced this flood appreciate that we are freeing up those police resources so they can be out in the community doing what they do best. We have passed tough laws to protect Queenslanders. What is clear from this bill and other measures that we have introduced since we came to government is that community safety is first and foremost. We will support our police so that they can do what they do best—that is, protect Queenslanders and keep our communities safe because that is what Labor governments do.

In the time I have left, I especially want to thank my local police. The officer in charge at Mount Ommaney, Peta Comadira, has been a particular advocate for these kinds of efficiency changes. When we meet, these are the kinds of things she raises with me on a regular basis. As an officer in charge, she is really passionate about making sure that we have those efficiencies in place so she can deploy her officers where they are needed. I am very lucky in Mount Ommaney to have two fantastic officers in charge. Over in Sherwood, Mick Coulson and his team played a huge role in the clean-up after the floods. They did that frontline work barricading off roads so that the flood-affected streets of Oxley could be cleaned up quicker.

I meet with my local officers in charge regularly. They are passionate about making sure they can have the maximum amount of time on the front line in our communities and they are finding new ways to serve our community and engage with our community better. They have a proactive and community focused approach which starts right from the time our kids start school. They like to be in the schools creating those relationships with our young people, and they work all the way through at all ages and levels in our community—for example, with the Jindalee Neighbourhood Watch and conducting those community catch-ups and visits.

I think this is an excellent bill. It is going to make such a difference in our communities and to our valued members of the QPS. I commend the bill to the House.