




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.38 pm): I also wish to make a contribution to the debate on the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The substantive object of the bill is to standardise some of the powers that police officers and protective services officers may use. Sometimes it is helpful to think about why we do the things we do and why we choose to create a change that can take a bit of time and effort. The ‘why’ is simply this: with mounting pressures on our Public Service, particularly on our front-line officers and—notably and relevant to this bill—our Queensland Police Service, we have an obligation to refine the operating environment for those important roles.

The state government’s protective security service is a dedicated statutory unit that is tasked with providing security services for Queensland government buildings. I join with others in putting on the record my thanks to the protective security officers who work not just here at Parliament House but also throughout all Queensland government buildings. I am sure others feel as I do that it is one of the highlights of my day—I do not know what that says about me—to come here in the morning and be greeted with a lovely smile. I still get a kick out of it every time they say to me, ‘Good morning, Ms Bush.’ I still love the feeling I get every time they say that. They are nothing but absolutely wonderful. That has been the story throughout my Public Service career, having worked at William Street, at the State Law Building and at the ‘Gotham’ building where, obviously, protective security staff work.

Yes, every day they are a friendly face and someone to have a quick chat to when hopping in the lift, but really they are so much more than that. Of course, we know that. Their steady and constant presence really is quite reassuring, particularly for staff members having to work late—as I have done on numerous occasions—coming and going from the building, particularly when working in the Public Service with sometimes some really vulnerable clients. As much as we draw from every part of our professional expertise, sometimes those interactions do not always go the way we would like them to. Having security there to support us in supporting our clients is really beneficial. I have only had to draw on them on very rare occasions, but those occasions have been managed in a very professional and compassionate manner. I put on record my thanks to them.

There are over 400 staff providing security for over 80 government buildings. Since 1984 they have operated within a variety of administrative settings. In 2016 the government protective security service was integrated into the Queensland Police Service in response to a recommendation made during the review of the Public Safety Business Agency, the PSBA. The reasons for the recommendation included: the inherent value of QPS maintaining overall responsibility for public safety in Queensland and the ability to easily coordinate responses and deployment in times of emergency; the ability to use Protective Services as part of the QPS employee life cycle, including as a platform for interested recruits who do not yet meet the entrance requirements for the Queensland Police Service; providing a broader range of options to transition sworn officers; and the ability to access improved training and support for protective services officers as the QPS already delivers these services to staff.

During the course of the integration process, Queensland police reviewed the underpinning legislation and identified a number of legislative changes which it considers will increase the efficiency of protective services while simultaneously promoting the integration of Protective Services into the QPS, ensuring the government meets its obligations as an employer to provide for the safety and security of people in government buildings.

The proposed amendments will seek to achieve the following: relocate the legislative framework underpinning the operation of the protective services from the State Buildings Protective Security Act and State Buildings Protective Security Regulation into the PSAA and PPRA; integrate the oversight and operations of Protective Services into police; streamline legislation; remove duplication; and provide a single source of truth for the PPRA. It will improve efficiencies through training and development opportunities and policy development for both cohorts of professionals which do share a lot of synergy.

Secondly, in transferring the powers of Protective Services from the State Buildings Protective Security Act to the PPRA, the bill will establish a single and consistent set of powers for protective services staff who provide security services in state government buildings. QPS has identified issues with the ongoing differences between the powers of two different classes of officers—namely, the protective security officers and senior protective security officers—and that these are discrepancies which only occur in Queensland. Nationally it can lead to unnecessary risk and potentially compromise community safety. In a practical sense it is simply inefficient through rostering challenges and simply is not in accordance with other states and territories.

Thirdly, the bill consolidates security powers of police officers and protective services officers and only in state buildings. This is in relation to the requirements for a protective services officer to require an entrant to a state building to provide personal details. This is to ensure that people accessing state buildings are in fact the person they are claiming to be.

Finally, this bill clarifies the use of force by a protective services officer when they are removing a person from a state building or preventing a person from entering a state building, providing that a protective services officer is authorised to use such force as is reasonably necessary for the purpose until the person can be surrendered to a police officer for investigation.

This bill also clarifies and strengthens the offence provisions in failing to comply with a security officer's demands for a person's identifying details, their failure to leave a state building or if a person assaults or resists an officer in the course of the officer performing their duties. Put simply, the bill further streamlines and modernises our protective services framework. I commend the bill to the House.