




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2022

POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 11 February 2022 the Economics and Governance Committee tabled its report on its examination of the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The committee made only one recommendation—namely, that this bill be passed. I thank the committee and its chair, the member for Logan, for its support of the bill and the agencies that submitted to the committee—namely, the Queensland Law Society and the Crime and Corruption Commission. I also thank the officials from the Department of Environment and Science and the Queensland Police Service who made themselves available and assisted the committee in the public briefing on the bill. I would also like to acknowledge the heads of jurisdiction, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society, the Human Rights Commissioner and the relevant police unions and protective services unions that participated in consultation during the development of this bill.

This bill is designed to improve the efficiencies of the Queensland Police Service. It achieves this through meeting two objectives. The first and primary objective of the bill is to improve the effectiveness of the Protective Services Group which operates within the Queensland Police Service. The second objective is to improve efficiencies with the administration of identity cards used to support the operations of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service within the Department of Environment and Science.

From time to time, police officers are appointed as authorised officers under legislation administered by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service within the Department of Environment and Science to undertake compliance and assist park rangers in places such as national parks, state forests, marine parks and recreation areas. Currently, these police officers are required to be issued with a separate identity card under this legislation and, where necessary, produce it despite already having their own identity cards and requirements for identifying themselves under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

Amendments in the bill will remove the need for a separate identity card to be issued to police under Department of Environment and Science legislation. These changes will also streamline requirements relating to relevant police officers identifying themselves when exercising powers under Department of Environment and Science legislation in recognition of the existing obligations in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. These amendments are a sensible step in streamlining administrative and operational arrangements for the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Environment and Science and contribute to increased efficiencies when police and rangers of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service are working together.

In relation to the primary objective of the bill, it is important to recognise the critical role that the Protective Services Group provides in supporting security for government buildings and assets across Queensland. Since 2016 this group has been positioned within the Queensland Police Service and now forms part of the Security and Counter Terrorism Command. Positioning the Protective Services Group within the Queensland Police Service did not happen by happenstance. This occurred as a direct result of recommendations made in a review of the now abolished Public Safety Business Agency. One of the rationales for this recommendation was the recognition of the value of the Queensland Police Service in maintaining overall responsibility for public safety. Aligning the Protective Services Group within the Queensland Police Service is appropriate, as both focus on providing safety and security. It is imperative that police officers and protective services officers have the confidence of the public.

This bill will standardise the powers police officers and protective services officers may use. These include the power to demand a person's name and address. Obtaining a person's name and address is necessary to provide adequate security for a state building. Simply put, you cannot secure a building if you do not know who is in it. Examples where this power may be necessary include: intelligence may be received that a person who presents a security risk will be attending at a state building. This intelligence may include photographs and data on risk factors such as a predisposition to violence, a history of carrying weapons and further concerning attributes. Without a power to demand an entrant's name, it will be difficult to verify that a person fitting this general description is the person of interest. In another example, it may be difficult to determine if a person is in breach of a direction to leave a state building if the person later returns and their particulars are not known and the officer who issued the original direction is not present.

Currently, only senior protective security officers can demand name and address details from a person who wants to enter a state building. To ensure that this power can be exercised consistently, the bill will authorise police officers to demand personal details from persons entering state buildings. The power to require a person to state their name and address will be qualified. A person may only be required to provide their name and address if the officer reasonably suspects it necessary to do so to maintain the security of a state building. If systems for the security of a state building involve the use of electronic screening devices, a protective services officer and a police officer may ask an entrant of the building to walk through a walk-through detector or pass their belongings through an X-ray scanner or allow an officer to pass a handheld scanner near the person or their belongings.

Regardless of whether the entrant or their belongings have been subject to an electronic screening, and if the protective services officer or police officer tells the entrant about the grounds for making the request, the protective services officer and police officer may ask the entrant to do one of a number of things, including: allow the officer to inspect the entrant's belongings; remove outer garments as specified and allow them to be inspected; remove articles from the entrant's pockets and allow them to be inspected; open an article for inspection; open a vehicle for inspection or remove an article from the vehicle as specified and allow it to be inspected. Further details of the powers that can be exercised by police officers and protective services officers will obviously be outlined during this debate.

We debate this bill while our community rallies against the consequences of a global pandemic and recovers from disastrous floods; however, Queensland is far better placed than many other jurisdictions thanks to our health response and therefore our economic response. Inevitably, in the future we will face further challenges. Some may be planned and promise to be wonderful, such as the upcoming 2032 Olympics Games. Other challenges, such as the impact of natural disasters on our state, can also have significant impacts, so our government's organisations need to be agile and adaptable to operate effectively within changing and dynamic surroundings. This can only be achieved through good governance.

In this parliament, members have an obligation to ensure that our organisations and agencies are best placed to serve Queensland. I believe that this bill will achieve this for the Protective Services Group by modernising the legislative framework that governs it. Since the Protective Services Group came within the ambit of the Queensland Police Service the Queensland Police Service has reviewed its governing legislation to ensure that it meets the contemporary needs of the community. These amendments introduce potential efficiencies and savings whilst ensuring the appropriate security of state buildings may be maintained. An important feature of this bill is the consolidation of security powers that may be exercised in state buildings by police officers and the new class of officer named a protective services officer, or PSO.

Rather than having multiple sources that provide security powers within state buildings, this bill will collect all security powers into a distinct chapter of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. This single point of truth will provide certainty and guidance to both police officers and protective services officers about the security powers that may be used and will promote efficiencies as common policies and training may be developed about the exercise of these powers.

Another important feature of this bill is the introduction of a number of legislative safeguards that will apply to protective services officers exercising these powers. These safeguards will provide guidance to these officers about the correct use of these security powers. They will enhance these officers' professionalism and strengthen client confidence that these officers will act appropriately when performing their duties.

This bill is important, as it impacts directly on the safety and security of the people who are employed in, or visit, state buildings. I endorse the comments of Assistant Commissioner Debbie Platz made before the Economics and Governance Committee in its consideration of this bill. At that hearing she said—

The significance of the security services that Protective Services provides cannot be underestimated. Their services go beyond simply protecting bricks and mortar. Importantly, the role of this group extends to protecting the 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.

I believe that this bill will best place Protective Services in a position to improve upon the already excellent services they provide in securing state buildings now and into an uncertain future. I take this opportunity to commend the bill to the House. I thank all those people who have contributed to the bill to this stage. I encourage all members of this House to support it.