




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2022

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (JACK'S LAW) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.17 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Community Support and Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022 [2000](#).

Tabled paper: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes [2001](#).

Tabled paper: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [2002](#).

I rise today to introduce the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022. As announced by the Premier recently, we are introducing Jack's Law. The proposed laws are named in honour of 17-year-old Jack Beasley, who was tragically killed in an incident involving a knife in Surfers Paradise in 2019. The laws are named in honour of Jack and they reflect the heartfelt and sincere efforts of Jack's parents, Brett and Belinda, for Jack's legacy to be a safer community. Jack's Law extends the Gold Coast knife-wandering trial for another two years and expands the powers for police to cover all 15 safe night precincts as well as public transport infrastructure.

Since Jack's passing, many of his family and friends have banded together, through the Jack Beasley Foundation, to advocate for changes around security and knife detection to help prevent this senseless violence taking place in the future. The foundation's first call to action was to petition the Gold Coast city council and the Queensland government to bring in a scanning system at Helensvale station where Jack's murderer got off the train and boarded a tram bound for Surfers Paradise. That petition attracted overwhelming support with more than 7,500 signatures.

In response to concerns around knife crime, the Palaszczuk government initiated a 12-month wandering trial in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts last year. The primary goal of the trial was to reduce the opportunity for serious violent offending involving knives and other serious weapons and as a means of preventing senseless and violent attacks in public spaces. The success of the trial in removing weapons from our streets has been evident not only in the number of weapons seized but also in the prevention of these offences that devastate the lives of our young people and their families.

Across the state, the unlawful possession of knives and other weapons in public places remains a concern. In fact, in July this year the stabbing homicide of a 24-year-old man just metres from the Fortitude Valley train station shocked us all. The removal of knives and other weapons from people who carry them in high-risk public places such as safe night precincts and transport hubs is an inherently valuable preventive intervention. The expansion of the trial in these high-risk public spaces is about enhancing public safety and hopefully stopping these devastating events.

We welcome the findings of the independent review of the Gold Coast trial conducted by Griffith University. The review, completed after 12 months of the trial, provided several recommendations which have been incorporated into Jack's Law. The expansion of the trial to all 15 safe night precincts and public transport infrastructure supports the notion of the increased risk in certain places. We have large numbers of people attending these locations at certain times, for example on the weekend, at night-time and during large events. We have an obligation to protect the lives of Queenslanders and to make it clear that carrying a knife in these public areas is not acceptable. A large concentration of people in one area, combined with the presence of sometimes intoxicated individuals, elevates the potential for harm to be caused to innocent people by offenders with weapons. The expansion of this trial will make it clear: do not come into these places armed with weapons.

The Queensland Police Service micro-hotspot project has identified several locations across the state where there is sustained offending and demand on police resources. Of the top 20 locations with the highest consistent and sustained reported offences and calls for service, half of those fall within safe night precincts. The Queensland Police Service anticipates that with the expansion of the trial the rate of knife and weapon detections will increase, therefore providing greater safety for the public using these spaces and a future deterrent for offenders bringing weapons into these areas.

I acknowledge that ongoing community support for the wanding expansion must come with a range of safeguards. The proposal includes several legislative safeguards to ensure the appropriate and proportional use of the powers. Continuing legislative safeguards include: the scanning period must not exceed 12 hours; police may detain a person for no longer than is reasonably necessary to conduct a scan; police must conduct the least invasive stop-and-scan power that is practicable in the circumstances; and police must offer the person a notice advising of the reason for the scan and their rights and police powers.

Additional safeguards that have been proposed in response to the Griffith review of the Gold Coast trial include: ensuring the safe night precinct or public transport infrastructure shows evidence of a problem in the past six months; and requiring that there must have been at least one offence committed by a person armed with a knife or other weapon, or at least one offence committed against the Criminal Code involving violence against a person punishable by at least seven years imprisonment, or more than one knife or weapons possession offence. A senior police officer must provide authorisation for wanding in the declared area and consider that the wanding is likely to be effective to detect or deter the commission of an offence involving the possession or use of a knife or other weapon. A senior police officer must also consider any previous authorisations made with respect to the place and whether those authorisations were successful in identifying people carrying weapons.

These considerations are designed to ensure that the senior police officer turns their mind to balancing the utility of wanding and its potential to interfere with lawful activity. Furthermore, appropriate training is essential and will be provided to Queensland Police Service officers in the use and application of the handheld scanning devices in accordance with the law. The expanded trial will be the subject of a further independent review in two years time.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the outstanding and dedicated work of Brett and Belinda Beasley and the foundation established in Jack Beasley's name for their fierce advocacy around the extension of wanding powers to assist the Queensland Police Service in preventing the type of senseless and unspeakable violence that took Jack's life all too soon. The message from the Jack Beasley Foundation is a simple but effective one: detect knives, save lives. I could not agree more and I commend this bill, Jack's Law, to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.25 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Community Support and Services Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Support and Services Committee.