




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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**POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.44 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It seems rather incongruous and perhaps even unusual that this particular bill was referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. Whilst my experience with the police has been limited—thank goodness; I have been on the right side of the law—the committee was pleased to give full and frank consideration to the bill given the workload of other portfolio committees under the parliamentary jurisdiction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will note that this is one of the rare occasions when there is no dissenting report or statement of reservation from the opposition members, which I would say is quite unusual. However, we believe that the opportunity to improve security and safety through these amendments to the Police Service Administration Act is very important. We believe that anything that assists law-and-order and protection people within this state should be supported. While I could talk about areas where we do not believe our police are supported enough by the current government, that is not a part of this debate tonight. This is a friendly debate.

In terms of the proposed changes to increase the safety and security of protective services officers, we live in a world that is increasingly driven by people with issues such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol related issues and all of those things. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to protect people who need shelter from those who are so affected. If we can put in place mechanisms to create a better way for the people charged with protecting us, we are all for those changes and additions. For instance, I refer to body worn cameras. While a few in society may see the use of body worn cameras as an intrusion into their privacy and so on, it is my strong view that those cameras are there for the protection of not only the officer but also people who may themselves be in difficulties. The cameras may protect them from making a mistake that could lead to greater difficulties in their future. I believe body worn cameras are a wonderful addition for those officers and that should be supported.

We note that the government, through the minister, should ensure that the department is adequately funded not only for the equipment but also for training. It is very important that proper training is adequately financed. There are members of the committee who are far more experienced in police matters than I will ever be and they know that it is absolutely necessary and important that the people who will be using this new gear are well trained before they are expected to embark on their duties under this new regime.

I understand removing the requirement for police officers to have an identity card issued under the Forestry Act, which is a major change. Over Easter I camped next to a national park where I saw some people from the national parks service. I could have been anybody—a nut bag or anything. I withdraw, Chair. For them to have the ability to identify people quickly and move them on if necessary is incredibly important for the efficient and effective oversight of those areas. The legislation authorises PSOs to seize contraband located in the performance of their duties, which I think is also a very important thing for them to be able to do.

As the chair mentioned earlier, there are provisions relating to prohibiting the impersonation of PSOs and clarifying the offences of assault or resist a PSO and obstruct a PSO. I note there will be alcohol and drug testing. That will have a positive outcome in terms of all of the officers involved in this change.

I can only recommend the passing of this bill. I certainly support any measures the government puts in place through this House to support our officers. In terms of police numbers—the shadow police minister raised this—I hope it is very clear that the transfer of PSOs does not contribute to the increased numbers of police we have been promised in the years ahead. I would hate to see the government fudging figures. I know that they would not do that sort of thing, but I mention it in case it crossed their mind. Obviously we should keep those folks separate in terms of the number of extra police promised by the government. These transferred officers should not be counted in that regard. I am supportive of the bill passing the parliament. I am greatly supportive of the police and of the new powers for PSOs.