




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

### **EVIDENCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.19 pm): I rise to speak on the Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which seeks to support our force in major trials by giving them further powers to enforce their evidentiary commitment to making a place a safe place. I cannot begin to offer the expert advice that the member for Macalister would offer as a former serving police officer.

As a layperson, I would certainly support through this House any additions that give certainty to outcomes of criminal prosecutions, not only for the prosecution but also for the defence. Making it clear means that judicial officers on both sides have a clear pathway to determining a right and proper outcome as the courts determine the outcomes of these prosecutions.

The body worn camera changes in this bill will be of enormous assistance in obtaining direct and verifiable evidence. This has been the case with many other pieces of legislation that have come to this House; for example, relating to environmental officers. It makes sure there is a proper and definitive record of what has occurred, both for the people involved in the case before the courts and for the people pursuing a line of argument in their prosecution.

The member for Macalister referred to training, which is an enormously important aspect of any new addition to the service, particularly in obtaining information in the right and proper manner. It has to be stressed that the people who are involved in protecting us—the ‘thin blue line’, as it were—require the right training and need to be afforded the best opportunity to deliver their outcomes with certainty and credibility in the judicial process. That is another important part of this legislation that we are pleased to support. We support at all times the opportunity for our Police Service to have better outcomes in their objective of keeping Queenslanders safe.

We recognise the wonderful job that our Police Service does. We do not want to impose further impediments, making it more difficult for them to deliver on their processes; however, we certainly wish to assist in every way possible in terms of giving them the opportunity to bring about a better decision-making process in the pursuit of legal justice in this state.

The member made mention of coroners in relation to DNA evidence. I had the great fortune of having Assistant Commissioner Brian Wilkins on the Gold Coast; I think he has moved on from the service these days. He was instrumental in bringing the Morcombe case to a conclusion—to their great credit. One of disappointing aspects of that particular case was the public disclosure of how it occurred, mainly because it will affect future opportunities for the force as miscreants will be aware of some of the great processes that the Police Service thought up to bring that horrible case to a conclusion. I congratulate Assistant Commissioner Brian Wilkins on his initiative in that particular case, bringing forward the DNA evidence that resulted, without a doubt, in apprehending the miscreant behind that terrible crime.

I understand that the legal fraternity is a bit concerned about some matters, as the legal fraternity always is. That is their role in this life, unfortunately: everyone who comes before the court is innocent. It reminds me of the *Wizard of Id*, to be honest.

**Mr Nicholls:** It might have saved your bacon a few times!

**Mr STEVENS:** I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. The lawyers of the world have a job to do; I respect that. As long as people keep paying, they will keep doing it. The fact of the matter is that they will have a lot more to work with, with the evidence that this bill allows them to gather. There will not be as many questionable decisions.

I refer to a matter that came before me when I was the member for Robina. The 'justice crew' from Bond University were adamant that a particular convicted killer in Surfers Paradise was innocent, mainly because he would not take his parole option. I was not totally convinced, because when we have a conviction in these matters it is supposed to be beyond reasonable doubt. This evidence will help put decisions beyond reasonable doubt. They were asking for new DNA testing of all the evidence. The parents of the girl killed in the toilets at Surfers Paradise were in South Africa and were terribly aggrieved over the whole situation. I did go to the attorney-general at the time; I think it was Cameron Dick. He agreed to do a retesting of DNA under our new testing regime. Guess what? The results came back confirming the previous results. A lot of people in jail say they did not do it—even in their own minds they did not do it—when they have done it.

The additional evidence we will gather as a result of this legislation will see us take a giant step forward in bringing a lot of matters to a conclusion. I support this bill 100 per cent. We support the agencies working collaboratively to bring about outcomes that are defensible in our judicial process—that is incredibly important—and counter the notion that people who did not do it might be in jail. We might get a few more admissions from people who are in jail. The provisions in the bill relating to evidence, particularly in domestic violence and so on, will help bring about resolution of those matters. It is very important. I support the bill.