




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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**POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to support the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. Before I go into detail I would like to echo the sentiment of everyone in the chamber and say how grateful we are in my electorate to have the serving men and women of the Queensland Police Service. As someone once said, they are the thin blue line that separates order from chaos. This is true whether they are dealing with crime, natural catastrophes or their everyday policing duties.

The purpose of this bill is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service, hence the title, by providing the requisite legislative authority to streamline operations through the reduction of unnecessary administrative processes and travel while increasing productivity by improving the detection, prevention and disruption of crime. The bill seeks to achieve this by authorising senior police officers to witness specified affidavits, reducing the need to attend a justice of the peace or a commissioner for declarations. After speaking to some JPs in my electorate I know how much time and hassle this enhancement will save not only for the Police Service but also for our hardworking community volunteers.

In regional Queensland the police are possibly the only public servants for miles, so this is a really important piece of legislation. Instead of waking up a JP at three in the morning to swear an oath of service or declare or affirm the veracity of the information contained in the document, senior and experienced officers can now handle the process themselves. The police do not need to spend hours driving around trying to find an available JP.

The bill will also allow search warrants to be sent to applicant police officers via electronic means, changing the way access orders to seize digital devices are applied, reducing loopholes that would prevent officers from accessing devices in various circumstances. This is really important. The Queensland Police Service has a wonderful history of foiling digital crime. Changing the definition of a critical incident will enable the Queensland Police Service to provide better oversight of an officer's conduct. The bill will also allow authorised special constables and non-state police officers to undertake their duties in a similar fashion to Queensland Police Service officers, reducing red tape for cross-border actions and staffing of major events, disasters and terrorism incidents.

It will extend the time for the temporary possession of a weapon to six months before application to acquire the weapon must be submitted. I know there are some delays with weapons licensing. Hopefully improved efficiencies will have a positive effect. It will also allow trained civilian technical officers to determine the category of weapons for the purposes of providing evidence to the courts, providing better workload management. It will enable licensed firearm dealers to better facilitate the permanent firearms amnesty in Queensland by retaining and dealing with weapons anonymously surrendered without the need to transport them to a police station where an authorised officer from Weapons Licensing, QPS approves the licensed dealer to do so. They have a lot of trouble with finding space for these things.

We all know the Queensland Police Service has done an outstanding job making sure our communities are safe throughout the pandemic. We have seen our police officers take on extra duties, manning border checkpoints, assisting health authorities, taking on the border pass system, giving up time away from home, away from friends and family, to take on extra shifts to keep our community safe.

I thank the member for Morayfield, the Palaszczuk Labor government's police minister, for alerting the House when the QPS nicked Australia's most wanted criminal recently. Our Police Service is a world leader in combatting crime. I hope that this legislation provides the service with the means to work in a more efficient and effective manner by reducing the amount of time that officers spend away from loved ones whilst still providing a world-class service to the people of Queensland.

This legislation seeks to build on the strong foundations of the existing reforms and support provided by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This Labor government started the current term by providing a record police budget—the biggest boost to policing in 30 years—through the addition of 2,025 extra police personnel over the next five years. On top of that, the government is providing 5,000 new QLiTE devices, 4,500 extra body-worn cameras and 250 new police vehicles over the next five years. This will allow our service to remain agile, flexible and responsive.

The Palaszczuk Labor government have launched the Australian-first Exit program for former outlaw motorcycle gang members who want to leave their gang. This move is in addition to tough new legislation to reduce youth offending and recidivism as well as expanding Project Booyah and the School Respect program across the state. The aim is to stop juvenile offending before it starts. New anti-hooning laws have been passed to ensure registered owners of vehicles are responsible for their operation—unless they can prove otherwise. Mobile police beats have been deployed around the state to boost the presence of police in the community and to strengthen frontline interaction.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has introduced the toughest parole laws in Australia for child killers and multiple murderers. In addition, it has introduced harsh penalties for individuals who attack faithful crime-fighting police dogs and horses. In my own electorate, construction has nearly finished on the new \$9 million police station. It will provide our officers with the infrastructure they need to get the job done. There have been delays due to COVID and the floods. I cannot wait for it to be open.

The Palaszczuk Labor government acted swiftly to guarantee the safety of Queenslanders in response to the pandemic. It is providing police with the necessary legislative amendments so they can keep our communities safe. This government makes no apology for supporting the needs of our Police Service. I thank our Police Service, and I acknowledge our justices of the peace and commissioners for declarations for their voluntary work in our community. I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and the stakeholders who contributed to these sensible changes. This legislation is yet another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government getting things done for the people of Queensland, especially those who are working in our best interests. I commend this bill to the House.