




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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**CORRECTIVE SERVICES (EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND SECURITY) AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.59 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Corrective Services (Emerging Technologies and Security) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill seeks to support the safety of corrective services staff through a range of amendments that address emerging threats and harness opportunities. This includes the threats and opportunities emerging from the use of technologies.

The bill proposes the creation of two new offences designed to improve security and deter behaviour that is presenting significant risks to the safety and security in the correctional environment. There is a new offence of being in a restricted area of a corrective services facility without a reasonable excuse. The bill defines a restricted area as the rooftop of each facility. The bill also allows for additional restricted areas to be prescribed by regulation in the future, recognising the ever changing nature of the custodial environment. A maximum penalty of two years imprisonment for accessing a restricted area ensures a safe and secure correctional environment by deterring this type of behaviour into the future and reflects the seriousness of the offence.

The House may recall the riots at the Capricornia Correctional Centre in October 2021 where there was extensive unrest. Approximately 70 prisoners broke into the garden shed and accessed mower fuel and gardening equipment. They also entered other secure areas. I would again like to put on record my thanks to all corrective services staff who were involved in that riot for keeping our community safe and bringing the riot under control without serious injuries. In mid-February I was fortunate to be at the commissioner's unit citation presentation where these officers and staff were recognised for their outstanding work—well done.

The use of or attempted use of drones at or above corrective services facilities and youth detention centres is an area that is also addressed. The drones are already prohibited items within corrective services facilities; however, this does not prohibit drones from being flown in airspaces above the facilities.

As a government, we are committed to the safety and security of adult corrective services facilities and youth detention centres. While we have physical barriers in place such as perimeter fencing along with operational procedures like the searching of prisoners and visitors upon entry, this ensures safety at ground level. We have seen in recent years a new threat emerging over and above the perimeter fencing. Drones are being flown over corrective services facilities and youth detention centres. They present significant risk to the safety of the correctional environment and to youth detention centres as they can carry contraband, including illicit drugs, into the facility or centre. Also the drone can capture photographs and videos to survey secure infrastructure. They can also be weaponised or used to create a nuisance or distraction. For a youth detention centre a drone could be capturing footage of children.

New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have all introduced offences to prohibit the use of drones in airspaces above or outside of a prison. New South Wales and Victoria have included offences prohibiting the use of drones in the airspace above youth detention centres. The bill will ensure Queensland is aligned with those other states by introducing a new offence to prohibit a person from operating a drone at or above a corrective services facility or youth detention centre, including the land on which the facility is located, without a reasonable excuse. The offence carries a maximum penalty of up to two years in prison, providing a strong deterrent to behaviour that threatens the safety and security of a closed correctional environment.

The new offences also form part of the broader work agencies are undertaking to tackle the rising use of drones. For Queensland Corrective Services this includes the deployment and exploration of additional antidrone technology across the state.

The bill provides clear authority for the use of CCTV, body worn cameras and other emerging technologies to monitor threats and maintain safety in corrective services facilities. The bill will facilitate a trial of X-ray body scanners and a future roll out of body-scanning technology. The initial trial of body scanners will be at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. Body-scanning technology will primarily be used to detect contraband through searches of detainees, visitors and staff members. The use of X-ray body scanners provides a less invasive means of detecting contraband compared to alternatives such as strip searches.

The use of X-ray body-scanning technology in corrective services facilities in Queensland provide the ability to improve detection and prevent contraband from entering facilities, supporting the safety of corrective services officers and prisoners. The capability of this technology expands to the detection of non-metallic objects on or inside the body. Put simply, this level of detection is something that current search equipment and methods in use cannot deliver.

The Queensland public may already be familiar with the use of body-scanning technology at airports when travelling by plane. This technology is highly effective in the detection of illegal items. I commend the bill to the House.