




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2022 AND THE POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.32 pm): I am pleased to rise to contribute to these two bills. There are many issues that I want to discuss in relation to these bills. Firstly, there are some huge, serious issues that have been put before this parliament. Once again, the opposition is going to be truncated in debate. That is also of serious concern to me. There are many issues that I want to discuss—hooning, QFES, child sex offenders, drugs and the new police officers. They all warrant much time and debate in this House. The debate should not be truncated, but the government always does it. It is obvious that those on the other side of this House simply have no clue when it comes to amending legislation.

Let us talk about hooning. I have been writing to the Minister for Transport for many years in relation to the very serious issues relating to hooning in the Nanango electorate. I have just recently written both to the police minister and the transport minister in relation to the blatant, frequent and ongoing hooning which occurs fortnightly at the intersection of Wivenhoe-Somerset Road and Northbrook Parkway. It has been explained by those constituents who live around this area that up to 40 cars assemble for about four hours on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday for these burnout events. These events are well organised. They bring marquees, eskies, chairs and people and then leave their mess on the side of the road. They upload the videos. They burn their tyres. They leave the tyres on the side of the road. It is an absolute disgrace. Oil is discarded into drains and cars catch fire, creating significant bushfire threats to our local properties. Like I say, residents are left to clean up the mess. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads has notified me that he has no funds to install any anti-hooning measures at that location. That is very disappointing.

I turn to the issue of bushfire threats. I would like to speak in relation to the new offence of assault of our volunteers and officers of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Recently I was contacted by one of my hardworking constituents, Mr Ray Petroni, who wanted to discuss a recent assault on one of our local firies. That again exposed the gap in protections for our rural fire volunteers when going about their duties. I agreed with him that more should be done. That is exactly why the LNP put forward in 2017—not even at the last election; it was our policy as well in 2020—a policy regarding mandatory sentences for anyone who seriously assaults an emergency services worker such as an ambulance officer or a firefighter. The LNP therefore, of course, supports the amendments in this section of the bill which are intended to protect those hardworking officers and volunteers. We could only hope that the Palaszczuk government had sat up and listened eight years ago. Again, it is very tardy in response.

Do I think the obligations in relation to child sex offenders go far enough? No, I do not. This is a policy concerning people who commit sex offences against children. Like many others in this House who have spoken on this bill, I have defended in a criminal court matters in relation to some of these issues, and it disgusts me. In fact, it is one of the reasons I decided to never again defend in criminal law. I believe that people who use a carriage service or look at, touch or do anything that interferes with

a child should be reporting for the rest of their lives. I support anything that can strengthen protections and give our hardworking police officers more resources in relation to these lowest of low people. Certainly, more needs to be done.

I cannot believe that the Palaszczuk government has introduced into this House provisions to enable diversion in relation to hardcore drugs. I note the contribution of the member for Currumbin—it was a very good contribution—in relation to what must have happened behind the scenes in the Palaszczuk government for the left to get its way on drug diversion for hard drugs. It is simply unbelievable to me, as someone who travelled the length and breadth of this state talking to victims, families, parents, grandparents, wives, husbands, children, ambulance officers, nurses, doctors and police officers who have had to live with a partner or a family member subjected to an addiction to the drug ice.

We held those ice forums because we know that in regional Queensland ice is everywhere. For the government to send the message that it is okay to have one gram of ice on your person and then be offered drug diversion, not once and not twice but three times, is unacceptable to me. It is unacceptable to the community out there that is fighting day in and day out to keep their people safe. I have been told that that equates to 10 hits of ice. The experts say that people can be addicted after one hit of ice. Imagine what 10 hits can do. Imagine what 30 hits can do. For the government to propose to expand the definition of a minor drug offence by including hardcore drugs such as ice, cocaine and heroin simply shows that this government does not listen to the people of Queensland who are affected by drug use.

It is a horrendous, insidious crime that makes the job of our hardworking police officers even harder. No wonder they are stretched to the limit. We have a government that thinks it is okay to tell my children and tell my constituents that these drugs are minor drugs. Fentanyl, ice, cocaine and heroin are not minor drugs. They are not minor drugs and they should not be in people's possession. Someone in my community should not be in possession of a gram of heroin and think it is okay because they are going to get diversion. Does diversion work? Yes, it works for minor drugs, but minor drugs are not heroin, ice and cocaine.

We have Palaszczuk government members saying it should be a health issue. Of course it is a health issue. We have a health system in this state that is in crisis. It goes from crisis to crisis. We have a government in chaos. They cannot get enough police officers, they cannot get enough nurses and they cannot get enough doctors and yet it is okay to let more drugs onto our streets. The reason there is a drug epidemic in this state is that we have a government that is soft on crime. They do not give our hardworking police officers the resources and the laws they need to keep us safe. That is what is happening in this state.

I welcome the fact that we are going to bring back into the force some of our hardworking police officers—that is exactly what we should doing—and make them special constables. The reason we have to call on our retired police officers is that this incompetent Palaszczuk government has failed to plan. They are lurching from crisis to crisis. That is why we have the chaos we have in the health system.

Unfortunately, our hardworking police officers do not have enough hours in the day due to a lack of resources and our laws. That is why they want laws to be tougher. They do not want us to come into this House and say, 'Let's give drugs to our children. It is okay up to a gram.' That is the message we are sending our children. If those opposite are going to say that ice, cocaine, heroin and fentanyl are minor drugs then that is the message they are sending to our children.

It is not okay to be in possession of a gram of any of these drugs. It is not okay to say, 'If you have it, you get diversion'—not once, not twice but three times. There we have it—30 hits of ice and someone is going to get drug diversion. I can tell members that we need more rehab centres. That is what we need. We need to get these drugs off our streets and protect our children.