




Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**

**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2023

**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (JACK'S LAW) AMENDMENT BILL;  
POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (6.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to what is a really important reform in Queensland. As others have articulated, on 13 December 2019, 17-year-old Jack Beasley was out with mates in Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast when he was assaulted and suffered a knife wound. Despite the heroic efforts of witnesses and paramedics who arrived on the scene, Jack died as a result of those injuries. This was just three months prior to his 18th birthday. I can imagine the shadow milestones that have occurred for Jack's family since—Jack's birthdays, graduation, watching Jack grow into his career, perhaps travel, fall in love. These are moments that Jack's parents, Brett and Belinda Beasley, will never have. As Belinda conveyed in her victim impact statement, which was relayed in court—

Jack was a son, a brother, a grandson and a great-grandson, a nephew, a cousin and a friend to many.

Jack was cheeky, fun-loving and an easygoing kid that loved life, his family and friends so much.

Jack was kind, so very loyal, protective, compassionate, hardworking and so much more.

No family should ever have to endure this type of grief.

Our government has introduced this legislation so that other families do not have to experience that terrible knock on the door from police. The bill proposes to extend and expand the trial which occurred in the Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise safe night precincts, where Queensland police utilised handheld scanners, or wands, to detect the unlawful possession of knives. This bill extends that trial by two years and expands the locations to include all 15 safe night precincts in Queensland as well as public transport stations and public transport vehicles. The laws are named in honour of Jack and they reflect the heartfelt and sincere efforts of his parents, Brett and Belinda, for Jack's legacy to be a safer community. Since his passing, many of Jack's family and friends have come together. They have created the Jack Beasley Foundation and they have advocated for change, particularly around security and knife detection, to help prevent the senseless violence that is taking place in relation particularly to young people and the carrying of knives.

In response to this advocacy and to the broader concerns around knife crime, the Palaszczuk government initiated a 12-month wanding trial in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts, commencing in May 2021. The trial was aimed at reducing the opportunity for serious violent offending involving knives and other serious weapons and as a means of preventing senseless and violent attacks in public spaces. Our government sought an independent review of the Gold Coast trial. This review was conducted at the 12-month mark by Griffith University and it made several recommendations which have been incorporated into Jack's Law. The success of the wanding trial was discussed by Griffith University reviewers during the parliamentary committee inquiry as follows—

... 68 bladed articles were recorded as having been seized by police. ... Of those, 8 were household knives, 59 were other types of knives, and 1 was an axe.

...

Other weapons seized included a baton, 2 hand tools, 5 knuckle dusters, 1 screwdriver, 1 handgun replica, and one other type of unidentified tool.

It is really terrifying to think that these weapons could have otherwise been taken out into a safe night precinct and would have gone undetected or, worse, been used to threaten or inflict violence on other people. The expansion of the trial to all 15 safe night precincts and public transport infrastructure recognises that these are the areas of greater risk in relation to carrying and concealment of knives and weapons. These are locations that attract a really high volume of people. There is a lot of movement. There is a lot of interaction between members of the public, so I think most of us would recognise the value in expanding the trial to those locations.

In relation to the amendments circulated by the member for Burdekin, while I recognise the good intentions of the member in wanting to see this trial made permanent now, I will not be supporting the amendment. I recognise Jack's family in the gallery. I have met with Jack's family and I think it is important and fair that people get to know where we stand on these issues.

Ultimately, we need more evidence on what elements of this law are working and which, if any, are not so that we can adjust and amend them. That was the finding from the independent evaluation. At the public parliamentary committee hearing, Professor Janet Ransley from Griffith University attested to the limitations that were associated with the evidence gathered from the trial when she said that it was only a year. A year seems like a long time for many things but, in terms of detecting the trends in crime and offending, it is not enough. There are natural differences that occur year on year and you cannot be sure that any differences that you are seeing relate to an actual intervention as opposed to those blips that we can see in statistical data. Therefore, I do stand with the member for Burdekin in wanting to see permanent changes that will ensure our streets are safe; however, to deliver that we need to make sure that what we are proposing to make permanent will work and will actually save lives. That is why at this moment I cannot support that amendment.

I wish that we did not need this legislation at all. People, particularly our young people, who are so disproportionately impacted by knife crime, have the right to move about the streets without the threat of violence. I truly hope and believe that expanding this trial will deliver on that. I commend the bill to the House.