




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

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

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.01 pm): I rise to support the passage of the cognate bills, specifically the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 that was introduced to the House on 30 November by the police minister and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. The committee's report was tabled 17 February. I ask all members to examine that report, especially the committee's recommendation that the bill be passed.

As stated in the minister's second reading speech, the House would be aware that the bill makes amendments to: strengthen child protection laws; enable the further investigation of cybercrime; make clearer and enhance the process of using civilian participants in controlled activities in limited circumstances; and strengthen laws and increase penalties to further deter dangerous hooning. Members may not be fully aware of the very unusual—I am being kind here—past decision by this House in 2014 to decrease the reporting periods for those who had committed, and were found guilty of, serious sexual and other offences against children. This severely mistaken decision made Queensland's reporting periods the shortest in Australia; that is, for the purpose of protecting their state's children, every other state made their reporting periods longer than Queensland's. I notice that the shadow minister made reference to leading the state, but he made no reference to the fact that before 2014 we were leading the country and we were taken backwards in 2014. Instead of reducing reporting periods, as happened in 2014, this bill will increase the reporting periods designed to protect children.

Mr Anthony Brown, of the Policy and Performance Division of the Queensland Police Service, representing the Commissioner, stated in our hearings that reporting periods are 'an important pillar for the protection of Queensland children'. The Queensland Child Protection Offender Registry seeks to monitor offenders who demonstrate a propensity to commit offences against children. As of 31 October 2022 there were 3,971 reportable offenders being managed by the registry. Between 1 January and 31 October, 881 reportable child sex offenders were charged with 2,183 offences for breaching their reporting obligations. Some of these were very serious offences, which shows they were in danger of hurting children again.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission stated that it welcomes additional safeguards for children. Members may be aware there was research conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology in 2018, Prescott and Rockoff in 2011 and Agan and Prescott in 2014 which found that registration schemes in the US resulted in a significant decrease in the overall number of sex offences. The QLS supported the principle of reporting periods and stated—

A reporting regime is absolutely essential for community safety and to enable police to properly target repeat offenders and gather necessary intelligence to provide protection to the community.

They further said, 'I do not think there is any argument.' Apparently, in 2014 there was. While having some concern, the QLS noted that reoffending was often connected with other stressful events that can equally happen early in reporting periods or later in reporting periods and that picking up those events further out was valuable in protecting children.

We did not hear from the shadow minister as to why the LNP made Queensland the state with the shortest reporting periods. Was it just to save money? I do not know. We will no doubt hear from LNP MPs who did vote to make this change. I do note it meant that 1,700 offenders were no longer being monitored. In his second reading speech the minister showed that offenders are many times more likely to reoffend than someone who has not been convicted.

I also strongly support the changes to further strengthen hooning laws. When I reread the transcript I noted that I made a rather unusual remark in the section discussing hooning. I said, 'This is something I am red-hot angry about.' Well, that is what I said at that time, but upon reflection I am still red-hot angry about it. This builds upon our laws to reverse the onus to the registered owner and other laws that we put in place to allow emergency services to cut up hoon cars. We know how antisocial and dangerous these activities are. In my local area I work with police and the Logan City Council to assist them in gathering evidence.

The bill creates a new offence that would prohibit a person from: willingly participating in a group activity involving a motor vehicle—which we do know is a significant problem in Boronia Heights, Logan Village and Yarrabilba—being used to commit a speed trial, racing, burnout or other hooning offence; organising, promoting or encouraging another person to participate in or view a group activity involving a motor vehicle being used to commit a hooning offence; and filming, photographing or publishing a film or photograph of a motor vehicle being used for a hooning offence for the purpose of organising, promoting or encouraging a group activity involving a motor vehicle being used to commit a hooning offence. Importantly, this bill also makes it an offence for those who wilfully lose traction but do not necessarily create smoke, closing an important gap, especially when the road is wet and it is even more dangerous to wilfully lose traction.

I have worked with the police minister and I have asked local police what they need. I am proud to have played a small part in these laws, which support safer streets and reduce antisocial activities. I frankly could not believe that the shadow minister, the member for Burdekin, has done nothing as a private member to target hooning. The minister has introduced more well-thought-out laws to target hooning than any police minister in the history of this place. I guess the opposition thought that, to paraphrase someone, if you are going to mislead, mislead in a big way.

Police who are asked to retire at 60 are often fit and active and have great skills and corporate knowledge. Ensuring that they are of use once they have retired is important and something that I have spoken to the police minister about. In fact, the member for Hervey Bay and I put this forward as the 'Ninderry amendment' because we thought he must be of some use after he leaves this place. No?

Mr Stevens: No chance.

Mr POWER: The member for Mermaid Beach suggests he would not be any use for the police afterwards. We will just have to agree to disagree on that one.

Although this next point was not in the bill that we examined, I want to speak very briefly about the new approach of maintaining drug possession as an offence while focusing on directing that person to rehabilitation. We heard the shadow police minister talk about Jenny, and I have encountered many such stories where the act of engaging them in rehabilitation was the thing that changed their behaviour that had been destructive for themselves, their family and their communities. Equally important, and it should not be missed, this bill focuses on getting police to target those who are selling to users like Jenny.

There is really important rehabilitation work being done by organisations like Lives Lived Well in Logan, and I will continue to support them. I think we need more funding and I will push for that. I want to see those same resources that go to the police to deal with those very minor drug possessions—and that takes them off the front line for so long—being focused on those who are doing that selling. I know the police maintain this as an offence and do not in any way condone it, as was the misleading statement from the shadow police minister. This bill further increases the penalty for those who have serious amounts and are doing the active selling of drugs. In that way, this will make a difference for people like Jenny and the people I have met. It will push them towards making a change in their lives, while targeting those who are selling drugs and making it more restricted. In that way, I support the bill and the amendments. I endorse the bill to the House.