



Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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)

Second Reading

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (2.40 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

The Community Support and Services Committee has considered both of these bills and has made a number of recommendations, including that the bills be passed. I table the government's response to those recommendations.

Tabled paper: Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 27, 57th Parliament—Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022, government response [396](#).

Tabled paper: Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 26, 57th Parliament—Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022, government response [397](#).

On 17 February 2023, the committee tabled their report on the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022 and recommended that the bill be passed. The second recommendation by the committee has three parts in relation to the expansion of the wandering trial to include public transport vehicles and public transport stations: firstly, that all police regions are adequately resourced and that police officers are supported with training; secondly, that the Queensland Police Service implement a clear, appropriate and concise public awareness campaign in cooperation with Queensland's public transport providers; and, thirdly, that the independent review also examine the operation of the wandering trial, specifically in relation to public transport vehicles and stations.

The committee's third recommendation is that a public education program is developed in consultation with key stakeholders in targeted areas around Queensland relevant to local safe night precinct areas and communities consistent with the extension of the wandering trial. The committee's fourth recommendation is that the extended and expanded trial be independently evaluated. I can advise the House that the Queensland Police Service has already commenced procuring metal detection devices and there is sufficient funding and resources to support the expansion of the trial to all safe night precincts and relevant public transport vehicles and stations.

The Queensland Police Service will also conduct a public awareness campaign and consult with stakeholders so that the public can be educated about the expanded wandering trial. Finally, the Queensland Police Service will initiate an independent review of this trial with the terms of reference determined in consultation with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

I will take this opportunity to express my thanks to the committee for its support of these bills and to the officials from the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services who made themselves available and assisted the committee in their consideration into the bill. I also extend my thanks to every person and organisation that submitted to the committee or participated in the development of these bills.

In particular, I would like to thank two people who are in the gallery right now, Brett and Belinda Beasley, who, with others, have worked tirelessly in establishing and running the Jack Beasley Foundation. As the House knows, Jack's Law is named after their 17-year-old son, Jack Beasley, who was tragically killed in a knife attack on the Gold Coast in 2019. Their foundation's motto 'Detect Knives, Save Lives' is exactly what Jack's Law is about and is needed to combat knife crime and the terrible consequences that can arise from one moment of senseless violence.

I have been advised by the Queensland Police Service that they are eagerly awaiting the passage of Jack's Law. Police will be ready with resourcing, training and a public awareness campaign to support the extended and expanded trial to use handheld scanners to detect knives. I have seen firsthand the professionalism in which the Gold Coast police use these extraordinary police powers when they stop and scan people for knives in either of the two safe night precincts at Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise. This trial was welcomed and embraced by the Gold Coast community who saw it as a positive step in reducing violence. The expansion of the trial will continue this collaborative approach by working alongside the community to combat knife crime. I can also advise that the expanded trial will be subject to a further independent review during the two-year trial period.

If a person chooses to unlawfully carry a knife in a public place, then they are putting the community at risk of serious harm. This is not good enough, and the bill will directly address this. As I mentioned when I introduced the bill back in November last year, Jack's Law will extend the trial for police to use handheld scanners to detect knives for another two years. It will also expand its application to all 15 Queensland safe night precincts and public transport stations, including public transport vehicles.

On 3 February 2022, the committee made three recommendations when tabling its report on its examination of the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), the first recommendation being that this bill should be passed. The second recommendation was that the Police Service Administration Act 1990 be continually monitored to ensure it remains effective and efficient and, where improvements are identified, consideration is given to amendments that maintain optimal operational efficiency. I am satisfied that the Queensland Police Service continually evaluates its governing legislation and actively considers where improvements may be made. I endorse this practice and the government accepts the recommendation made by the committee.

The committee has recommended that the government continues to engage with other Australian jurisdictions to ensure a consistent, efficient and safe approach to weapons licensing practices. This government's first priority is the safety of the members of our community. In our recent history, we have very stark reminders of the dangers that firearms can represent to human life. We must take all necessary steps to do what we can to ensure these tragedies do not happen again.

This government, as party to the National Firearms Agreement, has recognised the importance of a national firearms register. This government has been in consultation with leaders of the Commonwealth, states and territories to obtain their support for the creation of a national firearms register and intends to continue to advocate for this reform until it is established.

In relation to the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Bill, its purpose is to deliver efficiencies and improvements for the Queensland Police Service. The bill introduces a range of changes, each of which will bring incremental improvements. I will emphasise that small changes can lead to big outcomes. The collective impact of amendments in this bill will be significant. For example, one tranche of these amendments affects the new police discipline system established through significant reform by this government. One constant criticism of the old police discipline system was the delay in finalising matters. This is addressed in the new discipline system, where there is a statutory requirement for a disciplinary proceeding against a subject officer to start within one year from the date the ground of disciplinary action arose. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, and they are detailed in the bill.

The bill will also provide for the immediate dismissal of a police officer or police recruit upon being sentenced to a period of imprisonment by an Australian court for an offence, including a suspended imprisonment sentence. This amendment will be strict but also reasonable. This amendment sends a strong message to our police officers and our community. Our community supports our police; our government supports our police. We recognise that our police do a difficult and occasionally dangerous job. We respect them for their professionalism and the high standards that they maintain, but if a police officer is in jail then the Police Service is not the right place for them.

The bill will also improve upon offence provisions employed to protect the confidential information held by the Queensland Police Service. This will be achieved through increasing the maximum penalty for this offence to 100 penalty units or two years imprisonment and expanding its applicability to a wider range of persons, including contractors, subcontractors and recruits performing a function for the Queensland Police Service as well as other persons who access the confidential information held by the Queensland Police Service as authorised under an act, law or arrangement with the Queensland Police Service.

In considering this bill, I also endorse the comments made by Acting Deputy Commissioner Shane Chelepy before the Community Support and Services Committee. He said—

These amendments have to be examined in their entirety, not in isolation, to determine their impact. Collectively, these amendments will significantly enhance the operations of the QPS and create a range of efficiencies that will serve our officers, our organisation and the community well into the future.

Before I conclude, I would like to return to Jack's Law. As I said, Jack's parents, Belinda and Brett, are in the gallery today. It is not often that something so overwhelmingly positive for the broader community can follow something so terrible as the loss of someone's life. But thanks in a big way to the efforts of Brett, Belinda and the Jack Beasley Foundation, we all find ourselves here today with Jack's Law, a law that will benefit all Queenslanders, a law that supports safer communities, and a law that is testament to the very best of human qualities—Brett and Belinda's capacity to rise above their personal heartache to achieve a lasting legacy for both their son and the broader community. In honour of Jack, I commend the bills to the House.