




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

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

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (5.10 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all members who have contributed to the cognate debate on the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022 and the Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022. Jack's Law is, I believe, a watershed moment for community safety. It is nation-leading and it will save lives. Jack's Law will help stop those senseless moments of madness that lead to a knife crime tragedy.

I note again the presence of Jack's parents, Brett and Belinda, in the gallery. Brett and Belinda remind us all about what makes our state great. They remind us that this place, this parliament, exists to represent the will of the people. Jack's Law is not only another foundation stone supporting community safety. Jack's Law reminds us what is possible when the community, police, government and the parliament work together. Brett and Belinda, I know how much you have worked to make Jack's Law a reality.

Jack's Law will provide police with the power to stop and scan people for knives in safe night precincts, public transport stations and public transport vehicles. In simple terms, Jack's Law is about detecting the unlawful possession of knives by people in public spaces. It is actually more than that. It is about keeping our young and vulnerable people safe when they are out in public with their friends. It is about ensuring everyone is able to enjoy our entertainment precincts throughout Queensland. It is about ensuring public transport is as safe as we can make it.

I will now address some specific issues raised during the debate. The opposition's amendments in respect of the bill are not supported by the government. This government is, and always will be, transparent and accountable to the people of Queensland and the two-year trial period provisions will ensure the legislation can be reviewed within that period and, where applicable, can be agile enough in order to be fine-tuned to any learnings from any review.

Some members have raised resourcing for the police in respect of the expanded trial. I can assure the House that the Queensland Police Service is ready to roll out the resources and the training necessary to implement the bill's provision should it be passed. Acting Deputy Commissioner Mark Wheeler, who is the responsible officer for ensuring the rollout of the wandering trial, has assured me of this. Already there are sufficient handheld scanning wands to appropriately resource police officers for the rollout. Those officers will be further supported by additional appropriate training and the provision of operational policy and procedures to carry out the expanded wandering in accordance with the bill.

Supplementing the resourcing of our police is a targeted public awareness campaign informing the public of the trial and the minimal impact it will have on them. Some members raised the ability of the Queensland Police Service to respond to incidents outside safe night precincts should the bill be passed. I can assure the community that the Queensland Police Service will continue to maintain its

current policing capabilities both inside and outside of all 15 safe night precincts should the bill be passed. I can tell honourable members now that the Queensland Police Service has an effective, permanent, business-as-usual arrangement model to professionally police all 15 safe night precincts. The Queensland Police Service is achieving this now and will continue to do so by working collaboratively with the community and with other government agencies such as the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation to police licensed premises both inside and outside of all safe night precincts.

The Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022 covers a wide span of issues and facets within the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Some of these amendments are innovative and novel such as the immediate dismissal provisions for imprisoned police officers. Other amendments improve on existing provisions or remove provisions that have become outdated or redundant. While these amendments are diverse in nature, they have a commonality: they all make incremental improvements to the foundation legislation of the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Taken collectively, the amendments in this bill represent a significant efficiency gain.

I have noted the members' comments about the Weapons Act amendments within the bill being logical and the impact they may have on the time taken in approving weapons licensing applications. Weapons Licensing has the responsibility for managing the regulation of weapons and weapons licences in Queensland. This is a difficult undertaking given the amount of work that this unit is responsible for. As of 12 March 2023 Weapons Licensing was responsible for over one million registered weapons and the number of weapons licences issued in Queensland was almost 220,000. These large numbers illustrate the challenges faced in responding to each and every application that is made.

The Queensland Police Service has been meeting this challenge and has been driving down the processing times of these applications by reducing the time frames for some applications by up to nine weeks since August. Reductions in processing times have also been recorded in relation to permits to acquire, which have been reduced by approximately 20 days since August. Significant gains have been made also in respect of processing firearm transfers and notices of disposal. From 30 August last year to 12 March this year form 10 firearm transfers had dropped by 71 per cent and notices of disposal had dropped by 80 per cent.

I want to take this opportunity to commend the hardworking officers and support staff of the Weapons Licensing branch. It is clear that Weapons Licensing has been working hard to meet community expectations by quickly processing applications that are directed to it, and there is a clear downwards trend in any delays in respect of processing times. This government will also play its part. The Palaszczuk government has allocated funding to specifically upgrade the weapons licensing management systems used to regulate firearms and weapons licences. We have also taken the added step of making amendments in this bill. This bill will help Weapons Licensing drive down processing times even further by recognising the capability of all staff working at the Weapons Licensing branch. This bill allows appropriately qualified staff to be delegated the licensing functions of an authorised officer, which will further enhance efficiencies by increasing the number of authorised officers available to consider applications.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Brett and Belinda Beasley, who have worked tirelessly both in a private capacity and as part of the Jack Beasley Foundation, which focuses on education and driving change regarding youth violence involving knives. I would like to thank them for also allowing us to name this important piece of legislation after their son Jack. We all sincerely thank you.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel who have worked in the development of these bills, in particular, from the Queensland Police Service, Acting Deputy Commissioner Mark Wheeler; Superintendent Rhys Wildman; Inspector Jim Munckton from the Gold Coast and also Senior Sergeants Brad Rix and Paul Hunter, who are the officers in charge of the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach police stations on the Gold Coast—very important people when it came to the initial trial—Senior Sergeant Craig Smith from the Queensland Police Service Railway Squad; and the Legislation Branch officers Senior Sergeants Ian Carroll, John 'Hendo' Henderson—I like to get his nickname in there—Principal Strategy Officer Jessica Mudryk; and Director Tony Brown; and from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Acting Superintendent Mark Halverson, Acting Executive Director Jane Houston, Chief Superintendent Tony Johnstone and Acting Director Carly Osborne.

Our community places our police and emergency services personnel into a special category. We hold them in respect and acknowledge the essential work they do to keep our community safe. We turn to them when we are facing our darkest moments, when we are facing a natural disaster or are a victim

of crime. We know that we can turn to our police and emergency services for help. Because we turn to them when we are at our weakest, we need our police and emergency services to be at their strongest. Our police and emergency services workers do not need to be burdened with unnecessarily complicated legislative frameworks. They do not need a difficult job to be exacerbated through outdated provisions or complex legislative processes. The Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) supports both the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services by improving the effectiveness of their legislative frameworks so that these agencies can focus on their primary task of keeping the community safe.

My final comments are reserved for Jack's Law. We must never forget the tragic consequences of knife violence and the sadness of young lives ended too early. This bill, in conjunction with the good work undertaken by the Jack Beasley Foundation, is a positive response to these awful circumstances and those suffered by other Queenslanders. This bill's positivity flows from the very real public safety benefits that arise through providing our hardworking men and women in the Police Service with another law enforcement tool to work alongside the community to continue to keep us all safe. Jack's Law is Jack Beasley's law, but soon it will also be Queensland law. That is Jack's legacy—a law bearing his name, a law for the safety of all of us. I commend the bills to the House.