




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.11 pm): I will be speaking mostly to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 that was referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. It added to our workload and broadened our perspective on these matters. Members will notice that there was no statement of reservation on this bill from the LNP members. This is rather unusual, but the LNP supports any measure that increases the powers for the police to enforce the blue line in Queensland. We will never resile from that position. We would oppose any matters that weaken that position and that may be brought to the House through amendments. We are an opposition waiting to go into government to bring about changes that support the police in their activities to prevent the increase in crime across Queensland.

As we have heard, the major changes in relation to the child protection were in relation to the lengthening of reporting times of these offenders. We believe that is a good thing but it will require increased police numbers. In typical Labor fashion, the police minister said that the Premier would double resources over the next eight years. It is always on the never-never. It is always in the distance. It is always on the horizon. Yet we have new reporting requirements now that will require a lot more police officers on the beat.

We know that the problem is that the police are leaving the force in droves. Even though we have these new regulations, we need police to enforce them. We have heard the police minister talk on many occasions about the numbers we have now and the approved numbers. When I ring the police about the guy who is breaking into my house, I do not want an approved number sent to save me. I want a real police person to arrive on my doorstep, but that is not happening.

We have just seen that they are looking at overseas people and bringing back retired police officers. Why would a retired police officer come back and face the problems that police in the force are facing today? They are being spat on and being badly treated. I have had senior police tell me that 60 per cent of their labour resource time on the Gold Coast is spent on domestic violence activities and that they are not properly trained for those matters. That is a big part of why the police cannot service other areas of their enforcement to the proper degree, and that is why they have had it and are leaving the force.

On a social note, I met with a young police officer last week. He did not know who I was and I did not know who he was until later in the conversation. He had been in Rockhampton and had just been transferred back to Surfers Paradise. He said how horrible police morale is at the current time. He said, 'I do the job. I turn up. I get paid. My wife is an ambulance lady. She turns up and gets the job done.' He complained about the way they were being treated and he said that morale in the force was the lowest. He said, 'I don't care about it anymore. I just turn up and get paid.' That is not the attitude we need for a successful police service to enforce these police powers in the state. As I said, we have good

legislation to increase the powers. They are now looking at cybercrime offences, but we need more actual police—not approved police—to go onto these screens and chase down the dark web or whatever it is that these perpetrators and particularly the paedophiles et cetera live on.

That is why there has to be a complete turnaround in the direction of the police force in Queensland. It needs to be a job that they aspire to, a job that they are happy with, a job that they are respected in and a job where they have the proper resources to look after Queensland's interests. Youth crime is a problem and the police tell me that they spend a lot of time and resources on catching the kids but the courts then let them out in five minutes. Unfortunately, the police can only do their fair share and catch these young kids, but then they see them back out on the streets the next night committing crimes. That is the problem we have in terms of police time allocation.

I notice that penalties for hooning behaviour have increased, as well as the penalties for ownership of dodgy plates and for the owner of that vehicle. They are good measures, but again they will require police numbers to enforce these matters, not approved police numbers. They will require police on the ground who are happy with their job and content to go out and keep Queenslanders safe around all of these stupid hoons. We have a heap of these hoons on the Gold Coast. In fact a hooning cartel, if you like, broke into the member for Mudgeeraba's office a couple of years ago and forced the relocation of that member's office. That is how serious it is on the Gold Coast and why our community is concerned.

We have seen all of the polling. This government lives on the polling. We see the dying animal in its death throes, kicking out and making last-minute changes to its legislation and bringing things in at the last moment. That is what we are now seeing from this dying animal across there called the government. We can see them thrashing and kicking and trying to come up with last-minute answers to the big problems that are out there in the community. Obviously, the health situation is a problem, and I am not going down the health track.

Importantly, we are seeing crime in Queensland which the police have to control, and the government are saying, 'We're now going to do this with youth crime and we're going to do this with hoons. If you trust us for another eight years, we'll have it all under control.' I think the people of Queensland have run out of trust for this government. We are having all of these last-minute amendments and thoughts and whatever Shane Doherty comes up with as an answer to their polling problems. It will be interesting to see what Shane comes up with as an answer to the problem of the Premier's position. I will wait with bated breath. I am sure we will see some changes over there—

Mr Power: What about relevance?

Mr STEVENS: We are getting to the relevance of it.

Ms LINARD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. While deeply enlightening, I would question the relevance of this contribution.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Thank you, minister. Member, if you can—

Mr Stevens: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am coming back to the bill. I got it. The fact is, yes, we will support the police powers bill, but the reality is that without the proper policing resources and without a proper mandate for the police to carry on their activities in Queensland in a proper, supported, defined measure and a government that supports the police properly and does not push them off into newsworthy areas when they are not absolutely trained for those particular areas is a reason that the police will not be able to put in place the proper enforcement of these new regulations.

We support them, as I said, and to see us go down the track of another amendment and another bill that we have not dealt with and I will not go into the drug issues, but I can inform the House that one of my school mates is a doctor in Canberra who deals out methadone. While he will deal out methadone to heroin addicts quite freely, he will not stand in a room and deal out methadone to an ice addict without a security guy there because the ice addict is never able to be controlled. Any measures to allow any ice et cetera as a drug to be a part of a legal activity is absolutely nonsense and tells me what this dying animal of a government is over there, thrashing out in its death throes, and I cannot wait for October 2024.