




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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SUMMARY OFFENCES (PREVENTION OF KNIFE CRIME) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. In general, the bill is designed to reduce knife crime and associated youth offending and to enhance community safety by strengthening the legislative framework regarding the sale, possession and storage of knives and other dangerous items such as gel blasters.

The LNP supports enhancing community safety; however, this bill is a missed opportunity from this tired, third-term Labor government. During consideration in detail the LNP will deal with the real problem at the heart of much of our recidivist youth offending. Our shadow minister will introduce amendments to remove detention as a last resort and to improve the transparency of the Childrens Court by allowing victims, their families and the media into the Childrens Court.

The bill amends the Summary Offences Act and introduces a new division prohibiting the sale of controlled items to persons under the age of 18. Previous speakers have spoken on the controlled items, and these are outlined in the explanatory notes of the bill. The bill provides that commercial sellers will be responsible for ensuring they instruct their employees about the prohibition on the sale of controlled items to minors. Sellers will be required to display signage publicising the prohibition in all retail outlets.

The definition of 'sell' includes sales made online or at any place and sales outside of Queensland to a person in Queensland. It will be next to impossible to secure a prosecution for an online purchase made outside of Queensland, and the effectiveness of this in preventing sales to youth is highly doubtful. It will be an absolute nightmare in the border communities that I represent, because people traverse backwards and forwards across those border communities and it will be very difficult in some of those remote areas to have that enforced.

The bill creates much confusion for mixed businesses, of which there are many across my electorate. I ask the government: will the local Red Cross and Lifeline shops that sell second-hand knives in the op shop have to comply with this legislation? Will the antiques dealer who sells the odd carving knife set have to comply with this legislation? Will the local jeweller selling knife and fork sets have to comply? I would appreciate it if the minister could address these concerns in his summing-up, because, as I walk down the streets in my local communities, they are the questions that will be asked of me in relation to this legislation, so I have no hesitation in asking the government.

Even the local clothing retailers in my electorate that sell a Leatherman tool will have to instruct their staff, display signage and keep a register of those staff. It is hard enough now to actually get staff to fill those positions in many of these small businesses, let alone say to them, 'Now you have to sign on to this and there will be penalties if you don't do that.' More paperwork and compliance will be thrust onto family and small businesses by this legislation.

I see the government have no problem in getting tough on family and small business, yet they cannot get tough on youth crime. It is a real missed opportunity that the state Labor government have here. They really should be supporting the LNP amendments that go to the heart of the problems with the Youth Justice Act. Across my electorate we have seen some massive increases in youth offending and it is of great concern to many within the community.