




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill was examined by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee and the committee tabled their report on 1 February 2024. Prior to that, and of particular significance, is the Community Support and Services Committee's examination, whilst I was chair of that committee, of the trial to expand police powers to search for knives. That culminated in the Community Support and Services Committee's report on the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022 and the government's response to that Community Support and Services Committee report. That important preliminary work underpins the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. There was one primary focus of that work: the prevention of knife crime in our communities—that is, reducing access to and, therefore, the number of knives that are present in our communities. There is absolutely no excuse for carrying a knife in public without a reasonable excuse.

I congratulate our local police, based at the Upper Mount Gravatt police station, for their commitment to preventing knives and other weapons being brought into my electorate of Mansfield. For many months they have consistently carried out wandering surveillance at the Garden City bus terminal. It is an important interchange and arrival point into our community. It is an important point at which police can intercept any people, particularly young people, who may be making decisions that are contrary to their life chances. That taskforce has prevented a large number of weapons from entering my local community and for that my community is incredibly grateful. A knife crime cannot occur if a person is not carrying a knife. I am thankful to the Jack Beasley Foundation for their work and the guidance that they have provided to the young people in our schools through their programs.

As we know, our young people sometimes make poor decisions, especially when they are influenced by their peers. This bill is specifically 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.

A key aspect of the framework under the bill is the prohibition on the sale of knives to minors. For the purpose of this new offence a controlled item includes knives, swords, machetes, axes, sickles or scythes, spear guns, spears and replica firearms that are considered a restricted item under the Weapons Category Regulation 1997. The latter captures, amongst other things, lifelike toy guns that are commonly referred to as gel blasters.

Although knives are broadly captured, a minor will still be able to purchase what are referred to as exempt knives, which are plastic or wooden knives designed to be used for eating, a knife with a rounded or dull edge such as a butter knife, or a knife designed for use as a cheese knife. Knives have myriad genuine uses. We know that, for example, a 17-year-old apprentice chef and other young people engaged in professions that use knives may need to purchase professional knives on occasions.

Hairdressers with scissors is another example. They will continue to be able to lawfully use those knives and a person will be able to supply them to the apprentice. Only the sale of the knife to the hypothetical 17-year-old apprentice is prohibited. Therefore, that apprentice will be prevented from purchasing a knife personally and will be required to obtain the assistance of an adult in obtaining them.

I commend the Premier and the Minister for Police for their long work, starting with the work of the Community Support and Services Committee and Jack's Law. I commend the minister and the Premier for bringing this bill before the House and acknowledge the extent to which this law reform will reduce the number of and access to knives by young people across the Queensland community. Our responsibility as adults in our community is to provide guidance to ensure that the laws we make in this House not only represent and reflect the expectations of our communities but also are there to guide and assist our young people in making wise decisions when considering the possibility of buying and/or carrying a knife in our community. I commend the bill to the House.