




Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2024

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the bill before the House. In doing so, at the outset I want to place on record the condolences of myself and my beautiful Mount Ommaney community to Vyleen White, who recently lost her life, and note that the entire House joins every single Queenslanders in sharing their sorrow. I also want to note that we have in the gallery today the Beasley family, who have worked tirelessly because of their hard experience to reduce knife crime in our community, and I once again thank them. I had the opportunity to meet with them briefly when we passed Jack's Law—many members of the House took that opportunity to meet them—and I was very touched and moved by their story and by their commitment to seeing a reduction in knife crime, not just here in Queensland but right throughout Australia, and that unfortunately will be Jack's legacy.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my fantastic local Mount Ommaney and Sherwood police stations, whose officers work very hard to keep our communities safe. They are also providing me with feedback, and it is in large part because of them that I am speaking on this bill today. I will speak around the provisions that increase the police powers and, of course, any challenges that might exist. I might even start with those.

As everybody knows, I come from a hospitality family.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms PUGH:** Thank you, member. I appreciate the praise for my family business. In our restaurant we had a lot of apprentice chefs and many of the chefs, including the apprentices, carried around their knives. In fact, as my father would travel backwards and forwards from work he would rarely be without his. This legislation bans minors carrying knives. Therefore, we have provisions in place to ensure young people who do have legitimate reasons for carrying knives are able to do so. Firstly, a minor will still be able to purchase the exempt knives that have been previously outlined: plastic or wooden knives; knives with a rounded or dull edge; or knives used as a cheese knife. As I have said, knives have lots of genuine uses. A lot of apprentice chefs are minors when they start their apprenticeships and they will be able to continue to lawfully use those knives. Of course, somebody will be able to supply those knives to an apprentice; however, they will need the assistance of an adult to obtain those knives. There are certainly plenty of 17-year-old apprentices throughout Queensland who will continue to purchase knives. The apprentice will be prevented from purchasing that knife personally. They will need the assistance of an adult, but I am sure that will be no impediment to the purchase of those knives because most 17-year-old apprentices, of course, are still at home with a parent or a loving carer who is supporting them through that trade.

Further to the legitimate reasons for young people carrying knives for work-related purposes, which I am sure every member of this House supports, these amendments will allow police officers who reasonably suspect that a person under the age of 18 has been sold a controlled item such as a knife

that is not one of the exempt knives will be able to check. In that situation, the police officer may ask that person to show acceptable evidence of their age and require that person to produce the suspected controlled item. If that occurs, the officers may seize the item if they suspect that the item is evidence of an offence under this new legislation.

These provisions are consistent with an existing framework that is relevant to the offences that prohibit the sale of other items like spray paint to minors. They are necessary to ensure the new offences can be appropriately enforced, because, at the end of the day, what is important to every single member of this House—I think we all stand united on this—is ensuring the safety and confidence of the community and that we can minimise knife on this crime. I commend the bill to the House.