




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (4.58 pm): I rise to support the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Before I go through sections of the bill, I need to respond to the previous speaker, who spent half of her contribution talking about things outside the long title of the bill, I would suggest. If the member wants to politicise a bill that I believe we have bipartisan support for that is fine, but to put it into the context of the by-elections is pretty strange and pretty telling. I fear she is misleading the House because she described the LNP candidate as a true 'local', I believe she said. She just missed one little detail: he does not even live in the electorate! In fact, Wendy Bourne, the great Labor candidate for Ipswich West, is the only candidate who lives in the electorate. She has been a true local for 30 years. If those opposite want to talk about true local champions, we will take up that fight every day of the week and back Wendy in. Good on her.

I thank the minister and the committee for progressing this bill to the House. I thought the process and engagement was pretty useful, including the opposition or crossbench members who were involved. I think it is a bit of a shame that it has been politicised in the House today by a few members. Some have not. Some have spoken to the bill in some detail, which I welcome. I think it is a shame, because I think there are times when people should just get on with the job and be responsible parliamentarians.

I believe this bill is an important step in the continued approach to reducing knife crime offending. In particular, it is an important step in reducing the possession and use of knives by young Queenslanders. This is an important step in practice and in nature. It sends a very strong message about what I think is the main point of this legislation: changing the culture of Queenslanders, especially the culture of knife use by young Queenslanders. When it comes to young offenders, this is in line with the government's priorities which the Premier articulated this morning: prevention, intervention and detention. If we are talking about sentencing criminals after knife attacks or supporting victims of knife attacks, then by definition it is already too late to prevent crime and injury.

This bill takes it back several steps to get ahead of the game. It prohibits the sale of knives and similar weapons to underage youth. It also prohibits stores advertising the sale of those items in a manner that promotes the items being used in a violent or criminal manner. In terms of young people, it goes a long way to prevent knives and associated weapons from being in the hands of young people to start with. It includes what are collectively known as controlled items such as knives, swords, machetes, axes, sickles or scythes and spear guns as well as realistic replica firearms which are colloquially known as gel blasters.

The restriction on the sale of items to minors should not be criticised. We see it all the time—for example, with the sale of liquor. We can see this legislation closely reflects the regime that already applies to the sale of spray paint to minors. It is a worthwhile pursuit to increase public safety, and I think the faux outrage of those opposite who suggest there is some supposed huge burden to business is silly. Those opposite cannot even stop whingeing when they support the bill. The LNP playing politics

with an issue like this is pretty disgusting but, sadly, not surprising. Let me put it this way: I am not angry; I am just disappointed. When it comes to weapons, including weapons like knives and the associated weapons we have outlined, which are far cheaper to access and easier to obtain, culture and narrative matter. We need to change that culture, and anything we can do in schools, the family home and of course in the retail setting we should do.

I also want to pay my respects to the White family. In my new role I want to thank officers of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General who stood up their community response team out at Redbank Plains. It was a great partnership between DJAG officers, the Queensland Police Service, the Red Cross, the community and the government's ready reservists. I think it showed good engagement with a community that had suffered trauma. It was based effectively on our experience as a government in terms of natural disaster community response, recognising that in certain circumstances early community engagement and intervention is really important. I thank all of our departmental colleagues who went out there and had those important conversations with the community.

I want to give particular credit to the local member, the member for Bundamba, who wrapped his arms around the community and showed us what community leadership is all about, so congratulations to him. I again thank the minister for his work in getting this bill to where it is today and the committee chair and members. I know it was a bit outside the wheelhouse for that committee, but congratulations and well done. We thank you for all of your hard work. Thank you to the stakeholders who engaged in a genuine manner and those who will continue to be engaged as we roll out this regime, which I think will be important. I would particularly reference the recommendations of the committee which suggest that this is not just 'pass the legislation and we're done'. We need an education program and we need an engagement program, and I look forward to seeing that being delivered. I commend the bill to the House.