




Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**

**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.11 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—a bill that continues to demonstrate our government's commitment to reducing youth crime, to reducing the number of victims of crime and to ensuring young people themselves do not end up committing a heinous personal crime which they cannot come back from. While we in here are politicians, we are also members of our communities. We have all seen footage of people carrying weapons in public in a way intended to cause fear, and it has caused fear. Knives scare me too, so I wholeheartedly support legislation that prevents people from accessing and carrying weapons. It is an important bill and, as others have done, I commend Brett and Belinda Beasley and all those involved in the Jack Beasley Foundation. I have had the opportunity to speak with the Beasleys. Like many parents who have tragically lost a child through violence, their ability to work with government to change the laws so that others do not have to experience what they have is so admirable.

The committee oversighting this bill heard from the Queensland police that the prevalence of knife crime and youth offending is a serious concern to police. The QPS reported a 21 per cent increase in knife crimes over the past financial year and a 33 per cent increase over the past five years, with a significant portion of that increase attributed to young men charged with carrying knives in public. The concern amongst stakeholders and submitters was unanimous. This concern, coupled with the prevalence of knife crime in public settings, underscores the need for effective prevention and intervention strategies. Crime prevention strategies like these are critical to disrupting crime, to stopping it before it escalates. Unlike the LNP, whose only solution is mandatory sentencing after a violent crime occurs, our government will keep its attention on preventing crime so that lives are saved.

The bill amends the Summary Offences Act 2005 as part of a broader reform suite designed to promote community safety, reduce youth offending and minimise the risks associated with knives and other dangerous items. The bill is designed to strengthen the legislative framework regarding the sale, possession and storage of knives and other dangerous items by: prohibiting the sale of knives and other weapons, including machetes, axes, spear guns, spears and replica firearms, to minors; making it an offence for a person to falsely represent themselves as being over the age of 18 for the purpose of being sold a controlled item; requiring retailers to display signage advertising the legal prohibition against the sale of controlled items to minors; prohibiting controlled items from being sold or advertised in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat or intended to be used for violence or in a way that might stimulate or encourage violent or criminal behaviour; imposing obligations on suppliers of particular controlled items to safely secure the items at retail outlets; and allowing a police officer to request to see proof of age if they reasonably suspect a person under the age of 18 has been sold a controlled item.

The bill is designed to complement existing strategies to prevent knife crime in Queensland. Last year the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was passed which extended police powers to allow officers to use handheld metal detectors to detect knives in safe night precincts, public transport and public transport hubs throughout Queensland. Some of the weapons discovered through those activities are absolutely shocking and simply not fit for sale to minors or in fact anyone.

There is a bit of confusion in the community about what this bill will and will not do. This bill is not about restricting people from buying kitchen knives to cut up their meals. It deals directly with: banning the sale to minors of knives and weapons that are primarily bought for causing pain, harm or fear; imposing greater regulations to retailers on how those items can be marketed; and ensuring retailers are containing those knives and weapons in a way so they cannot be removed undetected by minors. It is important that the bill is complemented by a clear education campaign both for the community and for retailers. These formed two of the committee's three recommendations.

Like the member for Noosa, I am inclined to comment on the proposed amendments from the LNP that have been circulated. I have not read them, although I get the gist of what they are about. In terms of removing detention as a last resort, it is incredulous to me that the LNP is still continuing with this line. We have now had weeks of open hearings on the select inquiry into youth crime, and wherever we go, whether it is Townsville, Brisbane or Cairns, and whomever we speak to, whether it is people in QPS, the legal fraternity or victims of crime, it is unanimous that that proposal is simply not going to function and it is not going to achieve what we want to achieve. I do not know how that can be reiterated further. Anyone who is capable of googling and looking at those transcripts can find that out. I think it is the height of arrogance for the LNP to suggest that they somehow know more than everybody else on this issue.

On the second issue of allowing victims into courtrooms, again I have not looked at that particular amendment, but I do absolutely support that victims should be given greater access into courts, and the Premier has foreshadowed that already this week. I will not support the amendment without consultation. It is something that needs to go further and to be consulted on for victims of crime. Whilst I acknowledge that, I obviously cannot be supporting that here.

I want to acknowledge the work of Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney. As members of parliament, we have the privilege of coming into people's lives for a range of reasons, including the tragic way in which the member was introduced into the lives of the Beasleys. I am inspired by the member's dedication to the Jack Beasley Foundation—a dedication that is clearly genuine—and I thank the member for that. Recently at a public hearing a submitter remarked about youth crime that there is no silver bullet, just silver buckshot. This bill represents part of that solution and I commend it to the House.