




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.42 pm): The member for Clayfield exhorts us to work together. I am going to go out on a limb here and I am going to speak on behalf of my colleagues. If working together involves cutting the police force, gagging community groups, cutting Child Safety and shutting down the court diversion programs—just to name a few things—I reckon you can count us out over here. That is not the way we are going to tackle making Queensland safe. I support the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill is dealing with an increase in knife crime which has seen greater increases amongst young offenders.

I read a number of articles in relation to knife crime around the world to prepare for this debate. It is well documented that there are increases in knife crime worldwide. It varies country to country depending on a range of factors, but what can be said is that, because of ease of access to knives, the cheapness of knives compared to other weapons and the lack of regulation generally in relation to knives, they tend to be used more for crime. We have seen an increase in knives as there has been greater regulation of other types of weapons. This bill seeks to deal with that access issue, particularly for youth.

In Australia and Queensland, that rise in knife crime might actually be a result of the effect of firearms bans and the reduction in the number of firearms in circulation. While it is not good to have an increase in knife crime, we certainly should not lose sight of the fact that we have had to update legislation because we have taken other steps to keep the community safe. I will go on record as saying that I think one of the greatest acts of leadership of any Australian parliament was when John Howard banned firearms after the Port Arthur massacre.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Jack Beasley Foundation. It is thanks to their advocacy that we have introduced Jack's Law which means we now have extensive wandering. We know that this led to a reduction in knives, particularly in those safe night out precincts. We know this because of the evaluations that were done. I recognise that they were done during COVID, but I believe if we continue these evaluations they will continue to show similar outcomes.

Today in question time the Premier outlined the priorities of the Miles government—prevention, intervention and detention, in that order. This bill very much fits into the prevention and intervention space. The member for Ninderry referred to a lost opportunity in this bill, lamenting the fact that this bill does not change behaviour. The bill clearly states the objective of the bill is to 'promote community safety, reduce youth offending and minimise the risks associated with knives and other dangerous items' by prohibiting the sale of knives and other controlled items to minors, making it an offence to make false representations about age and requiring retailers to display signage, amongst a number of other provisions.

I am a bit surprised that the member for Ninderry, who is apparently the shadow police spokesman, has missed the point of this bill. He seems ignorant of the things that are actually being done to change behaviour, and that is certainly not the intention of this bill. This bill is about reducing access to knives. The change in behaviour is coming about because the government, the police and the community sector are already working in other areas to change that behaviour to prevent the desire to commit knife crime in the first place. We also have to work on preventing access to knives if we really want to change this. The 'I live my life ... without a knife' campaign is a great example of that behavioural change. I would have thought the shadow police spokesman would have known about that. If the shadow police spokesman had actually listened to the minister's speech today, he would have heard him outlining that there will be a further advertising and awareness campaign rolling out in relation to the 'I live my life ... without a knife' campaign.

I would also like to note a couple of other things that are happening in our community not specifically in relation to knife crime but in that space of trying to change the behaviour of young people in particular. On Thursday night in this parliament, we will welcome the Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation, which is a great organisation that kicked off in my electorate. I encourage all members to come along to the President's veranda to hear about the different path that young people can take, particularly those who are having a few challenges in life. We have to get those young people and intervene early, and that is exactly what the Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation does. I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of John Godwin and his team.

I would also like to give a big shout-out to all of those Neighbourhood Watch volunteers in our community who try to educate the community on not just knife crime but all sorts of crime to make people understand. I was with a group a few months ago just before Christmas where we were handing out information around the 'I live my life ... without a knife' campaign.

Like all parents in this state, I am extremely grateful for the leadership of the Jack Beasley Foundation on this issue that has led to this bill and the other interventions I have mentioned this afternoon. I know that my teenagers are much safer now thanks to Jack's Law, and I know that this bill will build on that important work. I commend the bill to the House.