




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.03 pm): This bill is sending a clear message: Queensland will not tolerate a knife culture. There are such cultures that have developed around the world, and that is not our standard. I would like to acknowledge all victims of violent crimes and their families. There is no excuse for violent crime. The member for Buderim spoke about small businesses and the impost on them around selling knives. In relation to knife crimes I see in the media, offenders are not going into Big W and the other big stores that he mentioned; they are targeting those small stores. This bill is about protecting those small businesses and those small traders where a teenager is doing the shift on a Sunday night on their own and is held up by somebody with a knife. There are swings and roundabouts in this for everyone.

Unfortunately, we have lost precious lives to knives. Even one life lost is one too many. I thank Brett and Belinda Beasley, parents of Jack, for their unrelenting work to ensure no other young life is lost to senseless knife violence and for saving other families from the immense pain and grief that their family has endured. Their work gave us Jack's Law, giving police wandering powers to disrupt and prevent crime and save lives. The law brought in by this government has given police officers the power to use handheld metal-detecting wands in all safe night precincts, on public transport and at transportation hubs across Queensland to detect weapons, deter offending and protect the community. Since the introduction of the law, we have seen tens of thousands of people being scanned by the handheld scanners and hundreds of potential weapons being seized. This means there are fewer weapons on our streets and the opportunity for fewer crimes to be committed and fewer tragedies.

A single, thoughtless knife crime can destroy many lives: the victim with lifelong impacts both physical and psychological or loss of life, and the perpetrator facing lifelong repercussions. This is unacceptable for our communities. There is more work to be done, and that is why today we are debating laws to ban the sale of knives and other items to juveniles.

We need to target and support our youth because adolescence is a tumultuous time for young people as they develop from childhood into adulthood. They can be impulsive and vulnerable as they navigate life as their brain is maturing. Their behaviour and development are influenced by the environment, hereditary factors and their hormones. Adolescent behaviour can be immature and irresponsible as their brains mature. Drugs and alcohol can also affect their development and maturation. Maturation of our brains occurs between the ages of about 10 and 24, so young people with these maturing brains bring the possibility of immature and impulsive behaviour. They need guidance that comes with these laws. We need these laws to prevent crime. In return, the community gets more protection.

We want to stop the perceived notoriety that is associated with possessing knives amongst those of any age in our community. This is exacerbated by some commercial sellers who profit from the mindless selling of knives and other weapons as they encourage or glamorise items for violence. We

need these reforms to make safer environments and safer communities. We do not want the global trend of youth or adults carrying knives, axes, machetes and other dangerous items becoming the norm in our community.

There is still more work to be done. The laws that we have already introduced will be strengthened by this bill. There are now new offences prohibiting the sale of controlled items to anyone under the age of 18, targeting our immature youth. Controlled items will include knives, swords, machetes, axes, sickles, spears, spear guns and replica firearms. Gel blasters as replica firearms are included in this bill. Some think of gel blasters as toys because they associate them with paintball and laser tag. Unfortunately, gel blasters look like firearms and have been used in violent crimes. They need to be included for public safety.

It will be an offence for anyone to falsely represent themselves to be over 18 to obtain any of these prohibited items. To make it very clear that violence with a prohibited weapon is not acceptable, it will be an offence for a seller to advertise or market a prohibited item in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, is intended to be used for violence or is likely to stimulate or encourage violence or criminal acts.

This bill does not change the restrictions that are already in place on people of all ages relating to carrying knives in public or at a school. A person must have a reasonable excuse to carry a knife including for work, to participate in a lawful activity or sport—for example fishing, as many people do in my area—or for lawful purposes when you go out and you have a meal in public. It is time all our young and older people can say, 'I live my life without a knife.'