




Speech By
Hon. Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.20 pm): I rise in support of the Queensland Community Safety Bill. This bill is a continuation of the Miles government's commitment to community safety and getting on and doing what matters for Queensland. The Miles government leads the way in addressing the risks of harms associated with knife related crime. That is why we have introduced these amendments which target the unlawful possession of knives in public places. Jack's Law, which was introduced by this government in 2021, currently empowers police to use handheld scanners in safe night precincts to detect unlawfully possessed knives. This bill expands upon that framework to include shopping centres, entertainment venues while an event is being held, retail premises, licensed premises, train lines and the Gold Coast Light Rail. It also increases the maximum penalty for unlawful use of a knife.

I have had quite a few conversations with elderly people in my community who do not feel safe that have stuck with me. Just across from my office is the Strathpine Centre. It is one that former premier Mark McGowan loves to visit. Over the last couple of years, we have seen all of the banks at that centre shut up shop in their individual premises along our high street and move into the larger shopping centre. It has in there Big W, Woolworths, Coles, Aldi, Target and a number of smaller shops.

I am having more frequent conversations now with women in their 50s and 60s or older who do not feel safe. They have to go to that location now to withdraw cash so they go to the ATM, they withdraw money from the ATM at the Strathpine Centre and they do their shopping there as well. Emerging in those conversations more and more is the feedback that vulnerable community members do not want to visit that location anymore. Despite needing to visit that location, they are trying to avoid it as much as they can because they do not feel safe there. They are saying to me that they want a shopping centre where they feel safe, and I am very much of the view that the expansion of these powers will lead to a safer space.

I met with my shopping centre before we proposed the introduction of these provisions. I have talked to them about increasing security and lighting and the types of things we can work together on to make that a safer space for my community. I regularly hold Coffee with a Cop there at the shopping centre. We frequently have our mobile police beat at the shopping centre as well. I am determined to make sure that people feel safe in this space in our community. It is not necessarily that a high level of crime is occurring there, but a perception has formed in the community—rightly or wrongly—that we have young people who are up to no good. When people see groups of people within that precinct—and they do not necessarily have to be young people or people with particular behaviours—they feel a level of concern. I am all for provisions that can make shared community spaces like shopping centres safe spaces for all of us.

I have met with Brett and Belinda Beasley, who I acknowledge are here in the gallery with us today. I want to thank them for their tireless advocacy to address the risk of knives in public. I know that is advocacy they are doing within other jurisdictions at the moment and I wish them well in that. Their

advocacy in terms of reforms that our government is making goes beyond Jack's Law. As the corrective services minister, I want to acknowledge the work they have been doing with me in the parole space as well. The circumstances that led them to becoming champions for community safety are tragic, but what they have achieved is absolutely inspirational and I want to acknowledge that.

This government is committed to providing more police on the front line, and this bill goes further by introducing amendments to enable efficiencies in the service of documents so our police officers can spend more time on the things that matter. It expands the options available to police when serving documents and includes an ability for the electronic service of prescribed documents, which I absolutely support. The bill includes appropriate safeguards to limit the use of electronic services in particular circumstances. The Miles government is delivering the police more time to be available to spend on policing.

I would like to discuss the amendment that is relevant for Queensland Corrective Services, which I have responsibility for. While this bill maintains existing arrangements which empower police officers to personally serve documents to prisoners in correctional centres, it introduces an option to have a corrective services officer serve prescribed domestic and family violence documents to prisoners. I would like to acknowledge the member for Mount Ommaney for the work she has been doing to advocate for this provision for some time.

For good and obvious reasons, gaining access to a prison is not a simple thing. If corrective services officers can provide prisoners with some documents, it means a police officer is not tied up with going through the security screenings required to enter a prison, ensuring the availability of room bookings et cetera. It reduces the time that police officers are spending serving documents to prisoners and it also creates opportunities for Queensland Corrective Services staff to engage more in proactive crime disruption and investigation activities. This bill facilitates a trial arrangement that can be implemented at one or more correctional centres approved by the commissioner.

I want to acknowledge the feedback I have had when meeting with Together union delegates in relation to this trial on who will be involved in this trial and how these things will be carried out as we operationalise the provisions in the trial. Maintaining staff and prisoner safety is the primary consideration in the development of this trial, which will occur in the Wacol precinct. I want to acknowledge the feedback that Together Queensland has provided to us. That is absolutely front of mind in working collaboratively as we roll out this trial so that we can achieve both staff and prisoner safety. They are the things we are focused on. There is work to be done on the best way to implement the process and the operationalisation of this amendment. It will be the subject of agreement between the police and corrective services commissioners.

This amendment has the potential to unlock significant police resources that are currently being used in serving these documents, and this is in stark contrast to the record of the LNP. The LNP have no respect for our hardworking public servants or the essential work they perform. LNP cuts saw police personnel and administrative support service activities being passed on to our frontline police officers. That administrative burden was put back on our frontline Queensland Police Service officers. As Ian Leavers said, if you take away admin staff, then the frontline police will have to perform those functions which reduces the capacity of frontline police to respond, and that is certainly not what we want. We want to support our frontline Queensland police officers to be able to be with our community, not in offices, not on iPads, not bogged down in paperwork. That is why the provisions contained within this bill are so important.

The Miles government is introducing these amendments really to create those efficiencies for our police officers to spend more time doing the things that matter such as crime disruption and investigating activities. The LNP's record is to increase that administrative burden on police, putting frontline officers behind desks. This is just some of the provisions contained within the bill that have my fulsome support.