




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 10 June 2025

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (MAKING JACK'S LAW PERMANENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CORRECTIVE SERVICES (PAROLE BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.23 pm): I rise to contribute to the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 and the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025 being addressed in cognate. I turn first to the police powers amendment bill. We recognise the serious threat knife crime poses to public safety across Queensland. I am proud to be part of the former Labor government that made nation-leading reforms to fight knife crime.

Let's be clear: Jack's Law is Labor law. Under Labor, a trial began in May 2021 to give police the power to detect knives using handheld metal detectors. These powers were limited to the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts and ran until April 2023. The trial was then evaluated by the Griffith Criminology Institute. The Griffith University report found that scanning helped detect more knives and recommended that scanning be focused in areas with high levels of knife crime. It also recommended better recording of demographic data and an audit process to monitor the use of the powers. The study raised some concerns, and some of those concerns have been addressed by the member for Cooper.

The study very clearly indicated that the trial needed to be expanded and it needed to go for longer. In response to this, the Labor government introduced the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Act 2023. This expanded scanning powers to all 15 safe night precincts and to public transport areas. I am pleased to say that the Mount Gravatt bus stop at Garden City is one of those areas. The bill was named in honour of Jack Beasley, who was killed by a stabbing in 2019. Jack's family established the Jack Beasley Foundation. I congratulate them and thank them for their advocacy and commitment. They have since advocated for a reform to youth justice laws and to educate our young people about the dangers of carrying knives, particularly in public places.

Further changes were made through the Queensland Community Safety Act 2024. This broadened the definition of 'relevant places' to include shopping centres, retail premises, sporting and entertainment venues, licensed venues and rail lines. The sunset clause was extended to October 2026. Like the member for Cooper, I am very disappointed that the LNP chose to not continue the trial, as per the university study. When we do not respond to and reflect the evidence that is provided by academics and research, we undermine public policy. We also undermine public confidence. In this era where there is a real lack of confidence in politicians, I do not think it helps our cause more generally, and it certainly does not help with regard to the integrity of public policy and achieving desired outcomes. We certainly should be avoiding social experiments at any cost. I am disappointed that the trial has not continued. I hope that the LNP will reconsider that position once the bill is passed.

To date, over 100,000 wandering operations have been conducted and more than 1,000 weapons have been removed from Queensland's streets. We acknowledge the continued commitment of Brett and Belinda Beasley, along with the Jack Beasley Foundation, for their fierce advocacy on extending wandering powers. Their efforts have played a key role in supporting work to prevent the kind of tragic violence that took Jack's life. I acknowledge the former police minister, the member for Morayfield, for his work to reduce knife crime over the years—a minister who took the evidence and the research, ensured it was being evaluated, listened to the experts and implemented a bill and legislation accordingly. I commend the member for Morayfield for his integrity in the work that he does as a leader in his community and in Queensland more broadly.

The bill before us makes Jack's Law permanent by removing the October 2026 sunset clause. The bill extends Jack's Law to public areas outside the currently prescribed areas by allowing a senior officer to authorise the use of scanners in public places other than 'relevant places' if the senior officer believes it will be effective in detecting or deterring the possession or use of knives or weapons in that place.

In addition, this bill introduces several operational changes based on the ongoing use of wandering powers. It allows police to continue scanning a person in a public place even if that person has left the original relevant place. It removes the need to provide an information notice on request as the same details are already given verbally before the scan. It also confirms that officers can continue to use handheld scanners in relevant places without a warrant. For privacy reasons, the bill changes reporting requirements. It removes the need to publish the names of places in the QPS annual report to reduce the risk of identifying individuals scanned at specific locations.

I note other amendments this bill introduces across several acts. It extends the sunset clause in the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act in 2005 from 2025 to 2040. The act allows a person to be detained for a short time to prevent a terrorist act or to preserve related evidence. While Queensland has faced terrorism threats, the power under this act has not yet been used. The legislation is part of a nationally consistent framework across Australia.

The bill also amends the Marine Rescue Queensland Act 2024. This change allows Marine Rescue Queensland to receive charitable gifts including assets from existing volunteer rescue organisations as part of broader emergency services reforms.

Finally, the bill amends the State Emergency Service Act 2024 to retrospectively validate the appointment of some SES members. This follows the discovery of an issue with the historical appointment process. All affected members have already been reappointed, and this ensures they are covered by the proper protections as authorised officers.

I support the Labor opposition amendments to ban the sale of machetes, and this will be welcomed by my community. This amendment builds on the work of the former Labor government in banning the sale of knives, machetes and other items to minors. This measure reinforces that knife crime has no place in Queensland. Under this amendment, an adult may only purchase a machete if they hold a permit to buy, which ensures the item is needed for a legitimate purpose or for work. A person who sells a machete to an adult without a permit to buy will face a penalty such as that imposed when selling controlled items to minors. We call on the LNP to support these amendments in the interests of Queenslanders' safety. The Queensland Labor opposition supports this bill.

I now turn to the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025. Parole is not a right; it is an entitlement. It is a tool used to reduce reoffending by encouraging participation in rehabilitation programs and supporting the safe reintegration of offenders into the community. Ultimately its purpose is to protect public safety. The effectiveness of the parole process is central to the integrity of our corrective services system. That is why Queenslanders must have confidence in how the Parole Board operates and makes decisions.

This bill clarifies the board's power to review decisions made by individual board members, particularly regarding urgent parole suspensions. It also retrospectively affirms that the board had authority to conduct these reviews in recent years. The bill strengthens confidence in the system by ensuring the board's oversight role is clear, consistent and practical. This bill confirms the Parole Board's authority to review urgent parole suspension decisions, ensuring consistent and lawful decision-making. High-risk decisions such as allowing someone to remain in the community should be subject to a full board review. That is a reasonable safeguard for community safety. These changes do not expand the board's power or alter parole rights. They simply make explicit what has already been happening in practice, giving legal certainty to the board's processes and avoiding reliance on other provisions in the act like section 205.

Just to be clear, the bill provides explicit legislative clarity, not because of any fault in the existing framework. During the public briefing on 30 April 2025 the commissioner of the Queensland Corrective Services explained that it has become evident that there was not a clear head of power for the board to review all urgent parole suspension decisions. In the same briefing the president of the Parole Board said the amendments put beyond doubt the board's power to review single Parole Board member decisions.

The Queensland opposition will be supporting this bill as a responsible clarification, not a correction.