




Speech By
Hon. Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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**

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. DG PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.24 am): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

The Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will build upon Jack's Law, which authorises police to use handheld scanners to detect knives that are being unlawfully carried in certain public places.

On 23 May 2025, the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee tabled its report on its examination of the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. The committee made one recommendation: that the bill be passed. We thank the committee for its support of the bill. I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation to the organisations and the government representatives that provided submissions and appeared before the committee. In particular, I would like to thank Belinda Beasley, who, with her husband, Brett, founded the Jack Beasley Foundation. Belinda and Brett have relentlessly advocated for our community to be protected from knife crime, with Belinda providing the committee important insights and perspectives about the importance of Jack's Law, named in memory of her son Jack.

Jack was just 17 years old when his life was cut short in a senseless act of violence. Belinda described her boy as the life of the party, a talented football player who had just started his apprenticeship. On 13 December 2019 Jack and his mates went to Surfers Paradise. That same night another group of teens also headed to the tourist capital armed with a knife. At around 8 pm a fight started, after just a glance, and within seconds Jack was fatally stabbed and left to die in front of his mates. Jack's life was taken but his legacy will live on through Jack's Law and the work of the Jack Beasley Foundation.

The Jack Beasley Foundation was formed at the local pub within weeks of Jack's death. I must commend the member for Bonney, the now Minister for Housing, for his steadfast commitment to ensuring meaningful change. I acknowledge the Jack Beasley Foundation's support of the bill and endorse Belinda Beasley's comment when she stated, in relation to Jack's Law—

These laws must keep moving forward as we see better ways of working and entrenching the current laws and making these amendments is a further step.

The bill will meet this government's commitment to addressing the scourge of knife crime by making Jack's Law permanent by: removing the sunset clause that schedules its expiry on 30 October 2026; allowing a police officer to use a handheld scanner in a relevant place without the need to obtain an authority to do so from a senior police officer; expanding the application of Jack's Law to include

public places that are not relevant places by allowing police officers to use a handheld scanner in these areas provided they first obtain authority to do so from a senior police officer; and improving policing efficiencies by streamlining the legislative framework underlying Jack's Law.

The bill also extends the operational period of the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 from 16 December 2025 to 16 December 2040; amends the Marine Rescue Queensland Act 2024 to clarify that Marine Rescue Queensland is capable of receiving gifts as a charitable institution; and amends the State Emergency Service Act 2024 to confirm that any previous appointment of a person as a State Emergency Service member is valid.

In relation to Jack's Law, I will reinforce a statement I made when introducing this bill—every instance of knife crime leaves a lasting impact on victims, their families and the community. We will not stand by while innocent lives are lost. The success of Jack's Law is not underestimated by this government. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024, 478 weapons were located and seized under Jack's Law. In 2025, to date, 177 weapons have been located and seized. The items located as a result of Jack's Law include knives, machetes, flick-knives, a handsaw, knuckledusters, screwdrivers, nunchaku, a star knife, an axe and razors. We can never know how many lives have already been saved.

The bill, by removing the sunset clause for Jack's law, sends a clear message: knife crime will never be tolerated, not now and not in the future. This government will support our police through ensuring that Jack's Law is a permanent tool that can be relied upon to address knife crime in our community. This government does not accept that doing nothing to change this situation is a realistic alternative. We must ensure that our laws are able to meet changing situations as they arise. We do not accept the failed prescriptions of the past decade.

Currently, Jack's Law only applies to certain public places that are defined as 'relevant places'. Concerningly, QPS statistics indicate that knife crime in public places outside of those relevant places is rising. The bill will address this concern through expanding Jack's Law to apply to public areas that are not currently prescribed as relevant places. This will only occur with the authorisation of a senior police officer who holds the rank of at least a senior sergeant. In authorising the use of handheld scanners for a period limited to 12 hours, the senior police officer must be satisfied that the use of handheld scanners is likely to detect or deter the commission of an offence involving the possession or use of a knife.

This bill has been designed to meet an appropriate balance between community safety and individual civil liberties. I can reassure the House that appropriate safeguards about the police use of handheld scanners will be maintained. For example, police must use their powers in the least invasive way practicable and may only detain a person for as long as is reasonably necessary to exercise their powers.

Inefficient procedures and administrative arrangements that do not advance the fight against knife crime will be removed by the bill. Under the current Jack's Law framework, the use of handheld scanners in relevant places can only be undertaken after a senior police officer has conducted an onerous and complex authorisation process involving considering an evidentiary and a subjective test. The evidentiary test requires the evaluation of a range of factors including whether certain offences have occurred in the relevant place in the previous six months. After the evidentiary test is completed, a senior police officer must then conduct the subjective test that involves an assessment on the impact of handheld scanners on unlawful activity at the relevant place and if previous handheld scanning operations successfully located knives or weapons.

These tests may be criticised as they do not cover the scope of places where the use of handheld scanners is most needed such as where credible criminal intelligence indicates that the unlawful use of a knife is imminent but no previous offences have occurred. Further, these tests are comparatively resource intensive, requiring a senior police officer, on average, about 30 minutes to complete. The bill will represent an efficiency gain for frontline police by removing the need for our senior police officers to complete the evidentiary and subjective tests for relevant public places.

Other aspects of the bill will realise further efficiency gains. For example, police are currently required to provide a handheld scanner information notice to persons or to notify a manager or occupier of a licensed premises, retail premises, shopping centre, sporting or entertainment venue when the police intend to use a handheld scanner. This requirement is unnecessary, time-consuming and delays the prompt execution of police duties.

Similarly, there is a range of reporting arrangements currently imposed upon the QPS. For example, the commissioner is required to publish a notice on the QPS website within two months of a handheld scanner authority being issued. This notice is to include information about: the time and date

that a handheld scanner authority started and ended, the name of the relevant place and information about the considerations made by the senior police officer when issuing the authority. In addition, the commissioner is required to include a range of similar information in the QPS annual report on handheld scanning. This information includes: the number of handheld scanner authorities issued in the past financial year, the number of persons required to submit to being scanned, the number of weapons detected, the number of times a power to search was exercised, and the number and type of charges resulting from the use of handheld scanners. The bill consolidates reporting requirements and promotes efficiencies through eliminating the need for the QPS to provide duplicative information.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition has foreshadowed amendments to this bill to ban the sale of machetes. I am intrigued by this announcement because a review of the report by the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee into the bill revealed no recommendations from the two Labor members, the members for Toohey and Macalister, that this be done. Two conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, Labor has outsourced its thinking to the Victorian Labor government. On 26 May, the Victorian Labor Premier, Jacinta Allan, announced that her government would put an interim ban on the sale of machetes in that state. Bereft of its own ideas, the Labor Party in Queensland clings to this Victorian model like a drowning man clings to a raft. A machete ban was never mentioned, much less considered, by Labor committee members before the tabling of the report on 23 May. Three days later, the Victorian Premier made an announcement and, two weeks after that, the Leader of the Opposition announced that his party had discovered the solution to the entire knife crime issue. That could only be described as a stunning coincidence.

Secondly, Labor has gone down this path in an attempt to find a point of difference with the government. Knowing its own policies have failed over the past decade, Labor thinks this move will help restore its tattered reputation. Stealing the homework of the Victorian Labor government, as unreliable as that is, is Queensland Labor's only solution to the crime crisis that its own inaction did so much to promote. That is unacceptable and says so much about why Labor no longer sits on this side of the House. Labor has made the fatal mistake of thinking that laws to combat crime exist in a vacuum. That is not a view shared by the government. Queensland is very different to Victoria.

Since our election last year, we have introduced a range of legislative changes and made commitments to the resourcing of our police to fight Labor's youth crime crisis. Expanding police powers to combat knife crime, as this bill does, will add to existing provisions and establish a more effective framework for combatting knife crime. This is the change our police have been asking for and that shows the difference between this side of the House and those who sit opposite. We listen to police and we trust them to use these powers effectively. Labor's kneejerk reaction provides no solution; it merely seeks to absolve them of blame for their decade of neglect and wilful blindness in the face of rising rates of crime.

This bill is the culmination of detailed work over a significant period by many people, stakeholders and organisations. In the course of its inquiry, the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee received submissions from 18 individuals or organisations, received a written briefing on 8 April and a public briefing on the bill from the Queensland Police Service on 30 April, and held a public hearing on the same day at which representatives of six organisations gave evidence. I offer my personal thanks to all those who contributed to this important process.

As the committee chair, the member for Nicklin, did in the foreword to the report, I again pay tribute to the work of Brett and Belinda Beasley. It is impossible to imagine how any of us would have reacted to the events that confronted them. That they directed their energy to reforms that will make a real difference in the fight against crime is something for which all Queenslanders should be grateful.

I now move to the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025, mindful that the minister will talk more about this in her contribution. This bill amends the Corrective Services Act 2006 to rectify a legislative gap and ensure the Parole Board Queensland must review all decisions made by individual board members to leave parolees in the community. The bill empowers the Parole Board Queensland to make decisions that maintain community safety. It does this by: enabling and mandating the board to review all prescribed board member decisions about requests for immediate suspension of a parole order within two business days, including decisions to leave a prisoner in the community, which was not previously mandated in the act; and validating previous decisions made by the board when it reviewed a prescribed board member's decision to not suspend a parole order after a request for immediate suspension.

The Governance, Energy and Finance Committee reviewed the Parole Board bill and in its report, tabled on 23 May 2025, made one recommendation: that the bill be passed. Parole Board Queensland performs an important role in delivering community safety in Queensland and the bill promotes confidence in board decisions and provides legal certainty for past decisions.

I foreshadow that I intend to move an amendment during the consideration in detail stage of this bill. The amendment will amend the Public Sector Act 2022 to retrospectively validate arrangements for two former police commissioners performing the role of chief executive of the Queensland Police Service and for a former fire commissioner acting as the chief executive of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. The amendment addresses deficiencies in previous appointment processes which meant that these commissioners were not validly appointed to perform the role of chief executive of their relevant departments. Those deficiencies also have implications for those who acted in the place of those former commissioners, which the bill also addresses.

In addition to enhancing Jack's Law, the bill will make a range of other changes. The bill will extend the Terrorism (Preventative Detection) Act 2005 for another 15 years to ensure that it aligns with other Australian counterterrorism legislation. The bill will also support recent emergency service reforms by: clarifying that Marine Rescue Queensland, newly established as a statewide marine rescue service, may receive funds from any source, including charitable institutions; and confirming that the appointment of a person as a State Emergency Service member is valid.

In summary, this bill will deliver on this government's commitment to keep our community safe. It will protect Queenslanders and equip our police with laws that are both fit for purpose and efficient. I commend Jack's Law and the other bill to the House.