




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 28 August 2025

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the electors of Southern Downs on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the member who spoke before me, the member for Moggill, and the other speakers on this side of the House, who I think have made very good contributions. I will not be making any tawdry value judgements about the respective perspectives of the different sides of the House. I share the view expressed by many on both sides of the House that there is genuine goodwill in this matter and that we all genuinely wish to see something done about family and domestic violence. This particular bill is, in my view, a very good step in the right direction. It is something for which we have been calling for some time and something which I believe the electors of Southern Downs would support.

We have heard a lot about the police protection directions and there is contention, I understand from listening to the debate, about whether or not those are appropriate. I note that there is currently no framework in Queensland empowering police officers to administratively issue immediate long-term protection directions without filing an application for a proceeding before a court. This bill will enable officers to issue a 12-month police protection direction when responding to domestic and family violence that does not require further consideration. As I understand it, the crux of the division in this House is whether or not the advantages to police efficiencies are sufficiently valuable to warrant what the opposition is saying are the downsides associated with PPDs.

As the member for Southern Downs, like all members, I attend events all over the place in my electorate. I was recently very pleased to attend a Legacy fundraising dinner which has been run on a regular basis in Warwick to raise money for both the Australian Defence Force Legacy and Police Legacy, and both of those organisations share a similar operating model and purpose. I want to particularly acknowledge Senior Constable Cam Mosley, who organised it and who has organised previous ones. It was a wonderful night. It was a chance for me to get together with a concentration of police officers—there were probably about 200 people there; it was very good—and I was talking with many of them about this bill and they could not wait to see this particular innovation of PPDs. Their reason was that on the front line they are spending an inordinate amount of time dealing with domestic and family violence, but not the face-to-face stuff in attending to the crime or detecting offences and prosecuting offenders; they spend most of their time doing paperwork associated with preparing for the court process associated with PPDs.

In my part of the world we are short of police. As a result of the decline in police numbers over the years, we have stations with insufficient manning and stations that have been closed. That continues even though we are now starting to turn around recruitment and retention of police—and I am sure those things will get better—but the lowest hanging fruit as I see it in enabling police to be more efficient to respond to crimes and be out serving the community is to expedite the work around domestic and family violence.

I understand when members of the opposition say that experts and advocacy groups for victims have said that they disagree with PPDs. I quite expect that they might because their job is to represent the narrow interests of the particular sector or group that they seek to represent, and that is fair enough. However, in the Queensland parliament we have a responsibility to look at the bigger picture. Instead of striving for some sort of unobtainable perfection—some sort of vacuous obsession with getting it absolutely right—we seek to achieve for the people of Queensland the maximum possible advantage.

I would ask those who are concerned about the safety of impacts of PPDs on the people we are trying to help to remember if we invert this equation there are domestic violence victims and survivors out there who are worried that the police will not reach them in time if their ex-partner comes around armed or in a threatening way. I have had many very scared women come to me in that very situation. That has been the most frequent reason for contact with constituents over this particular matter. I do not claim to be able to stand in their shoes, but I have certainly sat opposite them in my office and met them on the streets and had the very clear impression that they value the service of the police but that if the police are detained on a treadmill of paperwork they are not available, and that really does make sense.

We need to remember here that we do not operate in a vacuum and we have an obligation to maximise the effectiveness of the limited police resources we have not just for those who are having police attend for the purpose of a domestic and family violence call-out but also for those who might have to make that call and need urgent assistance from police for protection. I do not think that that particular facet of things has been adequately canvassed in the House and it is very important to me, quite apart from the domestic and family violence angle, that having police on the beat is obviously manifestly a good thing. We need to have officers able, as they were in times past, to patrol and be a conspicuous presence on the streets to come across crimes, as they do, and be spread out so that they can respond quickly to a radio call about a crime or a complaint that has occurred in their area.

I know that the people of Southern Downs would very much value an improvement in the availability of police to conduct that old-fashioned style of mobile patrols policing and fast response policing. The very best way to have that happen is to unburden them of the administritivia associated with PPNs. PPDs are not going to be the be-all and end-all. In certain cases, such as where there are children at risk or where there is an existing DVO or where there is perhaps a police officer involved as a respondent, the use of PPNs remains available.

I heard members question—perhaps with the very best of intention—how police would be burdened with the role of judge and jury in this case with PPDs, but I think that that sells police short, because we entrust the constables of this state with enormous coercive powers and we do so in the knowledge that they are a necessary thing in order to keep us safe. We counterbalance them with an array of restraining safeguards to make sure that those powers are only exercised as required under the law and in the interests of the community. I cannot see how this cannot be another instance where we entrust the police to use their judgement, because, after all, they are experts in their own right. They have to deal with this every day. I think that the police—and I am sure that the former police officers in this House would agree with me—develop a pretty good sense of who is who and what is going on.

Nothing is perfect, but I ask members of the House to think long and to think well upon this bill and to think carefully about the consequence of sticking with our current system, which ties up our police—hogties them—and keeps them off the streets. In the communities that I represent, such as Goondiwindi, Warwick and others where there has been a terrible scourge of crime building over the last decade, having more police on the beat would be very desirable not just because they are going to be liberated from the grind of this administration but also because they are going to have more professional satisfaction in their jobs.

Mrs Poole: Hear, hear!

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from the member for Mundingburra—a former commissioned officer until very recently before coming into this place. Police perhaps would not be separating from the service quite so rapidly if they had that professional satisfaction—that is, if they could be out serving the community and not be burdened with the extremely onerous requirements of the PPN system. We can only recruit so many, but we can always try and stem the separation of police, and that would be a great morale booster. After speaking to the police whom I encounter in my own electorate, they see that as a great positive. I certainly will be supporting this bill and the amendments proposed by the government. I commend the bill to the House.