




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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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 HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.20 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill. When we look at it, Queensland has really led the way nationally in the fight against knife crime, largely because of Labor's reforms while in government. I also want to acknowledge Belinda and Brett for the extraordinary work they have done, the sacrifice they have made and the difference they have made to Queensland young people. I want to also acknowledge the work of the member for Morayfield in implementing the original laws that we put in place.

In 2021 we did amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to trial new police powers to detect knives in the community. That trial allowed authorised police officers to use handheld knife detection scanners without a warrant in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts. Griffith Criminology Institute evaluated the trial, which ran to April 2023. The trial detected a significant number of knives in these precincts. The institute also recommended expanding the areas where handheld scanners could be used. Informed by the institute's recommendations, Labor then passed the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Act 2023, named in honour of Brett and Belinda's son Jack, who was tragically killed during a night out with friends in Surfers Paradise in December 2019.

Jack's Law gave the police the powers to use handheld scanners in all 15 safe night precincts in Queensland. Labor further strengthened these laws by passing the Queensland Community Safety Act 2024, which expanded knife detection wandering to shopping centres, retail premises, sporting and entertainment venues, licensed venues and train lines. I can still remember some of the alarming footage at the time of Ipswich train stations and seeing the number of weapons that were identified in that scanning.

While there has been a drop in overall crime in Queensland for over a decade, knife related offences have become a growing problem for many communities. Knives and increasingly machetes are being used in an increasing number of crimes in Queensland. It is troubling to hear that an increasing number of young people are carrying knives and machetes, possibly under the mistaken belief that they need these weapons for self-protection. However, there is simply no reason for knives to be in the hands of young people in public areas. Since Jack's Law was introduced, police have taken more than a thousand weapons off our streets across Queensland. It has potentially saved countless lives. I do reflect on the member for Greenslopes' comments. His children are much younger than mine, but I still remember the abject terror when sending them off on a night out and waiting for them to come home. These grey hairs did not come for nothing.

To take this further, Labor brought in legislation in 2024 to ban the sale of knives, machetes and other similar items to minors. However, we do need to go one step further to protect Queensland communities from violent crime. We must ban the sale of machetes in Queensland. Machetes have absolutely no place in shopping centres, parks, public transport or in our public sporting and entertainment venues. Regrettably, in the past few years there has been a shocking increase in the use of machetes in criminal acts. Machetes are an easy way for offenders to intimidate, threaten and instil fear. Their sheer size alone means they can result in devastating injuries with just one blow—injuries that change lives forever or, worse, end them. We have to keep these dangerous weapons out of the wrong hands. I say to the LNP government: if they are serious about violent crime and community safety, there has to be an argument to implement Labor's amendments today to introduce a machete sales ban.

The bill we are debating today will make Jack's Law permanent in Queensland by removing the October 2026 sunset clause. I am supportive of this amendment as well as the other changes in this bill, which will build on the significant reform work initiated by Labor under the previous police minister, the member for Morayfield. His hard work in implementing measures to reduce knife crime in Queensland is to be commended. Jack's Law has potentially saved many lives by removing numerous knives and other weapons from public spaces.

The other amendments in this bill to update the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2025, the Marine Rescue Queensland Act 2024 and the State Emergency Service Act 2024 are also supported. I turn my attention to the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill, which will clarify the board's ability to review the decisions of immediate suspension requests, whether upheld or denied. In her introductory speech, the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services erroneously described this bill as cleaning up Labor's mess. I would remind the government that they are no stranger to cleaning up messes, having had to have another go at the Making Queensland Safer bill last month due to their first one failing.

This bill is not a correction; it provides legislative clarity. The existing framework is not faulty; it confirms and strengthens the Parole Board's ability to review the decisions of immediate suspension requests whether upheld or denied. Parole is fundamental to our corrective service system. It provides incentives for prisoners to participate in rehabilitation programs and supports their reintegration into the community. Prisoners are assessed for release readiness before being granted parole to assess their risk to the community. Prisoners are also subject to conditions such as curfews and electrical monitoring.

Since 2017 Queensland Corrective Services has made over 38,700 requests to suspend a parole order under the act. The decision to suspend parole can be high-risk and time-critical, with a rapid decision required sometimes outside of business hours, so individual Parole Board members making these decisions have those decisions subjected to review by the Parole Board within a two-day period. We did hear in the public hearing that since 2022 only 61 requests were initially given a non-suspension decision by an individual board member. Of those, 39 decisions were confirmed by the full board and parole for the prisoner continued. Only 22 decisions were overturned by the full Parole Board and the prisoner returned to custody. While the number of non-suspension decisions made by individual board members is quite low, each decision is incredibly important. This bill simply guarantees that the additional review process by the Parole Board, which they have used since 2022, can continue. It guarantees that community safety is not left to the call of an individual board member. I support the bill as responsible clarification and not a correction.