




Speech By
John Barounis

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.50 pm): I rise today to speak in strong support of the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. These bills are putting victims first. They put community safety first. They deliver the oversight that has been missing for too long. The Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill ensures that the Parole Board Queensland has the power to review decisions made by individual board members—decisions that leave parolees in the community—so that the safety of Queenslanders is not compromised.

The Crisafulli government is demonstrating once again our commitment to reducing crime and putting the rights of victims ahead of the rights of offenders. The Parole Board plays a vital role in the justice system, and this bill gives it the tools it needs to better serve and protect our communities. Until now, there has been no legislative requirement for the full board to review a decision—no second opinion, no additional scrutiny. That is a serious gap, and this bill closes that gap.

This bill is particularly important to my electorate of Maryborough. We have a corrective services facility on our outskirts. The community knows very well that parolees are being released into the CBD, often late at night. This has bred fear and frustration. Antisocial behaviour on our streets is already a serious concern for locals. The community is asking, 'Who is looking out for us?' This bill is the answer. It ensures that if the parolee's behaviour is unacceptable or they are deemed a risk by QCS, their parole can be reviewed by the full board and potentially suspended. This is how we protect our community.

Under the previous Labor government, leadership of the Parole Board was lacking. For seven months the board had no president. That failure led to delays, a backlog of cases and a system that simply was not doing its job. The amendments that the bill seeks to bring in will correct a substantial gap that has existed in the parole suspension framework for some time. This bill also provides legal certainty for decisions already made by the board—decisions where a parolee was kept in the community but later had their parole suspended upon review. This retrospective clause ensures those decisions are valid and legally defensible.

The Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 represents another critical step in our commitment to making Queensland a safer place for all. It gives the police the tools they need to get knives off the streets and protect our communities. Jack Beasley's tragic death in 2019, after a senseless knife attack on the Gold Coast, shocked us all. It spurred action not only from the government and police but also from Jack's family and the dedicated Jack Beasley Foundation. Their tireless advocacy has led us here today.

On this side of the chamber, we understand that removing bladed weapons from our streets is not just common sense; it is also an imperative. We have backed Jack's Law from the start. Today's bill strengthens it, ensures its permanency and makes it more effective than ever before. As the honourable

the minister rightly said 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. My priority as the member for Maryborough is the safety of my constituents. They deserve to feel secure in their homes, on the streets and in our public spaces. This bill helps deliver that assurance.

Unfortunately, the former Labor government diluted what should have been a clear tool for police. While they initially supported the Jack Beasley Foundation's work, their later amendments added unnecessary complexity, creating a bureaucratic maze that discouraged police from taking action. The 2021 trial in Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise showed real promise, but by 2023 Labor's modifications made it so difficult to comply with the rules that police were unable to use Jack's Law effectively, especially at critical times like schoolies, major events and festivals. These events, which should have been protected, slipped through the cracks because the system had become too rigid.

I have spoken with frontline officers in my electorate, and their frustration is real. Their hands are tied, not because they do not want to act but because red tape and inefficient processes prevent them from doing their jobs. Our police are hardworking, professional and deeply committed to protecting the community, but they are let down by red tape, by rules that make no practical sense and by a former government that lacked the will to fix it. Well, we are fixing it now. Between April 2023 and May 2025, thanks to operations under Jack's Law, over 115,000 individuals were scanned, over a thousand weapons were seized and more than 3,000 people were charged.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the honourable ministers and the committees. I thank the Crisafulli LNP government for restoring trust, restoring safety and delivering practical laws that work. This means that, finally, the hardworking corrective services employees and our police force can get back to basics and do the jobs that keep my community and the whole of Queensland safe. I proudly commend these bills to the House.