




Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**

**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

---

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 BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (3.09 pm): This is the 32nd speech I am giving in this House relating to crime, community safety or justice, and I reckon that says a couple of things. I think it demonstrates that crime is dynamic and ever changing and that offenders adapt. The challenge for us as communities and as leaders within our community is how to get on top of the crime trends early. The second thing it demonstrates to me is that everyone in this House is rising to that challenge. While we do not always agree across the chamber on what the solution is, I think we are all in this House committed to doing our best to keep people safe, to stop recidivism and to stop people becoming victims.

Jack's Law was initiated under the Palaszczuk Labor government back in 2021. I would like to thank the former police minister Mark Ryan for championing this legislation which was designed to be a proactive policing strategy to detect people who are carrying knives, machetes and other items which have a primary use of inflicting harm and to take those weapons off the street.

Of course, the people who really deserve the focus of the speech are the family of Jack Beasley, in particular, Jack's parents, Belinda and Brett Beasley, who were faced with the horror that none of us as parents would want to face—the knock on the door from police to inform them that their 17-year-old son Jack had been stabbed while on a night out with friends in Surfers Paradise and had died as a result of that attack. I have said it in here before, but it bears repeating, that victims of crime are some of the most resilient people I have ever met. Their ability, like Belinda and Brett, to work through grief and pain and to champion reforms so that other parents do not have to go through what they have been through takes real strength, and I commend them for that. I would also like to recognise Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney. I know that the member has done a lot of work with this family and has been a real support to them, and I would like to thank him for that as well.

The vision that Belinda and Brett had was to empower police to identify and remove weapons from public places before they could be used to harm or intimidate people which, I think for probably all of us, sounds like a commonsense approach. Belinda and Brett worked alongside our former minister at the time, Mark Ryan, and the police to work up a proposal for a trial here in Queensland.

In May 2021, the former Labor government amended the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to implement that trial for a new set of police powers to detect knives in the community. The trial allowed authorised police officers to use handheld metal detection scanners without a warrant to determine whether a person was carrying a knife. The powers were limited to public places within the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts and were to be evaluated by the Griffith Criminology Institute.

The Griffith report was tabled in parliament in November 2022. The former Labor government twice amended the trial, taking on the feedback from the Griffith review. In April 2023, we extended the trial to all safe night precincts, and then in August 2024 expanded the trial to cover supermarkets in response to calls from the community following the horrific death of Vyleen White.

At every step, we have attempted to find the balance between being willing to try anything that will keep communities safe and recognising that victims of crime deserve a police response that works, and that we have to also get an evidence base for programs, which is why the former government continued to incorporate independent reviews into this initiative. It is why we set a sunset clause of October 2026 so that we could really look at whether the program was working.

The bill we are debating today comes as a result of the Crisafulli government wanting to make this law permanent before we reach the end of that trial date, and I welcome the government's willingness to prioritise community safety and victim support. However, it is a balancing act. We have to be brave enough to try things. We owe it to our communities, victims and offenders to intervene before things get really bad. But we also have to be brave enough to evaluate programs to see if they are delivering what we intended or whether we need to adjust a few things. Removing the sunset clause will make this reform permanent. However, also in this bill are a swathe of additional changes to the pilot which do not align with the reviews completed to date, and the government has also decided it will not be evaluating this program.

Public confidence is so important in our criminal justice system. If we do not have it then community safety declines, the work of police and our courts are so much harder and good people get harmed. We here are duty-bound to protect that. When we do away with transparency and accountability then we lose that public confidence.

A range of transparency and accountability measures have either been removed from this bill or not actioned as per the review recommendations. While it is clear the government does not want to be seen to need that advice, I do hope that after this bill passes, they do work quietly to consider some of the concerns raised by stakeholders and that they consider whether additional transparency and accountability measures, in fact, might be helpful.

Reviews of this law have identified areas where further work is needed. If we are to actualise the vision of Belinda and Brett Beasley, we really need to take that on board. We all want this reform to work. We want to go out and have a meal or to go and do our shopping and not be scared that the person behind us is carrying a weapon. To achieve that outcome, we have to invest in programs that work which starts with independent evaluations. It really, for me, is quite unforgiveable that the government has decided to do away with that particular option.

I will finish where I started which is really to again applaud Belinda and Brett and the work of the Jack Beasley Foundation who have worked tirelessly to drive down knife crime. The foundation runs an excellent One Moment Education Presentation. I can tell you it takes a lot from a family to keep retelling their story, but I know that the impact they are having on other young people through this program is really having an effect, and I thank them for that and wish them every success into the future.

We do owe it to them to get this initiative really working as well as it possibly can, and I hope that the government works with stakeholders who are working daily with young people and victims to continue to build on Jack's Law.