




Speech By
Margaret Nightingale

MEMBER FOR INALA

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**

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (8.14 pm): Tonight I rise to speak in strong support of Labor's amendment to this bill, specifically to ban the sale of machetes across Queensland. However, before I go to the heart of this amendment, I want to acknowledge the courage and conviction of two extraordinary Queenslanders—Brett and Belinda Beasley. In the face of unimaginable grief after the loss of their son Jack, they showed the kind of strength no parent should ever have to summon. Thanks to their tireless advocacy, Queensland and indeed Australia are safer places today. They were instrumental in the creation of Jack's Law and it is saving lives—a legacy borne from tragedy but driven by action.

In May 2021 it was Labor that amended the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to give police new authority to detect and deter the carrying of knives. We backed it up with evidence informed by the Griffith report. We passed Jack's Law in 2023, enabling wandering operations in high-risk areas. I know that this has made a difference in my community of Inala where, from shopping centre managers to parents and teachers alike, I heard of the increased safety that this law brought. In 2024 Labor delivered the Queensland Community Safety Act, strengthening those powers even further. As a result, over 1,000 weapons have now been seized under Jack's Law. That is a thousand weapons that no longer pose a risk to our kids, our families and our communities. I want to take this opportunity to thank the former minister for police, the member for Morayfield. He led with vision, compassion and an unwavering commitment to this work over many years and has seen the benefits of this law in action.

I welcome the government's decision to make Labor's laws permanent. It is the right step and it reflects the strong community consensus on this issue. It is an example of the good that comes from both sides of the House working together for the betterment of Queenslanders. However, today I also rise to express a concern—one that I believe many in our electorates share, a concern that is addressed by Labor's amendment. That concern is the ongoing unrestricted sale of machetes. Labor's amendment to this bill provides another opportunity for bipartisan work, but it seems that the LNP government would rather play politics.

I understand that machetes have a legitimate role in agriculture and land management. While both machetes and knives can cause serious harm, machetes are more likely to inflict severe disabling injuries due to their design and nature of their use. Machetes are not kitchen utensils. They are not backyard gardening tools. They are long-bladed, heavy weapons capable of grievous disfiguring harm. They were never designed for suburban use and I cannot see a circumstance in which someone would need a machete other than in agricultural settings, yet they are easily bought.

Mr Stevens: Cane cutting.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: I take that interjection. My understanding of cane cutting is that that is an agricultural setting.

Mr Stevens: They don't do it anymore.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: Further to the point, machete use in agricultural settings is required less and less. Machetes typically have blades up to 60-centimetres long, giving users a clear reach advantage over standard knives, making it easier to inflict harm from a distance. Their curved, weighty blades are built for forceful sweeping cuts—cuts that, in a violent setting, can cause catastrophic injuries, severe lacerations, dismemberment, permanent disability and even death. Unlike smaller knives, they do not require training or skill to do serious damage. Brute force is enough. That makes them especially dangerous in the wrong hands. Let us not underestimate the psychological weaponisation of machetes.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: Their sheer size and global association with brutal attacks make them terrifying to face and in volatile situations that intimidation fuels fear, escalates violence and spreads harm far beyond the immediate act.

Government members interjected.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: This is not hypothetical and it is not amusing or humorous as those opposite are finding right now. In my electorate a woman was brutally attacked by her partner with a machete in a domestic and family violence incident. Her injuries were horrific and the trauma immeasurable. It was a tragic reminder of what happens when dangerous weapons are too easily available. These long-bladed weapons are being used increasingly in violent incidents right now in our suburbs and towns. Queenslanders know it. Police know it. It is our job in this place to do something about it. Yet the Crisafulli government continues to ignore this threat. Even worse, they laugh about it. While Labor is pushing to restrict machete sales, the LNP offers no meaningful alternative, no justification for not supporting this amendment, just empty gestures and political posturing.

On this side of the House, we take the responsibility to do what we can to reduce the violent use of machetes seriously. That is why Labor's amendment builds on the February 2024 reforms banning the sale of knives and controlled items to minors. We want machetes reclassified as controlled items available only to adults who hold a valid permit to buy for legitimate work or agricultural use. If you do not have a permit you do not get to buy one. It is that simple. Any seller who ignores that rule will face the same penalties as selling a controlled weapon to a child. It makes sense.

I cannot see a reason not to pass this amendment. I have not heard one from the government speakers either. Yes, I acknowledge that the law currently prohibits the carrying of machetes in public or using them as a weapon, but that law is clearly not serving as a deterrent. It does not reduce the availability of these weapons and therefore the likelihood of their use in violent crimes. This amendment does. This amendment does not punish farmers or tradespeople. It does not penalise responsible Queenslanders. It targets those who seek to use machetes for violence, fear or intimidation. It is a targeted, practical and proportionate response to a growing threat.

I speak for many in my electorate when I say that people are worried. They are watching the news in fear. Our communities may be diverse, but on this issue they are absolutely united. They want to feel safe, they want action, they want accountability and they are not getting that from this government. Today I call on the LNP to stop hiding behind rhetoric and to join Labor in taking real steps to reduce knife and machete crime in Queensland. Let us pass this amendment. Let us show bipartisan resolve. Let us send a clear message that we will not tolerate the sale of weapons that threaten the safety of our streets, our homes or our suburbs. Enough delay, enough excuses—let's act.

While the member for Chatsworth jokes about using a machete to cut his grass, these are not amusing weapons to those who have been a victim of them. They do not find it funny. They would much rather these weapons be limited to those very people, like canefarmers and agricultural users, who need them for a legitimate purpose rather than be readily available to be in the hands of those who would seek to use them to inject fear into and harm vulnerable members of our community.

Government members interjected.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: I hear so many interjections from those opposite finding this issue immensely amusing to them—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Inala, address your comments through the chair, thank you.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE:—noting anecdotes of ways in which they can be used in a fun, jovial way. These are not funny weapons. It is not funny to have a weapon readily available in a suburban area that can be used to inflict harm and serious dismemberment and even death on innocent civilians. It is time for us to act, not wait for a tragedy like Port Arthur, not wait for a tragedy that could have been prevented by reducing the availability of these serious weapons. I call on the LNP—I urge the LNP—to please prevent and restrict access to these weapons so they do not end up in dangerous hands.