




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (MAKING JACK'S LAW
PERMANENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CORRECTIVE
SERVICES (PAROLE BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.34 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate which incorporates the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025. As chair of the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee which undertook the review of the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025 I, first of all, thank my committee colleagues and the secretariat for their efforts and also the submitters and witnesses to the hearing. The bill aims to empower the Parole Board Queensland with the authority to review all decisions made by a prescribed board member after a request for immediate suspension from Queensland Corrective Services, including where a prescribed board member decides not to suspend parole.

As has just been outlined by the member for Toohey, these urgent matters can be brought to a member in the middle of the night or in the middle of a weekend. It would be difficult, of course, for a board to come together in circumstances like that. Indeed, in the time that we had with the Parole Board president, we were advised that around 6,000 of these matters occur each year—a significant number. He further advised that there were 22 matters of concern since 2022, and I will talk about those in a little while. The bill aims to validate those decisions by the board as the result of the practice in the past where the Parole Board was making a call under a particular part of the bill. Parole Board Queensland is an independent statutory authority which makes objective evidence-based and transparent parole decisions without influence or pressure from external sources. Among their functions is a 24/7 function to decide requests by the chief executive for immediate suspension of paroles, as I alluded to a moment ago and indeed the member for Toohey also spoke about. This includes court ordered parole orders. There is subsequent consideration by the board of whether to confirm these immediate suspension decisions, set them aside or cancel the parole order. That has to happen—as, again, was indicated—within just two days.

As the QCS has advised us, sometimes the conduct of a supervised individual causes such concern that a determination is made by community corrections that the individual cannot be safely managed in the community, and that is the crux of this. Around 6,000 of these matters a year come before the board and community corrections are not confident they can safely manage the individual in the community. If this occurs, QCS sends a request to the board to seek that the offender's parole be suspended. These matters are considered a high-risk, time-critical scenario and that, once again, is the crux of it. In the middle of the night, imagine a scenario where someone is going off the rails big-time. There could be all sorts of things occurring in the background. There could be domestic violence matters. There could be drugs involved. There could be all sorts of matters involved where it is time critical to make a decision to suspend parole.

As articulated by the President of the Parole Board, Michael Woodford, while the board has a general power—and this is the crux of some of the discussion that we had—to suspend or cancel a parole order under section 205, decisions made on request for immediate suspension under sections 208A and 208B can only be reviewed using section 208C. The decisions on requests for immediate suspension may also use slightly different criteria to those available under the general power, including immediate risk or risk of carrying out a terrorist attack, so there is another element to this. The Parole Board considers there is currently no legislative basis to review that decision. This has been identified as a substantial gap that has existed in the parole suspension framework since just a few years ago when the Parole Board changed the way it reviewed these matters. Indeed, there were 22 matters, as I have mentioned, involved in this.

Since 2022, the board has reviewed decisions of prescribed board members not to suspend parole, and that is what I have just alluded to. Let us put that into numbers for members. The Parole Board advised that since 1 January 2022 there were 62 requests for suspension under section 208A that did not result in a decision to suspend the parole order on first consideration by the prescribed board member. They had been asked to consider suspension. It might have been the middle of the night, the middle of the weekend or whenever, and on 61 occasions out of those 6,000 per year since 1 January 2022 the decision was made not to suspend on that first look. The decision on 39 parole orders not to suspend were confirmed by the board. The board, as I mentioned a moment ago, has two days to have a look at all of the matters and in those circumstances, of those 61, the Parole Board agreed that the offender did not need to go back to jail. That left 22 matters where the board determined the order should be suspended.

It is important for us to understand two parts. First of all, going forward from here it is important to ensure that the board has the law on its side and that the board has the legislative power to make those decisions that up until now it has not had. Indeed, on a further note, if we were to look at section 205 as a fix for this, section 205 requires the whole board or several members of the board to get together to make a decision. Imagine in the middle of the night or the weekend you try to get three members of the board or a number of members of the board together to make a decision on an individual. Remember we are talking about 6,000 of these decisions a year. It would be near impossible to do that. It is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week situation that we have to look at, so we cannot rely on section 205; we have to rely on section 208A. In those circumstances, it is important that we provide this legislative certainty to the Parole Board moving forward, but also that we resolve those 22 matters to ensure certainty for the people of Queensland, the taxpayers of Queensland. It ensures the people of Queensland are not foisted upon to pay some sort of a penalty because of these 22 individuals who under the old rules did not have the right to reverse the decision. It stops them from coming at the people of Queensland to chase some sort of compensation because, in every one of those 22 cases, the Parole Board stands behind its decision to ensure they were put back into the prison system.

I thank the minister in particular for bringing this to the House as quickly as she did because it was only brought to the minister's attention within a few months of the new President of the Parole Board, Michael Woodford, coming to office. He brought it to the attention of the minister and she moved very quickly to bring this to the attention of the House and to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. I commend the bills to the House.