




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise today as the member for Thuringowa to support the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Jack's Law, born from the unimaginable tragedy of Jack Beasley's death in 2019, is more than just a law; it is a promise to our families, our children and our neighbours that they can walk our streets without fear of a blade hidden with malicious intent. In this chamber I proudly represent the community of Thuringowa, but just for a moment I am sure they will support me in speaking as a mother.

During the hearings Belinda Beasley, Jack's mother, bravely spoke about that night. We all heard it on the news when it happened, but nothing could prepare me for when I looked into the eyes of Jack's mother while she told us of the night. As a parent it broke my heart and made me feel fear I have never felt before. I never want another mother to experience this torture. Our job as a government is to make our community safe and I can assure honourable members I have no problem standing in front of my community in Thuringowa and telling them that I support this amendment bill. What are we waiting for? Another tragedy to scar our communities, another family shattered by a senseless act of violence, another mother's soul shattered by the unbearable loss of a child stabbed in the streets that we are sworn to protect? Are those opposite so paralysed by their historical soft-on-crime approach and bureaucracy that they will let another family endure that same agony before they act?

Jack's Law has already proven its power. Between April 2023 and May 2025, 1,124 weapons were seized with 115,334 persons being wanded by senior police officers. Over 3,000 people were charged as a result of operations. This bill, making Jack's Law permanent and expanding it to every public place in Queensland, is our chance to ensure no parent lies awake fearing for their child's safety. When my daughter steps out to Kirwan shops, to the Willows or to a local festival, I want her to come home safe. If someone carries a weapon in our parks or in our streets what possible reason could they have but to harm?

Today we stand at a crossroads with a chance to make this law permanent and expand its reach to public spaces across Queensland, ensuring our communities are sanctuaries of safety, not stages for fear. The right to feel safe is a foundation of a thriving community, from knowing their government has their back. Since its introduction, this law has removed knives, machetes and deadly tools from our streets, preventing countless tragedies. This bill empowers our police with handheld scanners to detect concealed weapons with precision, not intrusion. We promise to give our police the tools and powers they need to keep our community safe and the data is undeniable: wandering works. It has stripped weapons from our streets, stopped tragedies before they unfold and deterred those who would carry blades with ill intent.

Some may raise concerns, pointing to submissions that highlight potential negative outcomes, but let us not lose sight of the overwhelming good this law delivers. It is about the mother in Thuringowa who can let her teenager go to a concert without fear. It is about the elderly couple in Cairns who can stroll through their local market confident in their safety. It is about the young worker in Brisbane who can finish a late shift and walk home without looking over their shoulder. Jack's Law is not about restricting freedoms; it is about expanding the freedom to live without fear. The data speaks for itself. In safe night precincts wandering has reduced the presence of weapons, deterring those who would carry them with ill intent.

The bill before the House today appropriately balances community safety and civil liberties; prioritises the rights of victims over the rights of offenders; makes Jack's Law permanent by removing the sunset clause that schedules it to expire on 30 October 2026; allows a police officer to use a handheld scanner in a relevant place without the need to obtain authority to do so from a senior police officer; expands the application of Jack's Law to include public places that are not relevant places; simplifies the notification and reporting framework for the police; and improves policing efficiencies by streamlining the legislative framework underlying Jack's Law.

There must be consideration for a bill that strengthens our commitment to community safety while ensuring robust safeguards for its implementation. Jack's Law equips our police to protect our families and its framework is built on trust, training and accountability.

Clause 10 of the bill introduces the proposed new section 39BA to enable a police officer to use a handheld scanner without warrant in relevant places without requiring authorisation from a senior officer. This will save time and allow police to get on with their jobs of keeping Queenslanders safe. This bill at clause 11 amends current section 39C to expand Jack's Law to a public place other than a relevant place. A senior officer may issue an authority in relation to a public place only if the senior police officer considers the use of a handheld scanner is to be effective to detect or deter the commission of an offence involving the possession or use of a knife or other weapon. In order to satisfy this criteria, the factors that may be considered by the senior police officer include, for example, criminal intelligence that may have been received in relation to the public place, the concentration of licensed premises in the area and whether there is an elevated concentration of people in the area due to an event. The expansion will enhance community safety and provide our police with proactive policing powers to address violent crime involving knives.

The bill maintains legislative safeguards to ensure that the police use of handheld scanners in authorised public places will be appropriate. The QPS noted during the hearing that since 2021 its officers have conducted nearly 130,000 wandings but has received only two complaints, and neither of those led to further action. This proves that we can trust the QPS to carry out this vital work in the public interest with professionalism and care. By passing this bill, we align with Western Australia's any time wandering in high-traffic areas and authorised operations in public places, positioning Queensland as a national leader in knife crime prevention. This legislation empowers our police to keep our streets, parks and festivals safe, ensuring our vibrant, inclusive community thrives without fear. I urge every member to support this bill to make Jack's Law a permanent shield for our people and to deliver nation-leading protections that honour our duty to keep Queenslanders safe.

As a parent I carry the same hopes and fears as those I represent and a commitment to every Queenslanders that their safety matters. The expansion of Jack's Law to all public places is a proactive step, not a reaction to tragedy but a prevention of it. We are not waiting for another life to be lost, another family to be broken; we are acting now, with courage and clarity, to ensure our streets, our parks, our public spaces are places of joy, not fear. The Beasley's loss has galvanised a moment and their advocacy reminds us why we are here—to serve, to protect, to build a Queensland where every citizen can thrive. This bill will empower our police to act swiftly and effectively, giving them the tools to keep weapons off our streets. It is about trusting our officers to use these powers responsibly, as they have done since Jack's Law began.

In my electorate I have heard from families, small business owners and young people who want to feel safe, who want to know their government is listening. This bill answers their call. It strengthens our resolve as a state to stand against violence and to prioritise the safety of every person who calls Queensland home. Let us stand with every Queenslanders who deserves to live in a community where safety is a guarantee, not a gamble. This is our moment to make Jack's Law a permanent shield for our people and to ensure that our public spaces are places for our communities to enjoy and feel safe. I want to personally acknowledge the grief and loss that the Beasleys have had to endure to get the community and governments to listen. We make the safety of our community as a priority with absolutely no apology. As Thuringowa's MP I will stand tall before my community and declare with every fibre of my being: I back this bill because safety is the foundation of our vibrant city and an inclusive Queensland.