




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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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 DALTON** (Mackay—LNP) (8.24 pm): I rise to speak in strong support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and the Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill. Together these bills represent a major step forward in our government's effort to deliver on our commitment to community safety and public trust in the justice system. Let me begin with Jack's Law. This bill is named in honour of Jack Beasley, a young Queenslanders whose life was tragically taken in a violent knife attack in 2019. His parents, Brett and Belinda, responded with incredible strength, founding the Jack Beasley Foundation and dedicating themselves to making sure no other family suffers the same heartbreak. This bill continues their legacy.

The statistics since the introduction of Jack's Law are clear and compelling. Between April 2023 and May 2025 more than 115,000 people were scanned, over 1,100 weapons were seized and more than 3,000 people were charged. These are not just numbers. Each scan and each seizure represents a life potentially saved, but let us be honest: these results were achieved despite a framework that was overcomplicated and burdensome. The former Labor government introduced a convoluted approval process that made it difficult for police to act quickly. Officers had to satisfy evidentiary and predictive conditions, wasting valuable time, forcing them to jump through bureaucratic hoops instead of focusing on protecting the public. The public in Mackay and in the rest of Queensland just could not understand the reason it was not more regularly available. That is why this bill matters. It cuts the red tape and makes Jack's Law permanent. It empowers police to use handheld scanners, commonly known as wandering, in designated safe night precincts, shopping centres and entertainment venues without needing senior officer authorisation and, for other public spaces, introduce a simplified, intelligence-based approval process. At the same time, strong safeguards remain in place: scanning or wandering must be random, officers must wear body worn cameras and they must complete specific training before conducting these operations.

As the member for Mackay, I have seen firsthand how important it is to maintain safety in our vibrant night-time precincts and public areas. We need to support our police with practical powers, not bureaucratic barriers. This legislation does just that. While the opposition fumbles around with an ill-defined and unnecessary machete ban—one that already duplicates existing laws—we are delivering clear, effective, enforceable policy. Queensland already prohibits carrying any knife, including machetes, in public; we already ban sales to minors; and we already have strong laws addressing their wilful use.

Let us have a look at section 51 of the Weapons Act 1990. What is a knife defined as? A knife includes a thing with a sharpened point or blade that is reasonably capable of being held in one or both hands and being used to wound or threaten to wound anyone when held in one or both hands—hence a machete. A person must not physically possess a knife in a public place or a school, unless the person has a reasonable excuse—so you are not allowed to possess a machete in a public place. There are

some exceptions to carrying a bladed weapon or a knife in public. That could be if you are in a pipe band, because you might have a sgian dubh or a fisherman may carry a knife whilst they are fishing. Let us focus on what actually works: proactive policing, community engagement and giving officers the powers they need to intervene before tragedy strikes.

The Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill is another important piece of legislation that closes a loophole in the parole system the former government failed to address. Previously when a prescribed Parole Board member made a decision, such as suspending or refusing to suspend a parole order, the board's power to review and revise that decision was legally unclear. That uncertainty created risk for victims and reduced confidence in the parole process.

This bill puts an end to that confusion. It makes it crystal clear that the Parole Board can confirm, set aside or substitute its decision when reviewing a matter referred from an individual member. It also retrospectively validates decisions made as far back as 2017, ensuring legal certainty and continuity of justice. This is not a political stunt; it is a responsible and considered response to a clear legal and procedural gap. It sends a strong message that victims' rights matter and parole decisions must be subject to robust scrutiny. Together, both of these bills are part of our broader commitment to making Queensland safer not just through tougher laws but through smarter laws. Whether it is removing dangerous weapons from public spaces or making sure parole decisions are made fairly and transparently, our government is delivering on what we promised.

I sincerely thank Jack Beasley's family for forming the Jack Beasley Foundation and our police officers, legal stakeholders and the members of the parliamentary committees for their thoughtful engagement and support through this process. I am proud to support both of these important pieces of legislation. I commend the bills to the House.