




Speech By  
**Peter Russo**

**MEMBER FOR TOOHEY**

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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 RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.25 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate in relation to the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 and the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025 which proposes amendments to the Corrective Services Act 2006 to clarify the powers of the Parole Board of Queensland and particularly regarding decisions made by individual board members in urgent situations involving parole suspension.

I will now deal in some detail with the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This legislation builds on the success of Jack's Law that was introduced by the then minister for police, Mark Ryan, in April 2023 by extending the powers of police to use handheld scanning devices, commonly known as wandling, in a broader range of public spaces while also streamlining the operational requirements to enhance police effectiveness while maintaining effective safeguards for the use of these devices.

The bill removes the evidentiary and subjective tests that currently restrict a senior officer's ability to authorise the use of handheld metal detectors in public areas. Under the existing legislation, a senior officer may only authorise such use in designated relevant places if they are satisfied that a knife related incident has occurred and that reliable information suggests another such incident is likely. This requirement has also been removed.

Additionally, the bill amends existing procedural requirements that currently require police to notify managers or occupiers of premises orally or in writing before a wandling operation begins. It also removes the obligation to provide an information notice to individuals upon request that also outlines the details of the wandling authority. These changes are made to reduce the administrative burden on officers in the field while maintaining the use of body worn cameras and appropriate protocols to ensure accountability. This bill also extends the operational period of the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 by 15 years, moving its expiry date from 16 December 2025 to 16 December 2040.

The opposition supports the passage of this bill and the permanent enshrinement of Jack's Law. However, I also take this opportunity to urge the government to adopt a holistic approach to the issue of knife violence, one that balances legislative reform with community education, police training and youth engagement.

The legislative tools provided in this bill are only one component of an effective strategy to combat knife crime. They must be complemented by proactive prevention programs, robust public awareness campaigns and strong community and police partnerships. As the old adage goes, prevention is better than cure. It is here that the work of the Jack Beasley Foundation becomes not just commendable but essential.

Established in the memory of 17-year-old Jack Beasley, who tragically lost his life in a stabbing incident on the Gold Coast, the foundation is dedicated to preventing similar tragedies by educating young people about the dangers and the consequences of carrying knives. Their flagship program, One Moment, developed in partnership with the Queensland Police Service, is a powerful education initiative that combines personal testimony with factual information to drive home the message that one wrong decision can change—or end—lives.

I will now return to the Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill. At its core, this bill seeks to remove an ambiguity in existing legislation by providing Parole Board Queensland—an independent statutory body—with the express authority to review single decisions made by a single board member when Queensland Corrective Services requests an urgent suspension of parole. This includes the power to review not only decisions to suspend parole, which already trigger a board review within two business days, but also those decisions not to suspend parole, which currently lack the same oversight or procedural check. That distinction, or rather that legislative silence, is the crux of what this bill seeks to address. Let me be clear: this bill does not confer a new power; it clarifies an existing practice and confirms a mechanism already being used in the day-to-day operations of the Parole Board. It brings the legislation into alignment with operational realities and, importantly, validates past decisions made under this practice.

While the parliamentary committee received only three submissions and only one submitter appeared at the public hearing, the matters raised were significant and deserve some consideration in debate. The submissions raised two major concerns. First, the potential that this bill could result in an increased number of parole suspensions undermining the rehabilitative intent of parole itself. Second, the inclusion of retrospective provisions which raises complex legal and ethical questions, particularly for individuals who may have grounds to argue that they were wrongfully imprisoned due to decisions now retrospectively validated. These are not trivial issues. They cut to the heart of the balance we must strike in any criminal justice legislation—the balance between public safety and the protection of individual rights, between operational efficiency and legal rigour.

As was made abundantly clear by Queensland Corrective Services during the public briefing held on 30 April 2025, there are times when urgent intervention is required. A person on parole may engage in behaviour that poses a credible and serious risk to the community. In such cases, swift action is not only justified—it is necessary. In these time-critical high-risk scenarios, a single prescribed board member may be called upon to make a decision immediately, often outside standard operating hours. Under the current framework, if a prescribed board member decides to suspend parole, the full board must be convened within two business days to review and confirm that decision; however, no such mechanism exists if the board member decides not to suspend. That procedure is a legislative blind spot and this bill proposes to correct it. Put simply, the bill ensures all urgent decisions—whether to suspend or not—are subject to review, offering a consistent, transparent and accountable process. Let us not mischaracterise this reform. As the President of the Parole Board Queensland and the Commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services both made clear, this is not an expansion of the Parole Board's powers; it is a clarification. To quote the president of the board directly—

The amendments put beyond doubt the board's power to review single Parole Board member decisions.

I commend the bills to the House and the amendments moved by the opposition in relation to the machete laws.