




Speech By  
**Hon. Samuel O'Connor**

**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2025

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

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (5.15 pm): It is my great privilege to add my support to this bill to finally make Jack's Law permanent in Queensland and to deliver nation-leading knife-detecting legislation to our state. Today we are making sure Jack Beasley's legacy is forever enshrined in the statute books of our state. Making Jack's Law permanent means so much to so many people in my part of the Gold Coast. Jack's senseless murder on a busy street in the middle of our city at the start of the holiday period was devastating. He was a young man doing something we have all done: heading out for a night with his mates in Surfers. The impact of the series of decisions that the young men who attacked Jack and his mates made was unimaginable but, because of this bill, change is now permanently going to happen in Jack's name.

I start by paying tribute to Jack's parents, Brett and Belinda. They are here in the gallery to see these laws passed—their legacy in their son's name. I am so proud of their strength and their determination. They will do anything to make sure no other family has to go through what they have: the trauma they have had to experience alongside Jack's brother, Mitch, the rest of his family and all of Jack's mates, especially those who were with him that night. Countless other families will be spared that because of this legislation.

Brett and Belinda, I hope you are proud of what you have achieved. Thank you for all you do. Together, we started with a simple petition about the Helensvale station where Jack's killer got off the train and onto a tram for the journey into Surfers. That turned into the Jack Beasley Foundation being created at our local pub. I have good news for Brett: I have some stubbies of Gold in my office for later on. One of my team members came back with cans of Gold, but I made sure that was corrected for you, mate. That is Brett's go-to drink.

**Mr Minnikin:** That is customer service.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** That is customer service—I will take that interjection. The message was clear from that petition: Detect Knives, Save Lives. It ultimately led to the first version of these laws. Since then Jack's Law has become the foundation for Queensland's approach to tackling knife crime and now under this bill it will be made permanent and better than ever.

The Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 delivers on our commitment to back police and to keep communities safe. I want to acknowledge my colleagues, firstly, the now Attorney-General, whom I brought to meet the Beasleys in mid-2020 when she was our leader. She has been a wonderful supporter of their family ever since. At the start of the 2020 election campaign, Deb visited the Helensvale Hornets. We stood on the field where Jack had played footy from when he was five years old, the field that is named in his honour.

Once a Hornet, always a Hornet. We announced our firm commitment then to give our police the powers they need to detect knives. We said we wanted to see stronger stop-and-search powers in hotspots like Surfers Paradise.

I want to thank the Premier, who represents that great football club, for his strong support of the Beasleys from the beginning as well. During the most recent election campaign the now Premier visited the Arundel Tavern in my community to make a firm commitment to the Beasleys that we would make Jack's Law permanent. Unfortunately, that was not universally supported. The now opposition leader, Steven Miles—and I will quote the *Courier-Mail* reporting of our commitment to make Jack's Law permanent. The article states he—

... slammed the Opposition's announcement as "bizarre", but also did not explicitly say he would make the laws permanent.

I am happy to see that the Labor Party has had a change of heart and will be supporting this legislation. I also pay tribute to the member for Morayfield for getting the first version of Jack's Law through. I am still not sure how he got the members of the left faction to agree with it, but I thank him for his hard work to back the Beasleys. I do wish that he had supported our amendment to make Jack's Law permanent at the time because if he did we would not be here today, but I do acknowledge his work to bring forth the first version of Jack's Law.

I also thank the police minister, who has been a longstanding supporter of the Beasley family and who has listened to police on the front line in every corner of our state to improve this legislation, and that is because these powers work. Since the expansion of the original knife detection powers of Jack's Law in April 2023, more than 1,100 weapons have been taken off the streets of Queensland. More than 130,000 people have been scanned since 2021 and there have been just two complaints from the public, which I am told were from the same person. That is a testament to the professionalism of our police. In the committee's deliberation on this bill, Acting Senior Sergeant Michael Chalmers said—

The public perception as we are doing them is one of the best policing moves. I have been in the job for 20 years, and the positivity from the public as we are doing these is unbelievable. I have done nearly 6,000 people and 90 per cent of them are thanking me after.

...

... when people see what we are doing there is a preventive nature about it and even positivity from members of the public so I cannot think of any other power that police have had that has had such an impact.

This bill ensures Jack's Law can be used more flexibly at major events like schoolies, music festivals and sporting events across Queensland, including on the Gold Coast. We have listened to the feedback of police and made changes to sensibly simplify the process they have to go through. It puts the focus where it should be—on preventing violent crime, not responding to it, and removing unnecessary hurdles that were in place that made operations so bureaucratic that in many cases some were simply not approved.

This bill fixes the sunset clause that was placed into Jack's Law. It makes it permanent by removing that; it allows our police to wand in safe night precincts and high-risk public places without delay; it enables wandering in other public places with faster authorisation from senior officers and it strengthens safeguards in that wandering will remain random, recorded and only undertaken by officers who have had that training. It is underpinned by this practical training and clear guidelines from our Queensland Police Service. It is a law that has been shaped by those on the front line, by the officers who told us the old rules were not working and by the communities that said that they wanted these powers permanent to deliver more safety.

Reporting mechanisms are retained with the commissioner, so in the annual report the number of handheld scanner authorities issued will need to be reported as well as the number of people scanned, the number of knives or other weapons found, the number of times search powers were exercised, and the number and types of charges made as a result of Jack's Law. In response to calls for more data to be collected, the QPS confirmed that, when scanned, a person is not required to provide their name or date of birth and that body worn cameras must be activated by police as a further safeguard. The QPS further told the committee—

At the moment, we are looking weeks ahead before we do an authorisation for an operation coming on because it is a burden, and you could be doing multiple handheld scanning authorisations.

Again, they still need to be authorised by a senior officer who must consider the effect of undertaking wandering, whether previous wandering identified knives or other weapons, whether wandering will deter knife crime and for some places an intelligence assessment on whether there is reasonable grounds to believe a relevant offence may be committed in the next six months. The best comparison I have heard to this legislation is random breath testing or drug testing. This is something that is long

accepted in Queensland, and I think Jack's Law will come to be viewed in the same way as well. It is also similar to other scanning that we go through in everyday life at an airport and before going to a major event. It is really important.

Again for the Beasley family, for Brett and Belinda, this is deeply personal and they should be so proud of their legacy. It is personal for me too. Jack lived in our community. His family are across our community and we are so proud to see what they have achieved by channelling their grief into this extraordinary campaign. Through their school visits, their education campaign and advocacy on the national stage, the Jack Beasley Foundation is driving change. Its One Moment presentation has been delivered to around 100 schools, with more to come. They are helping kids understand that carrying a knife is never the answer and that one bad decision in just a few seconds can destroy countless lives. I will end my contribution with a quote from Brett and Belinda and the Jack Beasley Foundation's submission—

There is nothing that could ever replace the loss of our beautiful boy—

Jack—

but knowing that we have been able to make some changes has given some comfort. It means so much to us that the weapons will be taken off the street and that communities throughout Queensland and Australia will be protected under Jack's name.

I also want to thank the members of the Queensland Police Service who played a role in delivering this—Rhys Wildman, Brad Rix and the detectives from Jack's case, Ash and Shane. They have done an outstanding job in how they have supported the Beasley family. I want to thank the committee for its excellent consideration of this bill and again thank the Premier and the police minister for backing our calls to make Jack's Law permanent. I want to finally thank Brett and Belinda Beasley for their courage and their advocacy. Because of Jack's Law, young Queenslanders will be safer when they head out on a night with their mates. Because of this bill, Jack Beasley will never be forgotten.