




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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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 WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.24 pm): I rise to add my support to both bills being debated here in cognate, both putting victims above offenders. Particularly while the Beasleys are in the public gallery I want to thank them for what they have done out of their unimaginable grief. I had the privilege of meeting them with Sam in the tavern many years ago. Out of what they have done does not just come a change in the law; it is a turning point in the culture of Queensland. When I came to Queensland in 1989 I was not aware of anybody thinking about carrying knives when they went out. That is not to say that they did not, but it certainly was not commonplace. If I go back to my time as a publican, it had started to become commonplace. At my business we used to have a metal detector and we used it every Friday and Saturday night, and it is nearly 20 years ago now when we were doing that, so the knife culture has been creeping into Queensland.

Out of the senseless death of Jack, we now see legislation that I think will pass this House with support from all sides, and it is a turning point in the culture of Queensland where this House is reiterating what the community is saying, and that is that it is unacceptable to carry a knife in a public place in Queensland for the purposes of causing fear, intimidation, threat and/or causing grievous bodily harm or worse. Making these laws permanent and trusting our police to be able to execute these laws says a lot about what we expect in terms of the professionalism of the Queensland Police Service, the culture that it will have around using this and being sensitive to the invasion of privacy that some people may feel, but I think that everybody is willing to give that up to ensure that when you go shopping with your kids or your grandkids you are not walking past someone who has a bladed weapon on them as you are going about getting your groceries or having a coffee or anything else.

The senseless violence that can come in a matter of seconds from someone carrying such a weapon is something that is foreign to the Queensland culture and should remain foreign to the Queensland culture, and this House should uphold laws to ensure that people who want to bring that culture to our great state feel very uncomfortable and either decide to change their behaviour and accept the culture of Queensland or leave. We do not want people carrying bladed weapons in public areas, and having a Police Service that has both the power and the capacity to be able to provide the deterrent is critically important, and all of that has come from the good work of the Jack Beasley Foundation and Brett and Belinda.

Whilst the legislation is fundamentally important, the shift in culture that this legislation marks I think is more important. I think everybody in Queensland accepts that this behaviour is foreign to both Australia and Queensland. As we debate this bill and it hopefully passes through this House, people should be aware that out of 115,000 wandings there have been two complaints, and not in reference to police behaviour; there have been 1,100 weapons, each capable of causing a tragedy like Brett and Belinda suffered, removed from our streets; and people who would perpetuate this culture have been charged—there have been 3,000-plus charges.

I end my contribution by thanking the Beasleys and the foundation they set up. I thank them for the work they do in our schools to change culture and make this kind of behaviour unacceptable. That is much more reflective of the Queensland I came to and the Queensland I want to support going forward—a place where everybody feels happy and safe going about their business, particularly in public areas. I very much thank them and I support both bills before the House.