




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2018

**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. At the outset I want to thank committee members for all of their hard work on the matter and those who made submissions and those who were consulted on the bill—the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Union and the State Coroner.

First of all I want to acknowledge the fantastic job the local officers do on the northern Gold Coast—the Coomera region and the Nerang region. As I said, those officers do a fantastic job and making their lives a little bit better through better legislation is welcomed by our local communities and welcomed by our serving officers. I want to acknowledge those former officers on both sides of the chamber who sit in the parliament now. It is a great service, it is a great organisation and those members can be very proud that they were members of this wonderful organisation.

One of the main concerns the residents of my electorate have—and it could be classed as a lack of understanding of how legislation works—is seeing individuals get off on minor technicalities. That is certainly a bugbear. Today I was talking to John, one of my constituents, about a technicality that an individual got off on. As he said, the legislation needs to be tightened up to ensure that these individuals do not get off on these technicalities—in this case, information on a mobile device. Therefore, for this legislation to work properly we need more resources on the northern Gold Coast and I bring to the attention of the House the resources of the Coomera Police Station and the Nerang Police Station. There are about 68 officers in the Coomera region. Whilst it is great to have this new legislation come into effect, there are not adequate resources for this police region.

When it comes down to it, those officers are overworked and overstressed as it is. With regard to calls for service, in the Coomera region there were 22,000 calls for service in the period from 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018. That is a massive amount of work for 68 officers. With regard to Nerang Police Station, which, as I said, partly covers my electorate, it has 33 officers. They are great officers. They are working very hard. They are getting out there and certainly doing the Police Service proud, but they have received 10,422 calls for service. If we combine those two, that is 33,000 calls for service for about 101 officers. That is an enormous workload. The northern Gold Coast—and, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, I am sure that the Townsville region is growing also—is literally the epicentre of massive population growth in this state.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Just pause the clock for a moment. Member for Theodore, there have been a number of speakers who have spoken today and have been talking about capacities. They have all been brought back to the long title of the bill. I would counsel you to do the same.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. If we combine this with the DV rates on the northern Gold Coast, there have been 792 calls for service in the combined Coomera and Nerang police districts. Whilst this legislation may give police additional powers to do their job better, we need the police resources to adequately service the massive population growth. Our officers are getting snowed under. The member for Coomera is very passionate about the matter, obviously I am very passionate about the matter and I ask that all Gold Coast members—whether they are on the opposition side or the government side—be passionate about this matter. We need these officers for our region. We need them and we need them now.

Turning to the particulars of the legislation, the introduction of a new framework dealing with missing people and additionally the new high-risk missing persons provision that will be inserted will empower officers to establish a missing persons scene for a high-risk missing person without obtaining a warrant. A few weeks ago I was speaking to a police officer down my way who, by chance, is a prosecutor and he was talking about this exact same problem. He said that we need to update our laws to especially get them into the 21st century. A police officer can apply for a judicial order requiring access to locked storage devices such as mobile phones or laptops. Mobile phones these days are a very secure device and, therefore, it is critically important for police officers to have judicial powers to ensure that they can get access to these devices. I spoke about this issue previously on another bill, but security on these devices is extreme and I believe that the member for Townsville, the current Deputy Speaker, was a part of that inquiry quite some time ago.

This legislation is something that I welcome. As other members have stated in the chamber today, the opposition will not be opposing the bill. I support my colleagues in that we need to have very stringent legislation when it comes to sex offenders to ensure the protection of our young, women and the community. That is paramount for legislators in this state. It is our job to ensure that legislation protects our young people. Members on both sides have young families and I want to ensure that we do our utmost to protect women and young kids from these predators.