Expanding Adult Time, Adult Crime and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

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Introduction

I am a proud local of 48 years and the owner and founder of House of Holabox, a retail business operating in the Maryborough CBD. Myself and my husband are also the developers behind *The Queens,* a significant private investment into the revitalisation of the historic Queens Hotel building located on one of the most prominent corners of the Maryborough CBD, at the intersection of Kent and Adelaide Street.

Following redevelopment, House of Holabox will relocate to this site later this year, creating a new retail and hospitality precinct incorporating our current store concept on an expanded level - retail, fashion, hospitality and community event spaces on the lower level and following on the upper level, a high end tapas/wine bar with capacity to hold private functions/workshops/meetings.

This project reflects our long-term commitment to the growth, vitality and future of the CBD and represents a strong vote of confidence in the future of the Maryborough town centre, bringing increased activity, employment and visitors to the town centre.

Local government, community organisations and local representatives have all expressed support for initiatives that revitalise and activate the Maryborough CBD. Projects such as *The Queens* work alongside these broader efforts to strengthen the town centre, attract visitors and encourage positive community use of public spaces.

As a local business owner I am actively involved in the Maryborough town centre community, engaging daily with customers, neighbouring businesses and visitors to the area. I see firsthand the impact that anti-social behaviour can have on the safety, perception and vitality of our town centre.

Support for the Bill

I support the intent of the Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026 and believe stronger legislative tools are absolutely necessary to address persistent anti-social behaviour in public spaces.

As a business owner operating in the Maryborough CBD, I see first-hand the impact that anti-social behaviour has on local businesses, employees and visitors to the town centre.

Regional town centres depend on people feeling safe to visit, shop and spend time in their communities. When anti-social behaviour occurs repeatedly without effective intervention, it erodes confidence in the safety of those spaces.

Clear legislative mechanisms that allow authorities to respond to ongoing disruptive or harmful behaviour are important for maintaining safe and respectful environments for workers, customers and the wider public.

Impact on Regional Businesses and Communities

Like many regional centres, Maryborough's CBD has experienced ongoing issues relating to anti-social behaviour, youth crime and drug-related activity in public spaces.

At both our current location in Bazaar St and future location at The Queens we have witnessed public drug use, intimidation of customers and tourists and have been the victim of intimidation, property damage and repeated disruptive conduct.

These behaviours have a direct impact on local businesses and the broader community. They affect:

- customer confidence in visiting the CBD
- the safety and wellbeing of retail staff
- the ability for businesses to operate extended trading hours
- the overall perception of the town centre as a safe place to visit

When customers feel unsafe, they simply choose not to come into town. For regional retailers and hospitality businesses that rely on foot traffic and tourism, this can have a very real economic impact.

Regional towns like Maryborough, rely heavily on tourism and visitor spending. When tourists or visitors encounter anti-social behaviour in public spaces, those experiences are frequently shared through online reviews, social media and word of mouth. Negative accounts can quickly spread and damage the reputation of a town as a safe and welcoming destination. Over time, this can discourage visitation and undermine the efforts of local businesses and communities working to promote their region.

Recognising Broader Social Challenges

It is also important to acknowledge that many regional communities, including Maryborough, are currently experiencing housing pressures and increasing levels of homelessness.

These issues are complex and require compassionate responses, support services and long-term policy solutions.

However, these broader challenges should not mean that anti-social behaviour in public spaces is tolerated or normalised. Public areas must remain safe and respectful for all members of the community, including workers, customers, tourists and residents.

Importance of Designated Business Precinct Powers

The proposed ability to establish designated business and community precincts, together with police powers to issue move-on directions and temporary banning notices, is a practical measure to help address persistent anti-social behaviour in areas where businesses and the public gather.

In town centres such as Maryborough, many businesses operate in close proximity and rely on safe and welcoming public spaces. When individuals repeatedly engage in threatening, disruptive or offensive behaviour, it can affect not only one business but the entire precinct.

Providing police with the ability to direct individuals to leave an area for a period of time, and to issue banning notices where behaviour continues, gives authorities a practical tool to interrupt ongoing disruption and restore safety in these shared spaces.

These measures support both community safety and the ability of businesses to operate without ongoing disturbance or intimidation.

Small businesses should not have to delay opening their doors, clean up after antisocial behaviour or worry about the safety of their staff and customers before the workday even begins

Importance for Regional Investment

Private investment plays a critical role in the revitalisation of regional town centres. Projects such as The Queens represent a significant financial commitment by local business owners who believe in the future of their towns, investing resources into creating employment, attracting visitors and improving the vibrancy of the CBD.

Investment decisions in regional CBDs are heavily influenced by perceptions of safety, public behaviour and the overall environment of the town centre.

When anti-social behaviour becomes normalised in public spaces, it discourages visitation, reduces confidence for businesses and can deter further private investment in regional communities.

Conversely, when town centres are safe, welcoming and well-managed, they attract business activity, tourism and long-term economic growth.

Policy settings that support safe and respectful public spaces will therefore play an important role in encouraging continued private investment in regional CBD revitalisation.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I support measures that strengthen the ability of authorities to respond to persistent anti-social behaviour in public spaces.

Regional communities work hard to promote themselves as welcoming destinations for visitors, families and investment. When town centres are safe, active and well cared for, they attract tourism, support local businesses and encourage people to spend time in those communities. Conversely, when anti-social behaviour becomes visible and persistent in public spaces, it can quickly damage the reputation of a town and discourage people from visiting or investing.

Strengthening measures that help maintain safe and respectful public spaces will support the long-term prosperity and reputation of regional centres such as Maryborough.

Addressing anti-social behaviour, while also supporting prevention and early intervention initiatives, will help ensure communities like Maryborough remain vibrant places to live, work and visit.

Projects such as *The Queens* demonstrate the commitment of local businesses to investing in the future of regional CBDs. Legislative measures that improve safety in business and community precincts will support these efforts and help create safer, more active town centres for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

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