

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

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Submission: Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

Introduction and context

City of Moreton Bay welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026*.

Council has a strong interest in the safety, functionality and economic vitality of its town centres and community precincts. Over recent months, Council has observed an increase in drug-affected behaviour, intimidation, public disorder and associated safety concerns in several high-use public spaces, including shopping centres, transport interfaces and surrounding civic areas. Caboolture Square is a current and prominent example, with impacts extending beyond the centre itself into nearby streets, parks and community facilities.

These behaviours place pressure on local businesses, frontline workers, community members and Council staff, and undermine confidence in the use of public places. The increased prevalence of anti-social behaviour in public spaces has also resulted in significant cost-shifting to local government. To manage safety risks beyond Council's enforcement remit, Council has been required to engage Queensland Police Service special services to support its activities in high-risk locations. In the past 12 months alone, Council expenditure on such services has exceeded \$300,000.

Support for a stronger public safety framework

Council supports measures that strengthen the ability of police to intervene early, proportionately and decisively where drug related or antisocial behaviour presents a risk to public safety.

In particular, Council supports:

- Clear and enforceable police powers to remove individuals engaging in disorderly, offensive, threatening or violent behaviour from designated business and community precincts.
- The ability to impose time-limited bans from defined areas where behaviour is repeated or escalating.
- A consistent statewide framework that reduces ambiguity for police, local governments, businesses and the community.

From a local government perspective, the absence of timely and effective intervention often results in risk being displaced onto Council officers, contracted security, businesses and the broader community. This is neither sustainable nor appropriate.

3. Operational realities for local government

Council manages and maintains a significant portfolio of public land, facilities, and infrastructure used daily by diverse members of the community. Council officers are not enforcement agencies and are not equipped, funded or authorised to manage anti-social behaviour, including high-risk drug-affected behaviour. Where legislative or operational gaps exist, Council increasingly finds itself exposed to:

- Workplace health and safety risks to staff attending complaints or undertaking routine duties.
- Reputational and legal risk when community expectations of safety are not met.
- Escalation of low-level disorder into more serious incidents due to delayed intervention.

Stronger, clearer police powers in designated precincts would materially reduce these risks and provide a more appropriate frontline response.

4. Interaction with vulnerable populations

Council recognises that some individuals engaging in public disorder may also be experiencing homelessness, mental health issues or substance dependency. These matters are complex and require a coordinated response across policing, health and housing systems.

Council supports enforcement powers being applied with discretion and alongside referral pathways to support services. However, vulnerability alone should not negate the need to protect the wider community's safety or others' right to access public places without fear or intimidation.

5. Designated Business and Community Precincts

Council supports the use of Designated Business and Community Precincts as a targeted, place-based approach. Such precincts should:

- Be clearly defined and publicly communicated.
- Focus on areas of high foot traffic, economic activity and community use.
- Be supported by consistent enforcement and visible police presence.

Council also supports local governments being consulted in the designation and review of these precincts, given their place-based knowledge and operational responsibilities.

6. Conclusion

City of Moreton Bay supports the intent of the *Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026* in relation to enforcement measures to address anti-social behaviour, and considers it a necessary step in restoring confidence, safety and amenity in key public spaces.

Council encourages reforms that:

- Back police with clear, workable powers.
- Reduce the transfer of unmanaged risk to local government and the community.
- Balance enforcement with appropriate pathways to support services.

Strong, timely intervention is critical to preventing further escalation and protecting the places our communities rely on every day.

SUBMISSION ENDS