

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

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To: The Committee Reviewing the Expanding Adult Time, Adult Crime and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

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1. Introduction

I operate a retail business in Coolangatta, serving local residents, families, and visitors. My business relies on a safe and welcoming environment where staff and customers can interact without fear, disruption, or intimidation.

Over recent years, anti-social behaviour in our area has escalated to a level that is now directly threatening the safety, financial stability, and long-term viability of retail operators. I am submitting this statement to highlight the urgent need for stronger legislative measures and practical enforcement tools to protect businesses like mine and the communities we serve.

2. The Reality for Retail Businesses

Retail businesses face daily challenges that have intensified due to persistent anti-social behaviour. These include:

- **Shoplifting and attempted theft**, often by repeat offenders
- **Aggressive or threatening behaviour** toward staff and customers
- **Drug use and dealing** occurring near entrances, car parks, and public spaces
- **Vandalism and property damage**, including broken windows, graffiti, and damaged fixtures
- **Loitering and intimidation**, which deters customers and reduces foot traffic
- **Damage to vehicles**, including staff and customer cars

These incidents disrupt operations, increase insurance costs, and create an unsafe environment for workers and customers. Many retail businesses are now investing heavily in security measures simply to operate safely.

3. Why Stronger Legislation Is Necessary

Retail businesses are essential to Queensland's local economies. We employ young people, parents returning to work, and long-term staff who rely on a safe workplace. Yet we are increasingly operating in conditions that would be unacceptable in any other sector.

The current legal framework does not adequately deter repeat offenders or address the drug-related behaviour that fuels much of the crime affecting retail precincts. The proposed amendments offer an opportunity to correct this.

I support the intent of the bill and believe it should prioritise:

a. Stronger consequences for repeat property crime

Retailers are targeted repeatedly because offenders know the consequences are minimal.

b. Clearer police powers to remove individuals engaging in disruptive or threatening behaviour

Loitering, harassment, and drug-related activity create unsafe conditions for staff and customers.

c. Tougher responses to drug-related offending

Drug activity is a major driver of theft, vandalism, and unpredictable behaviour.

d. Greater accountability for youth offenders involved in high-risk or violent conduct

Many incidents involve the same young individuals cycling through the system without meaningful intervention.

4. Recommendations for the Committee

To ensure the bill delivers real improvements for retail businesses, I recommend:

- **Enhanced penalties for break-ins, theft, and vandalism** targeting retail premises
- **Mandatory intervention programs** for offenders involved in drug-related behaviour
- **Expanded move-on powers** for police in retail and commercial areas
- **Support for businesses to install security infrastructure**, such as lighting, CCTV, and protective barriers
- **A dedicated reporting and response framework** for areas experiencing persistent anti-social behaviour
- **Recognition of retail precincts as high-risk areas** requiring targeted policing strategies

These measures would help restore safety, reduce operational disruption, and protect the livelihoods of workers and business owners.

5. Conclusion

Retail businesses are the backbone of Queensland's local communities. Yet many of us are operating under constant pressure from anti-social behaviour that threatens our staff, customers, and financial stability.

I urge the Committee to consider the lived experiences of retail business owners and to ensure the final legislation provides strong, practical, and enforceable tools to address these issues.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,

Les Graue

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