

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

**Submission No:** 187

**Submission By:** Ben Howe

**Publication:** Making your submission and name public

---

**Ben Howe**

Director, CoSpaces Pty Ltd  
Southport, Gold Coast QLD

24 March 2026

**Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee**

Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

**RE: Submission in Support of Southport Designated Business and Community Precinct**

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you as a longstanding business owner and investor in Southport, Gold Coast, in strong support of the designation of Southport as a Designated Business and Community Precinct under Queensland legislation — and the associated police powers to address individuals exhibiting anti-social behaviour within that precinct.

**About My Investment in Southport**

I am the Director of CoSpaces Pty Ltd, a licensed commercial real estate agency that manages two coworking and flexible workspace facilities comprising over 4,000 square metres of commercial space in Southport. My commitment to this area goes back to 2012 when I established Co Spaces Pty Ltd, and in 2017 Mr P.P.'s Pty Ltd, a restaurant that operated in Southport for eight years.

Over that period, I have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in Southport and grown my workforce from a single employee to a team of more than 30 people. I am not an absentee investor — I am here, on the ground, every day, deeply committed to this city centre's economic future.

**The Ongoing Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour**

Despite our commitment and investment, we are continually confronted with the consequences of unchecked anti-social behaviour in and around Southport's commercial areas. Public drunkenness, open drug use, and associated criminal behaviour are not isolated incidents — they are a persistent, daily reality for businesses like mine.

The tangible impacts on my businesses have been:

- Tenants have vacated our commercial spaces citing safety concerns. When prospective tenants and occupants feel unsafe walking to and from their place of work, they choose to locate elsewhere — and they do.

- Our restaurant, Mr P.P.'s, lost patrons who no longer felt comfortable dining in Southport. People who once frequented the area now avoid it entirely. The revenue impact of this cannot be overstated.
- Our staff — and the staff of businesses throughout the precinct — should not have to run a gauntlet of threatening behaviour simply to open the doors in the morning. Retailers, hospitality operators, and professional services businesses alike face this reality.

### **Inadequacy of Current Police Response**

I wish to be direct about the inadequacy of the current policing response. When businesses in Southport call for assistance, they routinely wait 20 minutes or more simply to have their call answered. Actual police attendance — when it occurs at all — can take an hour or longer. In many cases, no one comes.

This is not the fault of frontline officers. It is a resourcing and policy failure. The current framework does not give police the tools they need to proactively manage anti-social behaviour before it escalates, nor does it allow for the exclusion of repeat offenders from key commercial and public spaces.

### **The Economic Cost of Inaction**

The State Government must understand that allowing this situation to persist is not a neutral policy position — it is a decision with real and compounding economic consequences. Every tenant lost is a business that has relocated. Every patron who avoids the area is revenue that flows to safer precincts. Every square metre of commercial vacancy in Southport represents a failure of the city centre to realise its economic potential.

Southport is the commercial heart of the Gold Coast. It is the location of the District Court, the Gold Coast Hospital precinct, and a growing innovation and professional services economy. It deserves, and requires, a safe and welcoming environment to attract and retain business investment, skilled workers, and community activity.

### **Our Call to the Committee**

I am calling on the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee to support the designation of Southport as a Designated Business and Community Precinct. This designation would grant police the powers necessary to:

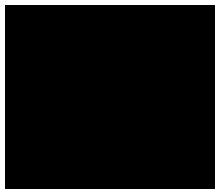
- Issue banning notices to individuals whose behaviour repeatedly threatens the safety and amenity of the precinct;
- Proactively manage and respond to public intoxication, drug use, and associated criminal conduct; and
- Provide businesses and residents with genuine confidence that anti-social behaviour will be addressed swiftly and effectively.

This is not about targeting vulnerable people without cause. It is about restoring the basic right of businesses to open their doors without fear, and of the community to use public spaces without intimidation. Retailers, restaurants, coworking operators, and residents alike deserve that assurance.

I have invested more than a decade of my professional life and hundreds of thousands of dollars building businesses in Southport. I want to continue doing so. But the State Government must act to make Southport a place where that investment is rewarded — not eroded — by the environment in which we operate.

I urge the Committee to move swiftly on this matter and to recommend the designation of Southport as a Designated Business and Community Precinct without delay. The economic and social case is clear. The community is ready.

Yours sincerely,



**Ben Howe**  
Director, CoSpaces Pty Ltd  
Southport, Gold Coast QLD