

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

Submission No: 188

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Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Parliament House

George Street

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Dear Committee

I am sending this letter as a significant landowner of heritage and historic buildings housing over 150 workers, and I write to express my strong support for the ***Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026***.

It is long overdue for the Queensland Government to listen to the concerns of Queenslanders, particularly those of Southport and Gold Coast business leaders and take decisive action to address the unacceptable behaviour occurring in and around the Southport Light Rail Station, Nerang Street Mall, Chinatown and Australia Fair precincts.

For too long, the conduct of a significant cohort of individuals in these areas has been entirely unacceptable. As both a landlord and business owner, my staff and tenants at Co-hort have been subjected to repeated incidents of public abuse, threatening, and offensive behaviour. On numerous occasions, we have witnessed individuals injecting drugs, consuming alcohol, and defecating in laneways adjacent to our property.

While we have made every effort to work cooperatively with Southport Police, their responses though genuine have often been ineffective due to a lack of adequate legislative powers to properly address persistent anti-social behaviour, public intoxication, and associated issues within our CBD.

The impact of this situation has been significant. Most notably, we recently lost our largest tenant, *Supercars*, after more than a decade as an anchor tenant. They cited safety concerns for their staff as the primary reason for their departure, stating:

“Our staff are feeling very unsafe in the area, and we need to move as soon as we can and have planned to go elsewhere.”

This is a deeply concerning reflection on the current state of the Southport CBD.

I am particularly supportive of the proposed introduction of strengthened “move-on” powers and banning provisions aimed specifically at addressing anti-social behaviour. I also support the move to reverse previous “soft on crime” and “soft on drugs” approaches and welcome the introduction of stronger drug-related laws.

Furthermore, I strongly endorse the proposal to establish designated business and community precincts. However, I note that these will initially be limited to four trial locations. In this regard, I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend in the strongest possible terms that Southport CBD be prioritised as one of the initial trial sites.

Southport is not only home to the local courts and approximately 38 international colleges and schools, but it is also a major employment hub, an economic engine room for the Gold Coast. Despite this, the precinct has experienced a noticeable decline in recent years, largely due to the inability of authorities to effectively respond to anti-social and drug-related behaviour under existing laws.

Without stronger legislative powers, both police and the broader community will continue to be frustrated by the lack of effective enforcement and meaningful change. Sadly, many businesses have already felt compelled to relocate to other areas of the Gold Coast due to the adverse impacts on their staff, customers, and operations.

For these reasons, my colleagues and I wholeheartedly commend the intent and provisions of this proposed legislation. We respectfully request that Southport CBD be given priority consideration as a designated trial precinct should the Bill be passed.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of John Howe.

JOHN HOWE
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