



Speech by

Mr ALLAN GRICE, OAM

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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DRUGS

Mr GRICE (Broadwater—NPA) (7.18 p.m.): I have spoken in this House previously about the scourge that is drugs, in particular on the Gold Coast but also throughout this State and this country. I have said before that there are regularly five narcotics overdoses per day on the Gold Coast. I spoke quite recently of a mother of five who has just buried her third child to a drug overdose. The child started off on marijuana and finished up with an overdose of methadone tablets. This mother was a sole parent.

The catch of 400 kilograms that the police achieved at Port Macquarie was pure heroin, and that can be cut up—or divided—up to eight times. So a street weight of 3,200 kilograms was confiscated in one day. One of the worst statistics that I know of in our society today is that in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane or on the Gold Coast, the price of heroin did not increase by one dollar or even one cent. So 3,200 kilograms had no marked effect. Therefore, one can only guess at the amount of heroin and illicit drugs that come into this country.

I turn now to some other statistics that exemplify and exaggerate—well, they can never exaggerate the dreadful crime in which these grubs involve our young people. How many of Australia's 762 children who are victims of crime each week can we trace back to drug abuse? We know that 75% of all crime is drug related in one way or another. I have also said in this place that it has been worked out by the Crime Commissioner of Queensland that one kilogram of heroin costs society \$1m.

In our job as members of Parliament, I do not know how we approach or attack one of the root causes of crime and drug use. I have mentioned one of the worst statistics that I know. One that is worse is that 51.7% of all children in Australia are raised in a single-parent household. I do not mean to denigrate those who do it successfully. Some single parents do an incredible job of bringing up and providing for children. But I believe that the fact that 52% of Australian children are brought up in single-parent houses is the root cause of lots of our social malaise.

It is easy to imagine that there are many young people out there who have absolutely no idea about how to live in society because they have never lived in a traditional family; they have never had the influence of two parents. How do we approach this? How do we cause a shock wave in society to identify this problem? How do we address it? I am certainly not the font of all wisdom, and I just do not know. But if we, as parliamentarians on both sides of this House and in the Houses of Parliament throughout Australia do not address this issue and find some answers, I can see no improvement in our dreadful crime statistics.

We all talk about the punishment of crime, and that must happen. Stronger punishment of crime is very often necessary and does achieve a result for society. We also often talk of the causes of crime. I know that this current Government often uses the expression that it will address the causes of crime. However, in my view, the greatest cause of crime and our general social malaise in this country is the fact that we have lost the traditional values of families. Lots of do-gooders can say that it does not really matter, that the newness of different relationships is appropriate, good and enjoyable. But it is the kids who suffer—kids who cannot be brought up in a two-parent relationship; kids who are witnesses to changing partners; and kids who do not have the solidarity and the backing of a family. That is the basic problem today. I for one am saddened that I cannot provide an answer in this House. But if we do not work at this together to figure out an answer to that, we will be much the worse for it and not truly representative of our people.