



Speech by

## Mr BRUCE LAMING

### MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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Hansard 10 November 1999

#### LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah—LP) (10.28 p.m.): I am pleased to be given the opportunity to speak to the Liquor Amendment Bill. I do not intend to make a lengthy contribution, but it does afford me the opportunity to refer once again to an issue that has been of great concern to me ever since I became the member for Mooloolah in 1992.

Two Ministers responsible for licensing and three Ministers for Police are well aware of my continual concerns over the past seven years about the behaviour of a minority of people—many from other areas—leaving the nightclub area of Mooloolaba for various destinations during the early morning period. The troublemakers are not necessarily all nightclub patrons, as many are underage and underdressed for the clubs. It is a huge social problem on the Sunshine Coast and it is not restricted to Mooloolaba. Much of the behaviour is not necessarily unlawful, but it is anti-social and noisy. It includes sometimes foul language, noisy vehicles and other boisterous behaviour, as well as a considerable level of vandalism from time to time.

For the benefit of those members who represent electorates that have not experienced this problem, I should go into a little detail as to one aspect of the problem. We used to have 3 a.m. closing, which I understand is the normal situation in many areas of Queensland now. We had the slow wind-down of this boisterous night-life activity overlapping with the legitimate early morning activities of mainstream Sunshine Coast residents and visitors. These activities for hundreds of locals comprise walking, jogging and heading for our beaches from about 4.30 a.m. onwards—men and women, old and young. What a shock it was for them to be often confronted with the behavioural dregs of the night before.

The consensus of the community outrage was such that a few years ago we as a community were able to cobble together an agreement with the licensees and other stakeholders to draw back closing time to 1 a.m. This was not the end of the world for either the nightclubs or the nightclub patrons, because life continued on much as it was. As a matter of fact, the problem is to a certain extent still there but between the hours of 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. instead of between the hours of 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. The conflict between those who got up early in the morning and those who stayed up very late at night was removed.

I do not claim any right to dwell on Anzac Day, apart from reflecting on its solemn and sometimes silent observance and the fact that more and more young people are attending services. But Parliament does have a responsibility to ensure that Anzac Day can be observed without even unintended interruption wherever possible. Although I am not aware of any recent conflicts between the sometimes noisy activities of that minority of people departing the nightclub areas and those observing dawn services on the Sunshine Coast, I believe that such an occurrence would be quite possible had it not been for our decision to pull the closing hours back from 3 a.m. to 1 a.m. A 3 a.m. closing time is still the norm in many parts of Queensland.

The question is: should this Parliament put in place legislation to avoid this happening at some time in the future, particularly as such an incident has occurred in the past? I believe that it should, as long as the proposed legislation is not unduly restrictive on the wider community.

The Liquor Amendment Bill seeks to amend the Liquor Act 1992 by replacing section 9(3), which relates to trading hours on the eve of Anzac Day. It is proposed that all liquor licences, including

cabaret licences, cease at midnight on the day prior to Anzac Day. It is proposed that these premises be able to reopen from 1 p.m. on Anzac Day.

So the real question—the only question—is this: is this restriction on licensees and their patrons to cease serving alcohol at midnight on the eve of this very special day unduly restrictive on the wider community in its endeavour to avoid a possible conflict? This is particularly the case on a day on which we should be enjoying a singleness of purpose. I have little difficulty in saying that I believe the potential benefits of such a Bill far outweigh any reservations. I strongly believe that the Liquor Amendment Bill should receive the support of this House.

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