



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOORROOPILLY

Hansard 23 March 1999

DRUG COURT TRIAL

Mr BEANLAND (Indoorroopilly—LP) (6.24 p.m.): This motion moved by the coalition tackles two issues: firstly, that of drug offenders and, secondly, that of fine defaulters. We heard from Minister Foley a short while ago that he is opposed to this trial; he is opposed to a trial that is, in fact, now occurring. I understand that a trial started one month ago in New South Wales. Yet we can expect little more from this can't do Government.

The Premier said that we need Federal funding. Of course, the Premier is always looking for funding from somewhere else. He indicated that there are 9,000 drug addicts. There seem to be 9,000 good reasons to get cracking on this particular exercise. Minister Foley mentioned that drug courts were in the Government's crime prevention strategy. Let me tell the public that they were on the last page of its strategy—the very last page, page 64—and only two words were mentioned, "drug court". So little does this Government think about drug courts it puts them right to the end of its thinking. It is really not interested.

It is time for this Government to start to sit up and take notice of the concerns of the public. Even the New South Wales Labor Government is making a fool of this Government. That Government is miles in front of this Government. That is saying something, because at least in New South Wales they are prepared to give it a go. But on the last page of the Government's crime prevention strategy there were the words "drug court", and there was absolutely no model mentioned at all—no reference to a model whatsoever.

This exercise does two things: it gives us the ability to undertake drug court trials—and I emphasise "trials"—to see how they work and, secondly, to put in place a program for fine defaulters. Of course, this Government obviously has to be prodded into both exercises. We know it is a cynical political exercise as far as this Government is concerned. One has only to look and see its reaction in relation to keeping fine defaulters out of jail. It was raised by the coalition some 12 months ago—over 12 months ago, in fact. The Opposition spokesman on Justice at that time, Mr Foley, said that the scheme would tear apart families already struggling with onerous financial commitments. He called on Government to pour more resources into community service orders as a means of dealing with fine defaulters. That was the Labor Party's reaction to tackling the issue of keeping fine defaulters out of jail. It was not interested at all in the exercise; it was too busy playing straight party politics. That is what it was all about, and that is exactly what it did in the first part of last year.

Of course, we have heard today and we saw in the paper this morning comments from the Minister for Justice that the former proposal was flawed. He said it was not funded. Of course, the same goes with his proposal, which I have noticed is to be self-funding. Of course, our proposal was to be self-funded, too. It was absolutely self-funding, and I know that at the end of the day we will see that that is exactly what the Labor Party is looking at, because it has to be self-funding if it is going to stand up. If it is not self-funding, there is something dreadfully wrong with his proposal.

Secondly, the Minister talks about drivers' licences. The Minister indicates there is some flaw in relation to that. We did the hard work; I did the hard work. The coalition spent many, many months working through this piece of legislation. Any changes could have been made with a couple of hours of work—not even that, probably five minutes—but this Minister is too lazy to spend a couple of nights burning the midnight oil doing a little work. Already we see the work he has done as Minister: one Attorney-General Bill that was opposed by the former EARC parliamentary committee. The Government

puts up this proposal, the parliamentary committee opposes it, so he brings in one Attorney-General Bill, and nothing else has passed through the Parliament—nothing else.

Mr Foley: What about the stalking Bill? You ignored stalking.

Mr BEANLAND: I sat up late—till midnight—doing the hard work, and he had a paper that was already prepared. You lazy, lazy Minister! I did the hard work. I prepared the paper. He came in and carried it on. The day he took office he indicated—it is on the public record—that the work had already been done. The point I make is that he is not prepared to put in the work, and that is what we find with this issue of fine defaulters: he is not prepared to put in the work. That is what we are finding with the drug court: he is not prepared to put in the work. That is why the Labor Party is opposed to it this evening: they do not want to put in the hard yards that are required.

Members opposite are not interested in the 9,000 people who have drug problems. They are not interested in coming up with a model. As I indicated, only on the last page of Labor's crime prevention strategy does the issue of drug courts get a mention. If we look at some of the benefits that will flow from the proposal of keeping fine defaulters out of jail, we find that there is some \$23m to be saved that will go towards paying for the cost of this drug court. The Government has the funding and the resources that are necessary across-the-board, but it is still not interested.

Time expired.
