



Speech by  
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BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 2 December 1999

**PROSTITUTION BILL**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (12.11 p.m.): This legislation is a great disappointment. The Premier promised to change the current situation by removing single sex operators from our suburban streets and, therefore, remove the problem from our suburban residential areas. Instead, single sex operators who are currently legal in our suburban streets will continue, and the disturbance that this brings to a neighbourhood will continue. People calling at the wrong address at all hours of the day and night will continue. The ability to set up a business as a single sex operator next door in a residential suburban street will continue. In any case, it is an accepted fact in the sex industry that the illegal brothels will continue to flourish because of the high level of operational costs and the significant requirements associated with brothels under this particular legislation. Again, this legislation is flawed, as it will not stamp out illegal brothels—as the Premier has indicated. And as for those legalised brothels which this legislation will allow, it needs to be stressed that this will do little to stamp out illegal prostitution, and certainly not street prostitution, whether by adults or children.

Although the Government says that organised crime will be kept out, members would be well aware that there is more than one way to hide behind a front organisation. The fact that these brothels only need to be up to 200 metres from a residential area means major problems for residential neighbourhoods. The result of these changes will be an explosion of prostitution—not less prostitution—in our residential suburbs and streets. Again, the Premier indicated that the converse would be the case.

So who is going to get the licences— Queenslanders or crime bosses and the institutional sex industry of southern States? I understand that brothel owners from southern States, where there is an oversupply of sex workers, are already in Queensland looking at a range of locations. Should these be approved, the community will see a large number of prostitutes coming to this State from interstate. Many of them, of course, have a drug problem, which will mean a resultant increase in the drug problems in this State; and the numbers of sex workers likely to be involved will double or treble within a short period.

It is little wonder that we have witnessed opposition to this legislation by the sex workers themselves and other people within the sex industry in Queensland. They have indicated on a number of occasions, and in a number of aspects, how this legislation is flawed. We should not forget that sex workers and their organisations have spoken out strongly to date, as they believe that this is the wrong model of legislation. This model is flawed.

As for young people under the age of 18 years, particularly those on drugs—how is the Government going to keep them off the streets? Those young people need money to feed their drug habits, for which they prostitute themselves. Larger fines will only mean that they will become even more hopelessly entrapped in prostitution, in drugs and in crime to pay those fines. And of course, if they do pay those fines, they will become more entrapped in prostitution, just as they will to pay for their drug habits. That will lead to more crime and more robberies.

I have challenged the Government previously on this issue, yet all the community gets from this Beattie Labor Government is that the fines will be stiffer and that that will solve the problem. But I have news for Premier Beattie: this will solve no problem whatsoever. It certainly will not solve the current problem and, as I have indicated, it will make it worse.

The community is crying out for a proactive approach that tackles the causes of young people being on the streets in the first instance, treats those young people, assists them so that they will not end up on the streets again in the same situation and gets them off drugs and away from their street crime and, of course, away from prostituting themselves on the streets. There is nothing in this legislation that tackles the causes of those particular issues and problems that lead to young people getting on the streets in the first place. Imposing stiffer penalties on those young people will do nothing to tackle these causes but will add considerably to the problems of young people needing to prostitute themselves further and committing robberies to pay those penalties.

Of course, street prostitution already is illegal—whether it be for children or for adults. Again, even in relation to adults, we are not going to see adults being taken off the streets because of this legislation. And stiffer fines will mean that they will need to do more prostitution on the streets to pay those fines and to pay for the drug habits that so many of them have.

It is clear that this model is flawed. A range of recent incidents involving children prostituting themselves on the streets has received coverage in the media. But, despite all the laws that protect those children from being identified, and the circumstances surrounding those situations from being identified, it is apparent that the numbers of children who are involved in those situations is quite significant. The causes are clearly far too hard for this Beattie Labor Government to tackle.

It is worth while noting that there has been little reference to the fact that certain exemptions from the FOI legislation are covered in this legislation. I think it is clause 137 in the Bill. When I read the Explanatory Notes on the Prostitution Bill, I noticed that all they say is that the Freedom of Information Act 1992 does not apply to documents given or produced by the authority. They provide no explanation or reasons. In fact, it is fair to say that there is no explanation at all. I believe that shows that a fairly slipshod effort was put into those Explanatory Notes, because they ought to have covered this significant issue in detail. It is significant that that freedom of information exemption has been granted and that these matters are not covered under the FOI legislation.

In conclusion, I believe that there is clearly a need to address problems in the current prostitution laws. Unfortunately, this legislation—this model—does not do that but creates additional problems.

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