



Speech by

**DESLEY BOYLE**

**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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Hansard 2 December 1999

### PROSTITUTION BILL

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (12.22 p.m.): Despite the expressions of moral outrage that this House has heard from members of the Opposition and Independents, the fact is that moral outrage, expressed over many centuries, has not worked. Expressing it further today will not change the fact that, regardless of the Beattie Government and all honourable members of this House, prostitution does exist, has existed and will exist well into the future. It is as though there is a wish for prostitution to disappear, as though if the Government adds to the voices of moral outrage by refusing to legalise prostitution via brothels, then somehow our moral stand will make a difference in a way no society in modern history has been able to make a difference. It is as though they wish us to place this moral outrage, as hopeless as it is in conquering prostitution, ahead of our responsibility to do all that we can to prevent harm to those who work as prostitutes as well as to their clients, to abrogate our responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of all involved in the sex industry, to do what we can to minimise the associated crime, to limit where such operations take place, and to do the best that we can to decrease the likelihood of disruption and offence to those members of the public who are not in any way engaged in the sex industry. If we do not set those parameters and instead adopt the simplistic attitude of moral outrage, then we have no controls. That is the bottom line and, for that reason, I support the Government's attempts to impose some proper controls over the sex industry and prostitution.

However, I would like to make some points. Religious standards and moral outrage have not worked against prostitution. I am bothered by the punitive and holier-than-thou attitude of many members of this House, particularly those opposite. The implication is that they themselves are and have always been without blemish. Oh, that it were so. I am bothered also by the demonstrated lack of humanity, particularly on the part of the members of the One Nation team, as though this false division that exists between good people and some others who are somehow bad can somehow be remedied by these punitive expressions of outrage.

When we talk about the sex industry, we are really talking more about a sad industry. We cannot consider the issue of prostitution without talking about the broader issue of human sexuality. We need to recognise the power of the sexual drive. It is not just a powerful drive for the purposes of reproduction, we are given by God bodies through which we can enjoy intense feelings of pleasure and of closeness to other human beings. These workings, these needs and these capacities are God given. Modern history shows that religious imperatives in the name of God to set sexuality aside for exclusive expression in a legally and religiously recognised marriage between a man and a woman have failed. At this time, our society is having the courage to face the distorted and dysfunctional sexual behaviour that has occurred behind closed doors and for too long has been destructive and for too long has been denied. Much of this behaviour is much worse and much more damaging than prostitution which is, in effect, the sexual act of consent between adults, albeit involving money. Of course, the behaviour I refer to is paedophilia, sexual assaults on children and abuse of children, a significant proportion of which has occurred within a church-related framework. I also refer to rape, both as a single event of violence, repeated rape in the context of marriage and rape frequently associated with violence and alcoholic excess. That type of behaviour is much more damaging to human beings than prostitution which is controlled, regulated and set aside for those who feel a need to use it.

Oh, that it were so that we all had satisfying and intimate relationships that allowed sexual expression and fulfilment and that, therefore, none of us needed to ever think of the sad second best

that is prostitution. However, when the powerful sexual drive will not be suppressed or repressed, prostitution is a better choice than violence, abuse, or forced sexual acts perpetrated against children or adults. It is a better and a safer society that allows for prostitution controls and regulation, thereby minimising the risks of violent abuse, harm and disruption to others.

I wish our society could find the way forward so that we all enjoyed appropriate, intimate and close relationships and that prostitution would, through a lack of need and, therefore, lack of custom, disappear. Moral outrage will not make that happen. As parliamentarians, the best that we can do is to do the best we can to control, to protect, to regulate, and to minimise the disruption of the broader society caused by prostitution.

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