



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard 14 April 1999

ANZAC DAY TRADING HOURS

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (6.18 p.m.): Tonight, thanks to the member for Gladstone, we have an opportunity to do what we all know should have been done immediately this issue was raised. We have an opportunity to ensure that the issues that the Liquor Amendment Bill 1999 seeks to address are addressed in time to prevent any disrespectful incidents from occurring at Anzac Day services this year, which is what this motion seeks to do. The motion seeks to ensure that the issues are given fair consideration by the Parliament in time to be effective for Anzac Day this year.

Anzac Day is a day that, without doubt, is most revered and respected in the Australian calendar. It is but 11 days away. This year it falls on a Sunday, so the potential for the type of problem that the Bill seeks to address is very real. Therefore, it follows that it would seem appropriate to any commonsense way of thinking that the Parliament should consider the Bill now. If it is considered an appropriate legislative response to the issues that arose last year, it can be proclaimed in time to be effective in minimising disruption to Anzac Day services this year. To not consider this Bill tonight will in itself represent a disrespectful approach by the Parliament to the celebration of Anzac Day.

Mr Pitt: Rubbish!

Mr SEENEY: It will represent a disrespectful response to the issues that have arisen from this most respected of Australian remembrances. To refuse to consider this issue now is to belittle those issues. It is to say that they are unimportant and not worthy of timely consideration. I do not believe that anyone, least of all those who interject so stupidly from the other side of the House, believes that.

To refuse this opportunity to consider this issue tonight is to say that we in this Parliament do not consider that the solemn observance of our Anzac Day traditions is important enough to consider in a timely fashion a proposal that seeks to address issues that have arisen in the conduct of the most solemn of those ceremonies—the traditional dawn service. Nightclubs and licensed premises that trade all night are increasing in number in the Queensland community. The problems that can and have been caused by such establishments to dawn services on Anzac Day are unacceptable to every member of the House. Every member of the House and every sensible member of the community will deplore any disruption at all to the Anzac Day dawn service—that most solemn service on our most sacred day of remembrance.

It does not matter how many such incidents have occurred already. The figures and the statistics do not really matter. One such incident is far too many. Every member of the community, every person we represent in whatever electorate, would surely agree that this Parliament—the people's Parliament—should consider proposals that address problems related to the Anzac Day dawn service in time to implement whatever changes the Parliament considers appropriate before Anzac Day this year. To remove the potential for such problems to occur is an important role of this Parliament.

This year, Anzac Day falls on Saturday night/Sunday morning, and the potential for problems is greater than it otherwise would be. Given the universal unacceptance of this problem in the community, it would seem straightforward that the Parliament should consider this issue. It is simply politics that will prevent that. As we approach Anzac Day this year, it would be most appropriate for this Parliament to ensure that that problem is fixed once and for all; that we put petty politics aside and consider this issue now. It would seem ludicrous not to consider options for measures to prevent disrespectful disruptions to the solemn celebration of the traditional dawn service this Anzac Day. It may well be that those

options are not considered appropriate. I hope that is not the case. But at least let this Parliament consider those options, fully and frankly debate them and make a decision on whether it will or will not remove the potential for such unacceptable incidents to occur this Anzac Day.

I commend the member for Gladstone for introducing this motion. I urge members to support this effort to ensure that Anzac Day this year is celebrated with the respect and solemnity that is appropriate in respect of those who served this country and in particular those who lost their lives.
