



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD

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DRUGS

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (10.26 a.m.): Residents at the Forestdale Community Association meeting last week were shocked to hear that some syringes were found in one of their local parks. Forestdale is a unique acreage development in the Archerfield electorate and it has a strong community spirit. I was pleased to see this community spirit emerge at the meeting. The Forestdale residents did not respond by panicking about the syringes. They did not call on the police to raid the parks and run the drug users out of their suburb. Instead, they spoke sensibly about a range of strategies to deal with the drug problem.

They discussed practical and safe clean-up strategies. I also discussed with them the importance of the drug prevention programs and innovative treatment programs that our Government is implementing. I commend the residents of Forestdale for their open-minded approach to their local concerns.

I believe that communities throughout Queensland want sensible, bipartisan approaches to the drug abuse problem. The Premier reported on the productive bipartisan discussions that were had at the meeting of Premiers last week. We will not get anywhere if we focus predominantly on a "lock 'em up" approach to people with drug addictions and political point scoring on drugs. That is what the coalition parties have focused on, despite the bipartisan rhetoric from the member for Warwick today.

Cities such as New York that have had a tough approach to drug addicts and zero tolerance policing practices have spent billions of dollars building prisons. In fact, it was recently reported that there are more black youths in jails than in college in New York. They are now trialling drug courts and mandatory participation in structured support programs to get people back on track. This approach is showing promising results.

Our Government is being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. One cause of crime is drug addiction. This is the way forward. No-one can promise the residents of Forestdale that there will be no more drug users in their park, but as their State member I will be pushing for more sensible, effective, bipartisan solutions to our drug problem.
