



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 27 October 1999

**LIQUOR OUTLETS, BARRON RIVER ELECTORATE**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (11.05 p.m.): The residents of the Barron River electorate jealously guard their quality of life. Members in this House have heard me speak often in defence of our wonderful natural environment and the need to provide adequate protection against inappropriate development. But tonight I wish to speak about the potentially adverse social impacts of development and, in particular, the adverse impacts that can result from the proliferation of liquor outlets in my electorate.

Since my being returned as the State member in June 1998, there have been five applications to the Liquor Licensing Division, and on each occasion there has been a significant community opposition. While I am not a teetotaler—and I am certainly not a wowser by any means—I have supported the objections from constituents on these issues because the evidence is clear that increased access to alcohol often brings with it many problems: for the patrons, who may drink to excess; for their families, who may suffer as a result; and for the surrounding residents, who may experience an increase in noise, traffic problems and crime in their neighbourhood. There is certainly the likelihood of an increase in under-age drinking.

To date, two of those five applications have been successful, and bottle shops have been located in small local shopping centres in Brinsmead and Edge Hill, despite objections. The Edge Hill application actually went to appeal following rejection by the Liquor Licensing Division in support of residents. It was finally approved after the independent tribunal ruled in favour of the applicant. We were, however, more successful in the case of a tavern proposal at Kewarra Beach, which was also rejected by the licensing commission. This application also went to appeal, but the local residents and the Trinity Anglican school located nearby mounted a very strong case, and the community won the day.

The proponent of the Kewarra Beach tavern, Chris Cameron, has not, however, given up and has lodged another application for a hotel licence, this time for a tavern in the shops at the Campus Shopping Village, located near the Smithfield campus of the James Cook University. But the university and the Cairns Chamber of Commerce have indicated publicly that they will be lodging a strong objection—as, I understand, will the Smithfield police, the students association, Councillor Sno Bonneau and certainly myself.

The particular concern at the university is that the tavern is located immediately opposite student accommodation that is currently under construction and which is targeting overseas students. There is a real fear that the noise and traffic from the tavern will impact on students trying to study and sleep and that overseas parents will not support their sons or daughters coming to the James Cook University if they know that there is a tavern with poker machines and entertainment located next door to where they are living. I am aware also that many Smithfield residents living in the subdivision situated quite close to the Campus Shopping Village are also concerned about the impact on their lifestyle.

Finally, there is also the question of need. The students association already has a limited special purpose licence, and the Smithfield tavern is located just a couple of kilometres away. So there can hardly be any argument that there is actually a need for an additional liquor outlet.

The same argument is even more compelling in the case of the final liquor licence application to which I wish to refer tonight, namely, that of Mark Biancotti of Trinity Beach, whose development site is

located no more than 200 metres from the existing Trinity Beach Hotel. I have attended public meetings of the Trinity Beach Promotion Association and the Trinity Beach Ratepayers, and there was overwhelming objection at those meetings to the granting of a full hotel general licence.

There was agreement that that prime esplanade site, owned by Mr Biancotti, could be enhanced by redevelopment, and an on-premise restaurant-style licence for a family bistro would certainly have wide community support. However, it appears that Mr Biancotti is determined to ignore the sentiments of the community in which he lives and apply for a general licence that opens the door to uses that are inconsistent with the family-oriented nature of the tourism industry at Trinity Beach and the character of that popular beachside township.

I am part of a local campaign that has been initiated to object to the granting of this general licence at Trinity Beach. It is being spearheaded by Laurie Irwin of the Trinity Beach Promotion Association and Councillor Sno Bonneau. We know that we can count on the support of the police, the ratepayers association and many local residents in this campaign. There has, in fact, been a strong response already to material that we have letterboxed in the Trinity Beach area outlining the grounds for objection that residents can use. It is particularly disappointing to me that Mark Biancotti, through his employees, has been out in the Trinity Beach area encouraging people to sign a petition in support of his development, using information that was really designed to mislead people into thinking that his proposal had widespread community support when, in fact, it does not.

I conclude by tabling a copy of all of the information that the Trinity Beach Promotion Association has distributed in the Trinity Beach area.

Time expired.

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