



Speech by

Tony ELLIOTT

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

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LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham—NPA) (8.47 p.m.): I rise to take part in this debate tonight because, quite frankly, I have seen over a long period at various venues and at different times right throughout the State—and nothing to do with the RSL—how some drunk will suddenly lob into a situation. Whether it be at a private party, a function or whatever, where everything is very solemn and people are going through a particular process, some character will turn up and mouth obscenities and curse and swear and fall about the place. Now, I am not saying that that is going to happen often, and I am not saying that it is going to be a regular occurrence; however, I am saying that if members think that it will not happen if the legislation stays in its current form, then they are greater optimists than I am.

I invite members to stand outside City Rowers early in the morning. I have a daughter who rows physically—not in City Rowers, either. She is out there on the river early in the mornings, and I have been past City Rowers and I have seen people falling over themselves, abusing each other, abusing taxidrivers and everyone else they can see. Down at the Gold Coast, I have seen the same thing. So if members think that this will never happen and that it is all some figment of their imagination then, quite frankly, they are away with the pixies.

The reality of the situation is that it will happen in time. I can visualise the most solemn part of the Anzac Day ceremony where one can hear a pin drop. That is how seriously the old diggers and the RSL people take this ceremony. These people carry out the ceremonies quite magnificently. One has to be a pretty hardened type not to have a tear come to one's eye and to feel sad about the whole situation. It makes us think of what we owe to those people.

Probably all honourable members have relations who either gave their lives or were maimed in the service of our country and its flag in order to give us the freedom that we all take for granted. Honourable members represent a cross-section of our community. Unfortunately, we all take for granted what the servicemen and servicewomen went through in order to ensure that we live in a free society and a free country.

Surely to goodness members opposite are not going to take a political point and not give way in order to ensure that such sacrosanct moments are not destroyed by some idiot, five sheets in the wind, cursing and swearing and totally upsetting the whole ceremony. Honourable members have seen gatecrashers at 21st birthday parties. These are the people who wreck what would ordinarily be a wonderful family occasion. The same thing will happen if those opposite do not support this legislation.

I believe that honourable members opposite owe it to the RSL clubs and to the veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Malaysian conflict to support this legislation. Unfortunately, there are not too many of the old fellows left from World War I. We now have servicemen serving in East Timor. Surely it is not too much to ask honourable members opposite to support these people in our community and ensure that they do not have to suffer such indignity and embarrassment. It is not a lot to ask.

I am amazed that such legislation was not introduced some time ago. I do not believe that anyone can say that we are jumping at shadows or imagining a problem that does not exist. I invite honourable members opposite to tell me that I am wrong and that incidents of this kind will never happen. If I hear honourable members speak with the courage of their convictions, perhaps at least I might think that they are simply misguided. However, if Government members hide behind the cloak of anonymity provided by the Australian Labor Party, they will all go down in history as being cowards.

Mr Sullivan: Rubbish!

Mr ELLIOTT: You will be branded as cowards.

Mr Sullivan: You are one of the laziest members in the whole House.

Mr ELLIOTT: You don't like it because you know that the RSL is going to get into you in your own electorate. They are going to brand you as one of those people who did not have the guts to stand up here tonight and do something about this issue.

The member for Chermside turns around and points at the Independents and at members of the National Party and says, "You are not game." He is trying to tell members on this side of the House that they are not game to stand up on this issue. This is the member for Chermside's opportunity to stand up and show what he is made of. I invite him to tell the people of Queensland where he comes from and that he is prepared to stand up for the diggers and the RSL. I invite him to do what the community wants him to do. That is the bottom line.

Government members interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is easy to tell when one gets under their hides because the first defence is to stoop to personal abuse. If we say something that those opposite do not like or do not agree with, they say something personal. They believe that we will then sit down because we do not like it.

Mr Sullivan: You are a fraud.

Mr ELLIOTT: It has nothing to do with being a fraud. This is something that is very important to the community. If the member for Chermside does not sense that, he has a worse political barometer in his nose than I thought. As a person who goes around the community and talks to people in his electorate, I thought he would know that. He has been a teacher. It is a very important principle at Nudgee College. If the member for Chermside went back to Nudgee and spoke to the old boys who served in the Second World War, the Vietnam War and the Korean War, they would tell him to support this legislation. I challenge him to do that.

Mr Sullivan: I have spoken to them and they have not said it—the RSL. The diggers have not said it to me.

Mr ELLIOTT: Because you have been hiding in your office. You have not been game to go and talk to them. If you go and talk to them, I guarantee that is what they will tell you.

Anyway, enough of that. I consider this legislation to be very important. On 6 November, the day of the referendum, I will be at the Clifton RSL attending an annual reunion. I can hear the ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen saying to me, "That is what we wanted you to do." That is the feedback I get. That is what my conscience tells me to do this evening. I will do it without the slightest hesitation. Those opposite can abuse me and call me what they like, but that is what I intend to do. I advise anyone with any commonsense, who wishes to act in accordance with the community's views, to think hard and long and support this Bill.
