



Speech by

**BILL FELDMAN**

**MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE**

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Hansard 3 October 2000

### PROSTITUTION LEGISLATION

**Mr FELDMAN** (Caboolture—CCAQ) (6.21 p.m.): If there was one thing that Queenslanders did not think was the right thing to do it was the liberalisation of the laws in relation to prostitution and the formation of boutique brothels. Most thinking Queenslanders saw that amending the prostitution legislation merely enabled the further erosion of the moral fibre and character of our society. This was highlighted last month at the Local Government Association conference on the Gold Coast in a similar debate over the issue of prostitution and the anomaly surrounding councils of varying sizes and populations. The right to deny or not deny applications for brothels is the same debate that has been resurrected tonight by the member for Gladstone.

I honestly feel sorry for the member for Waterford, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, because he thought he was on a winner with this legislation, but it has come back to bite him in a big way. Every corner of the sex industry, community groups and churches, even the previous Police Commissioner, local government and even members of his Government spoke against and criticised the then Prostitution Bill and now Prostitution Act. Saying that he should not be listening to God-fearing people is not the right thing to be saying in this place.

Now that local governments know and understand the greater will of their constituency, they are very reluctant to pass any application for a boutique brothel licence. They have recognised the inherent dangers for their shires in passing such applications. And perhaps they realise the inherent dangers to their positions in local government should they approve those licences.

I believe the Minister sought to fracture the Local Government Association by separating the councils representing shires of 25,000 people or more from those councils representing shires with fewer than 25,000 people. However, they showed on the Gold Coast that they would not be fractured and they are of the opinion that all councils should have the same right to reject the legislation and have the right to refuse brothel applications within their local government areas. I think that is a right that they deserve, because they are the ones, as the Minister said, who do the planning and have to put up with the complaints that will be coming in.

The Minister sought to pander to the sex industry and even through the legislation sought to absolve himself of any responsibility for the administration and the success of brothel applications and washed his hands of the process—just like Pontius Pilate—and he used the local governments as a hand towel. He was told that the legislation would not help anyone, but he pressed on regardless. We now have a piece of worthless legislation that is harmful to the greater good of society, sitting coiled like a snake ready to attack those who are least able to care for themselves.

I believe the Logan City Council had the right idea when it responded to the review of prostitution laws in Queensland, and it did not say it any better than when it responded on page 2 of that document in subsections (c), (d) and (f) in its list of reasons not to support the legislation. In (c) and (d) it stated that it is likely that brothels will generally reduce property values, amenity and development options of adjacent properties and that planning and development legislation and schemes are unlikely to be able to adequately address the social impacts and community concerns about the location of brothels, particularly as the new Integrated Planning Act 1997 does not allow activities to be prohibited outright. In (f) it stated—

"Logan is a City for families, Lifestyle and Business—Council does not consider prostitution as an activity consistent with its vision and planning for the City."

I totally endorse the sentiment of tonight's motion that councils, regardless of their size, should have the right to refuse brothel applications within their local government areas. As the member for Gladstone said, this is not to say that councils will always refuse such applications. But tonight's motion is providing a mechanism outside the IPA that does give them a right of refusal should they wish to exercise that right. I believe all councils should have that right of refusal, because they are dealing one on one with this problem as it is coming to the fore in their areas. They will be the ones dealing with the complaints about the activities around these places should they be set up. It should be the right of every council to react to what their people want.

Time expired.

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