



Speech by

**BILL FELDMAN**

**MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE**

Hansard 22 June 2000

### **DRUG INJECTING ROOMS**

**Mr FELDMAN** (Caboolture—CCAQ) (6.45 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. I know one thing: Queenslanders will not support legal safe injecting rooms.

I was wondering exactly how this Government would twist this debate around. How it did was no surprise to me. After all, this is the same Government that introduced boutique brothels to this State. It is the same Government that said that people had to be of good character to be a pimp in this State—to own and run a brothel. So it does not surprise me that this Government has moved an amendment and that it probably intends to follow the path gone down by New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT—the same path that has failed in Sweden, Scandinavia and Holland. Now this Government will say that people have to be a saint in the church to be a drug dealer. That does not surprise me, but I know that Queenslanders will not support it.

I will quote from an article written by Lawrie Kavanagh. To a degree he is right on the money. The article states—

"Not only are drug addicts a drain on the economy; they have vastly increased Australia's serious violent crime rate to finance their addiction. Their ill-gotten funds support international drug cartels. They drain police, ambulance, health and hospital resources from far more worthy causes. And closer to home they cause untold misery to their families and are in many cases causing total breakdowns in the home that in normal circumstances might be the centre of living harmony.

Probably the worst of all are injuries inflicted on innocent bystanders of drug related crime like armed hold-ups. The community threat today is compounded by the risk of deadly disease through the thoughtless disposal of the contaminated needles in most of our public parks and beaches."

I agree with the Australian Christian Coalition when it states—

"Why are we going down this 'softly, softly' approach to one section of the community and not the other? We try to find ways to make life easier for the addicts with safe injecting rooms, all the harm minimisation, the free needles and even proposed free heroin."

That will be the by-product of the safe injecting room, just like the member for Warwick said. I have worked out there. I have chased down drug addicts, pushers, dealers and manufacturers. The thing about manufacturers is that the filthy drugs they produce—one of the filthiest drugs out there at the moment is speed—are manufactured in some of the dirtiest hovels one can imagine and made on some of the filthiest equipment one can think of. Down the path we go.

The Government might be able to control where people inject, but it will never be able to control what people put in their arms unless it is prepared to do the quality control itself. What this Government is saying to the people of Queensland is that it will be prepared to supply and maybe even manufacture the drugs for our children. I think that is a very sad indictment upon any Government that wants to go down that path. As the Australian Christian Coalition said, that is sending a vastly wrong message to our youth. It is actually saying that it is okay to sit in a room and inject an illegal drug, as long as the room is clean. It is like playing tiggy when we were children. I can see it happening out there in the

streets. How can what is wrong outside suddenly be okay in a safe injecting room? What do addicts do: run down the road from the police, jump into the room and say, "Bah, I'm safe"?

The wrong message is being sent to our children. That is exactly what this Government is proposing. It is proposing to follow that path, because it has indicated by the amendment that it will look at the trials in Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT. The Minister for Police flagged that fact in his contribution when he said that it has failed overseas, but the Government will still examine what happens in other States. The Government knows that it will fail down there, and yet it is still not prepared to give a firm commitment in this place that it is not prepared to accept safe injecting rooms in this State. It is not prepared to follow the path that the public of Queensland would expect from a strong Government. The public expects the Government to be strong on crime. One of the worst crimes in this society is drugs and drug addiction. The Government cannot go down that path at all.

Time expired.

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