



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
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MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPIILLY

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DRUG INJECTING ROOMS

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (6.25 p.m.): This evening we have heard that the Premier has left the door open for illicit drug injecting rooms here in Queensland. The Premier has simply moved an amendment which adds the words "until the proposed trials of New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT are complete and have proven their success". Of course, there is a lot of history about this.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. Just so the record is clear, I also said words to the effect of "widespread community support". It is not in the amendment—

Mr BEANLAND: I am reading the amendment.

Mr BEATTIE: I am just telling the member what I moved.

Mr BEANLAND: I heard what the Premier said, but I am reading the circulated amendment, and it does not say anything about "widespread community support".

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The member is wasting his time on this. I am trying to explain to him—

Mr BEANLAND: No, the Premier is wasting my time. He is trying to put something into the amendment that is not here.

Mr BEATTIE: The amendment before the Chamber, in fact, has added words; it talks about "widespread community support".

Mr BEANLAND: All I can quote is what is on the paper, and I am doing that. It does not say anything about "widespread community support".

I thought that the Premier would have learnt something from Switzerland, where they went through this experiment. One side tried to portray it as a great success. However, when the independent studies were done, it was found to be a great failure indeed. In fact, far more people ended up being involved with drugs than were previously.

I was listening to the Minister for Health, who talked about a couple of initiatives, such as drug courts. That initiative came from this side of the Chamber. The shadow Minister for Justice, in fact, was the member who came up with that initiative. The provision of hospital beds for 13 to 18 year olds was started off by the former Minister for Health, Mr Mike Horan. Then, of course, there was Naltrexone. I thought that the Premier or the Minister for Health would have talked about that tonight, because last week New South Wales announced that it was going to use Naltrexone, but we have heard not a word from the people opposite. They will let New South Wales do something constructive, but they are not doing it themselves. So again we are behind the eight ball. This Government is not doing anything constructive to get people off drugs, but when it does do something, it is only after this side of the Chamber has dragged it along.

Let us look at some of the points about these so-called drug injecting rooms. It is said that they are safe. Of course they are not safe. There is no such thing as a safe injecting room; it is a nonsense to say that. Some people say that these sorts of people would suddenly be travelling long distances to go to these injecting rooms. However, any sort of scientific study would show that they go to the nearest

place they can to inject themselves with the drug. They carry it with them. They go to a phone box, down the road, up a laneway or wherever it might be up. They inject themselves with that drug as quickly as they possibly can when there is that need. And it is not once a day or once a week, depending on what drug it happens to be; heroin addicts can inject themselves several times a day. They need to go and get that injection straightaway. To think that they are going to travel enormous distances is just another furphy and an example of the sort of nonsense that is raised in relation to this particular matter. When it comes to safe injecting rooms, those people will not travel long distances at all.

We should be allocating this money for rehabilitation. Supporting continued drug use is strongly resented. We should put money into rehabilitation and treatment, not into safe injecting rooms, which encourage continued drug use. We have seen what has happened with methadone. More and more people are getting methadone. I do not notice too many people getting off the methadone program, which is supposed to be its aim. The number of people on that program continues to increase substantially; it is not decreasing. There is no limit on that. The numbers increase—more and more get on it—and very few come off the methadone program.

The International Narcotic Control Board under the United Nations is appalled at the idea of drug injecting rooms. Many people who promote harm minimisation do not talk about that. They like to mention the United Nations on all other occasions, but they never mention the United Nations when it comes to this subject. This situation will go from bad to worse. I note that the Minister denigrated the United States. The United States and Sweden are two countries doing something constructive in order to achieve a drug-free society.

This is not an easy issue. No-one is saying that it is, Minister. Nevertheless, we have to send a very clear message. This Government is simply not sending that message at all. The message coming from this Government is anything but clear. After all, we do not say that a person can have only three packs of cigarettes a day instead of 10. The message is clear; the message is: quit smoking. That message is broadcast day in, day out in the media, both print and electronic. The message is to quit smoking, to stop smoking. The message relating to drink-driving is not to drink so many beers and then drive. The message is very clear: do not drink and drive.
