



Speech by

**Hon. K. LINGARD**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

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Hansard 4 April 2001

### **DRUG STRATEGY**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (6.46 p.m.): Drug use by our youth has become such a massive problem that we have all been forced to change our preconceived attitudes towards the control of drugs. Those of us who advocated the cold turkey approach many years ago have been forced to accept that some people are so deeply involved in drugs that it is virtually impossible for them to go cold turkey and that they need much more assistance than we ever thought was necessary.

It used to be believed that hard decisions by our courts would resolve the problem. Now we know full well that any kid who is involved in drugs has probably spent his last penny and hocked everything that he owns. It is impossible for the courts to impose very strict penalties and stop our kids from taking drugs in that way. Generally, these kids have no money and no possessions whatsoever because they have hocked them. We know how difficult it is to catch drug dealers, with many drugs such as amphetamines and speed being made in backyards. Recently in the media we have seen that it is almost impossible to control the use of drugs in sport.

Therefore, as legislators, we must adopt a very comprehensive attitude towards our attack on drugs. Discussions with young people who are involved in the use of drugs reveals many and varied reasons for their involvement in drugs. The strategies that we adopt must cover all aspects. They certainly must involve the initial step of prevention. I find that many politicians tend to go right past that step, because they have a fixation with solving the problem rather than looking at prevention in the first place. We must take a very hard line with drug suppliers.

We must also consider how to deal with those who are taking drugs. In this respect, I must admit to a preconceived attitude to places like the drug and alcohol facility Logan House, which was established in the northern part of the Beaudesert Shire amid great controversy. Logan House is an example of the excellent work that has been done by the Drug and Alcohol Foundation. When that facility was established, there were rumours that we would have drug users on the streets. That has not happened, and generally that area has been very well controlled. Similarly, we must deal with the penalties, and then, most importantly, we must introduce rehabilitation programs for the kids.

I am concerned that programs such as Life Education have been allowed to flounder, receiving only community assistance. To me, that is evidence of a preconceived idea that we can control drugs through the schools and the parents only. We need all the assistance that we can possibly get out of the community. Life Education was one such program. An amount of \$1.5m over three years was put into that program. That funding has been withdrawn by the ALP government and now, of course, Life Education depends solely on community support. I believe that that is a program that the government should support.

I refer to an article in the *Courier-Mail* by Matthew Hart, in which he states—

Amphetamine use in Queensland has outstripped that of any other state or territory according to a snapshot of our illicit drug habits.

He states further—

... the average purity of methamphetamine seized in Queensland over the past year was second only to that of Western Australia.

We really have to work out why that is happening. The article states further—

User reports from Brisbane indicate amphetamines are now most likely to be the first drug ever injected.

And further—

Over the last 12 to 14 months the number of amphetamine-dependent clients has steadily grown, and now make the majority of clients we have.

Regardless of whether those figures are the correct figures—and I have quoted from the *Courier-Mail*—or whether the Health Minister's figures are more correct, it is quite obvious that the problem is increasing.

Tonight, the opposition will certainly support the government's amendment. It would be silly if we were to reject that in order to try to support our own. However, I refer to the Positive Parenting Program, because three years ago we put into place a parenting program at Loganholme, which was to be an open-shop space where people could walk in and see a user-friendly parenting centre, which had plenty of toys for young kids and where parents could look at the videos and all the booklets that are available. Unfortunately, before that program was set up, those booklets and videos were made available only at Margaret Street.

I know that the Families Minister withdrew that program at Loganholme and put that program into libraries around Queensland, saying that the program needed to be spread further around Queensland. Of course, those parenting centres needed to be spread further around Queensland. But if you go into the community, I do not think that you would find any parent who knows that those things are in the libraries.

Time expired.

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