



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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DRUG STRATEGY

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (6.10 p.m.): It is my pleasure to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In doing so, I will offer a couple of words on the government's amendment, which has just been circulated. We all agree on the basic principles that need to be adopted by the parliament. After reading through the government's amendment, there does not seem to be a great deal of difference between what is contained in the amendment and what is contained in the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. However, the government knows that, once we start injecting words such as 'supports the Beattie government's Queensland drugs strategic framework', that tends to politicise this issue in the parliament. At the end of the day, the simplest way to get a bipartisan approach is to leave words such as 'the opposition's program' or the 'government's program' out of it and to agree on principles which are important to us all. If anything, that has taken away from the spirit of the debate we are embarking on in the parliament tonight.

Following on from what the Leader of the Opposition said, the 'Just say no' to drugs message is very important. In Australia in the last few years we have tended to have an approach to harm minimisation. Perhaps there is a role for harm minimisation, but we need a 'Say no' campaign on drugs. There are quit smoking campaigns. We do not say, 'It will be really good if you reduce from 45 cigarettes to 10 a day.' However, that is something we tend to do.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: As no doubt the honourable member for Maroochydore will mention, Queensland Health gauges success by maintaining people on a methadone program for 15 years. However, we need a very clear 'Say no' message to drugs. There are issues involved in this which are extremely important. We know that drugs are insidious. We know that drugs are destroying our families. We know that drugs are tearing apart our community in many different ways. We are all concerned about that. However, it is how we go about addressing the issue. It can be addressed by supporting the bipartisan principles which have been outlined in the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

To touch on a few particular points, penalties are an issue I am very keen to look further into. We need to look at the issue of life imprisonment for drug traffickers. If there is a concern about that, we need to look no further than the Bracks Labor government in Victoria, which has just moved down this path after recent announcements. That is what we have to do. On the one hand, we need to be compassionate. We need to deal with the victims of drugs to make sure that there are rehabilitation and diversion facilities. They need that support, as do their families and friends. On the other hand, we need to crackdown on those people who peddle in drugs, those people who destroy lives. On the one hand, we need the resources to identify those in need and to assist them through a difficult time whilst, on the other hand, we need to see the people who peddle in human misery and death are no better than history's worse mass murderers and they deserve to go to jail and to stay there. Those people have blood on their hands. They destroy young lives.

I turn now to the issue of drug courts. I am very pleased that we have been able to achieve a bipartisan approach to this in Queensland. However, I say to the Attorney-General that there is some room for improvement with regard to that program. Even though I do not know the process of assessment, I believe that some people who are slipping through the system. I think it is a bit too easy

in some cases to get onto the program. I have heard stories of defence lawyers saying to their clients, 'Are you on drugs? If not, say you are and then we'll put you up for the drug court program.' There are some issues there that need to be looked at. I have put a deputation request to the minister to talk about these issues. People who have been given orders under the drug court program are allowed to partake in the consumption of alcohol under the program. That weakens their resistance and they then return to drugs. The United States, the home of the drug court program, is much tougher on that.

Another extremely important issue that needs to be addressed relates to antisocial behaviour orders. There was a great article in the *Courier-Mail* in the 'Perspectives' section yesterday by Paul Wilson which referred to the processes of the family services department in this state in dealing with young people on drugs. We have a situation where authorities who are responsible for looking after young people are not prepared to intervene in the lives of young people who are at risk. They do not want to intervene when a young person is hanging around with a pimp and having their life destroyed. That is not good enough.

Time expired.
