



Speech by

**DESLEY SCOTT**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.30 p.m.): The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill encompasses 13 amendments to 11 separate acts and is therefore quite diverse. Today I want to speak on just one of the aspects of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, but before I refer to that matter I want to congratulate our Police Service in Logan. As with the rest of Queensland, our crime statistics are trending down. Clearly, this government's commitment to increasing police numbers by 300 additional graduates each year and ensuring our police officers are well trained and have adequate resources is making a difference. I congratulate Minister McGrady and his policy team on their leadership and a raft of good legislation. Also to be commended are our Police Commissioner and his team for the implementation of that policy, which is clearly making a real difference. I should also congratulate our community on the part it plays through our fantastic Neighbourhood Watch network and Safety House programs, all designed to help our community be aware of what is happening in the neighbourhood and to report matters of concern.

Additional programs in Logan include our Opening Doors program where police officers welcome migrant and refugee groups by informing them of the services offered by police. It also gives the police an opportunity to learn of the culture of many ethnic groups, thus enabling them to deal in a sensitive way with issues which may arise in that community. Our PCYC runs many great programs, including after school care, and an officer has also been designated to work with at-risk young people. Logan's domestic violence initiative Fax-Back is recognised for its effectiveness nationally. With an active police beat at Marsden/Crestmead and the present police shopfront at Logan Central, which will in the new year be converted to a police beat, our police are very visible in the area.

Logan City has been one of the very successful community renewal areas of our state. One of the really important outcomes of community renewal is that it empowers a community to recognise issues and to then set about finding solutions. It should, therefore, be no surprise to this House that my community has embarked on a plan to help youngsters who are involved in substance abuse. Some two years ago a group met to discuss substance abuse and to investigate ways to reach these young people and help them. Those participating included our Youth Justice Service, Indigenous Health, BoysTown Link-Up, Youth and Family Services, Centre Education, Family and Kids Care, police officers, community liaison officers, Logan City Council officers and elected representatives including Mayor John Freeman, Drug Arm, the departments of Education and Health, Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, Access Inc. and many individuals representing their community groups, such as the Booran Park Neighbourhood Centre. Also born out of these meetings was our RALY group, which is Retailers Assisting Logan Youth. This group includes many of our retail managers who have agreed to take spray cans off the shelves. It meets regularly to look at initiatives and is planning a training session for retail staff to give them skills to deal with any difficult issues in their store.

Out of these meetings on substance abuse came a plan to establish a safe house, or time-out house as we have now called it. Plans were laid and Logan City Council located land close to Logan Hospital. At that time the Commonwealth government announced the availability of funding for drug initiatives. Unfortunately, the application lodged by Logan City Council was unsuccessful. I should congratulate Melissa McKeering on the incredible amount of work she has put into this application and project. Undeterred by the rejection of our application, our steering committee has now set about to establish plan B. Some months ago I was able to make representation to Councillor John Freeman, Mayor of Logan City, who has now made a house available close to our police station. The expertise,

resilience and goodwill of our community in Logan never ceases to amaze me. A meeting at the house identified those with the ability to renovate it to maximise its use. We now have plans well advanced and will be seeking funding from a number of sources. Where we have their consent, we can now intervene when we find a young person affected by substance abuse. However, this legislation goes a step further to empower police and youth workers to take a more proactive approach.

I now want to outline some of the network of organisations and programs which I believe will play a role in diverting these young people into more worthwhile pursuits. Kingston College Community Access School has now given hundreds of people, mainly young people, a second chance at gaining an education. Similarly, Centre Education has a dedicated band of teachers who work with marginalised young people. Tass Augustakis from Family and Kids Care offers effective counselling and rehabilitation to youngsters involved in substance abuse. BoysTown Link-Up has many services available to help youngsters, including Glugor House for young mothers and BoysTown Enterprises to teach skills which lead to employment.

In recent weeks community leaders in Logan have been in negotiation with Michelle Venables from the YMCA who is seeking an industrial shed where skilled instructors will teach aluminium boat building, automotive skills as well as life skills to at-risk young people. Help Enterprises of Eagle Farm is looking at expanding its outreach program to Logan with courses such as certificate 1 in engineering and horticulture as well as intensive support in preparation for work, job applications and interview techniques. Kingston's Make and Do Shed is also interested in joining the YMCA to teach woodworking.

Last week I hosted a meeting of all of these groups at my office, and the commitment to mentor our young people and the desire to see them re-engaged in education and training was very inspiring. These are but a few of our services. They fit well with the education and training reforms and will complement the initiatives already planned by our Logan team for the trial period. Ms Kerry Holst, CEO of our regional education office, is brimming with enthusiasm and very keen to see all of our services networked together. Logan City is now a strong, proud community which has overcome much of our perceived earlier disadvantage. Our people are proud to live in our community and we will continue to improve our amenities, service and lifestyle.

The initiatives outlined in this bill today will provide a trial in four areas of the state to establish guidelines as to the best way to deal with the issues of chomping. It is a matter of great distress to parents, youth workers and indeed the whole community that youngsters are involved in what is such a tragically dangerous behaviour that can do such damage to the brain and, indeed, lead to death. The legislation will enable trained police to remove an implement suspected of being used for substance abuse and then to take the young person to a safe place. Retailers will have a duty of care not to sell substances to young people which they suspect may be used to get a high. This government is serious about assisting young people to kick their drug habits. The drug court and drug diversion initiatives are showing great promise. I applaud these additional measures which will give police greater powers in their quest to help our youngsters. I thank the minister and his staff and commend the bill to the House.