



Speech by

**Mrs D. PRATT**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Hansard 28 October 2003

**PUBLIC HEALTH [INFECTION CONTROL FOR PERSONAL APPEARANCE SERVICES] BILL**

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (11.50 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Bill 2003. A simple trip to the hairdresser has changed significantly over time. I must confess that I am not quite sure what some practices mentioned in this bill entail exactly. If someone can enlighten me, I would be happy. They sound awfully painful.

The policy objective of the bill is to minimise the risk of infection that may result from the provision of hairdressing, beauty therapy and skin penetration services. I note from the explanatory notes that a public benefit test and a risk assessment were undertaken as part of the review. The risk assessment found that some personal appearance activities, for example hairdressing, pose a relatively low risk of infection transmission while other personal appearance activities, such as tattooing and body piercing, pose a higher risk of transmission of serious blood-borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C.

Higher risk personal appearance services include body piercing. Where once upon a time people felt pretty brave just going to get their ears pierced—when I got my ears pierced no-one I knew had actually done it in the little town in which I lived, so they thought I was pretty brave—now piercing seems to be everywhere.

When I had my coffee lounge I was confronted with a young woman who came to be employed there. We had a certain dress code and standard. Although most of the girls there had their ears pierced maybe twice, this particular young lady had her eyebrow pierced, her nose pierced, a chain running from the eyebrow ring to the nose ring and 12 earrings in one hole in her ear. I basically said to her at the time, 'Just have a look around. I would rather you did not wear all of those piercings if you want to work here. Outside of hours you can do what you want, but not while you are here.' She told me that she was very offended by that. I told her that she was entitled to be offended, but that my customers and I were entitled to be offended if she worked there. That was my first run-in with multiple piercings. It was not really a pleasant one.

The second example of a higher risk personal appearance service is implanting natural or synthetic substances into a person's skin including, for example, hair and beads. Why would someone implant beads under their skin? I just cannot understand that.

**Mrs Edmond:** Some of them have patterns of beads under their skin.

**Mrs PRATT:** Really? Patterns of beads? My heavens! That is a new one for me, and I do not mind admitting it. The third example is scarring or cutting a person's skin to make a permanent mark, design or pattern. I have seen that. That is a traditional custom in a lot of cultures, such as in New Zealand, Samoa and a few other places. The next example is of tattooing, which seems to be the in thing. Some people, I am told, actually get addicted to that. I cannot imagine getting addicted to the pain, but they do. The explanatory notes then refer to other skin penetration procedures prescribed under a regulation.

The non-higher risk personal appearance services are closed ear and nose piercings and so on. Non-higher risk personal appearance services will not have to be licensed, but will need to comply with the legislative standards as described in the infectious control guidelines.

I also note that the enforcement and administration of this legislation will be taken on by local governments who may recover their monitoring costs by charging reasonable fees for licensing and

inspections of places of business. This applies to all businesses which provide higher risk personal appearance services or non-higher risk personal appearance services. I note the use of the word 'may'. I ask the minister to clarify whether the amount charged is left to the discretion of local governments or whether there is a limit. The licence fee could be different in different areas, and if there is no limit local governments could charge as much as they think they can get away with. I would like to see some sort of standard in that regard.

I note that before the local government grants a licence it has to be satisfied that an applicant is suitable to hold a licence, having regard to matters such as whether the applicant has been convicted of an offence or had a similar licence or registration suspended or cancelled. The premises must also be suitable. I think most people would be aware that any business that decides to operate legally has to comply with standards set by the council even before it is allowed to open. I think that goes without saying. That also applies to whether they are clean, whether they have proper waste disposal and sterilising equipment and so on, just to be able to operate in a safe way. I also note from the explanatory notes that individuals offering higher risk personal appearance services must hold an infection control qualification.

The member for Gladstone mentioned that the bill reverses the onus of proof. This has become almost a standard practice of this government. That is, I believe, against our fundamental right to innocence until proven guilty. That reversal of onus of proof concerns me now and always will.

Everybody must recognise that any procedure that breaks the skin and lets blood must be strictly controlled. I think this is more relevant today perhaps than when we were younger, simply because the practice is becoming so sought after, especially for our youth. They seem to thrive on disfiguring themselves. With the advent of HIV and AIDS and the use of drugs, syringes and so on, these practices can be a real danger to our young people. I think they really need to be protected. We as responsible legislators should be prepared to take what measures we can to keep them from harming themselves. With those few words I support the bill.