



Speech by

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.45 p.m.): I rise to support this important bill, which contains major reforms that address law and order issues with the best interests of the members of our communities. The Beattie government has instituted a number of these reforms since being elected in 1998. In my area, residents can see that this government's commitment to law and order is paying off. In the Oxley police district, the Beattie government has provided 53 extra police positions. A 14-officer tactical crime squad to service the Oxley district will also be established early next year to provide an additional policing service to focus on drug and property crime in this area. These initiatives are a credit to our police and show that the strategies of police and the community, particularly the Neighbourhood Watch groups in the area, working together to fight and prevent crime are working. A couple of weeks ago I attended a Neighbourhood Watch meeting in Jindalee. The visiting police officer announced that there had been no crime reported in that area over the past two months.

The government's commitment to community safety and the Queensland Police Service is also evidenced through its sixth consecutive record budget for Police, with this year's budget tipping the \$1 billion mark with an \$84 million increase. We will never shirk from our responsibility on law enforcement issues.

The bill addresses 13 significant legislative amendments and makes amendments to 11 acts. The Police Powers and Responsibilities Act is amended to specify clearly when a vehicle may be impounded or forfeited for a road hoon related offence. The act is also amended to allow for the search and seizure of a potentially harmful thing—a volatile substance—so that a person is prevented from inhaling or ingesting that thing. Volatile substances are things such as glue, petrol or spray paints that a person intends to use foolishly to get a high. Additionally, a person affected by a volatile substance may be taken to a place of safety for treatment or care.

Ann and Anthony Lanza are residents of my electorate who set up an antigraffiti group in my electorate a number of years ago. They have been talking to me of their concerns about there being no control over the sale of spray cans to young people. They actually see children affected by chroming whilst the group is out cleaning off graffiti. Not only are spray cans used for vandalism, but they are a cheap high for young children in the area.

The effect of chroming on children is absolutely devastating. They are endangering their lives by misusing volatile substances. Substance abuse can make the user highly anxious and prone to risk-taking behaviour. Other more serious effects include heart failure, suffocation, choking or, in some cases, death. It may also cause disabilities including irreversible hearing loss, brain damage and damage to the bone marrow, liver and kidneys.

The good news is that this government will complement this legislation with regard to prohibiting businesses selling volatile substances. The law is likely to take effect in April 2004. It will mean that, in certain circumstances, retailers will be able to refuse to sell volatile substances if the seller has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person intends to ingest or inhale the thing or intends to sell it to another for that purpose. This legislation is part of a comprehensive approach to volatile substance misuse and will complement the retailer's code of practice that has been produced by the Brisbane City Council. I support all aspects of this bill and commend the minister for his work in this area, particularly in relation to his care and concern for children who take volatile substances.