



Speech by

**LEX BELL, MP**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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### **GOLD COAST SCHOOLIES COMMITTEE**

**Mr BELL** (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (12.01 p.m.): On 15 May this year, the Premier tabled in this House a list of the 12-person board of the Gold Coast schoolies committee. At that time, the Premier said that the numbers of the board might be increased by one or two. Then last Tuesday, in answer to a question from me, the Premier urged me to cooperate with and to assist that board, even though I had no input whatsoever into its personnel.

I am happy to give an undertaking to the House that I will cooperate with that schoolies board, because most certainly I want to see the best outcomes for the electorate of Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast as a whole. But in exchange, I would say to the Premier: perhaps he should listen to the local member. Perhaps he should have appointed people who work and live or who work or live in the central Surfers Paradise area. At least some members of the board should have that particular qualification, because with the arguable exception of the representative of the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau, not one person on that 12-person board works or lives in central Surfers Paradise.

I stress that I do not seek a berth on that board. I certainly do not have the time to give that board the attention that the circumstances of the matter certainly merit. Indeed, if the local member were a member of that board, he would be the foil for all of the complaints in the Surfers Paradise area about schoolies.

But there is a flaw in the appointment of the personnel who have been appointed to this board. The people concerned, many of whom are known to me, are fine people. But they are also busy people with lots of other tasks. It is very difficult for an ordinary citizen to be able to make contact with the existing board members to give their input and their ideas.

I must rebut the Premier's statement to this House last week when he said that the schoolies festival is a citywide Gold Coast activity. The blindest person could see that 95 per cent of the schoolies activity takes place in central Surfers Paradise and 95 per cent of the accommodation provided for schoolies extends from Main Beach through Surfers Paradise to the northern half of Broadbeach, which is all within the electorate of Surfers Paradise. One pointer is that the whole of the 600 schoolies volunteers are all deployed in central Surfers Paradise.

Also in answer to the question last week, the Premier implied that I had been consulted by this Labor task force that he appointed. I looked at the Premier's wording and it was very careful. I cannot say that he is technically incorrect in what he said to the House. However, any implication that I had made a submission to the task force was totally wrong. In fact, I had made a submission earlier before the task force was ever appointed to Dr Keliher of the Premier's Department. The task force did not come anywhere near me, nor did it ask for any submissions, nor did it offer any consultation to me as the local member.

When the community cabinet was held on the Gold Coast, I spoke personally with the Premier, pointing out that I was aggrieved that I had been omitted from that task force. He was very reassuring to me and he said that he had personally asked Minister Rose, as chairman of the task force, to consult with me as the local member. The consultation was exactly nought—zero. If that is consultation, then it leaves a great deal to be desired.

There is a lot of room for improvement. The matter could be handled very much better. The best way of starting would be right now by appointing two extra board members who live or work in the Surfers Paradise CBD.