



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Alcohol Management Plans

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 a.m.): One of my government's priorities has been to address the deadly serious alcohol related problems that have plagued our indigenous population for far too long. I would like to update the House on our work in this important area. Alcohol restrictions are now in place in 17 of the 19 at-risk communities identified by Tony Fitzgerald in his Cape York justice report in 2001. Since the introduction of alcohol restrictions in communities, including Lockhart River, Aurukun, Wujal Wujal, Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Kowanyama, there has been a 17 per cent reduction in alcohol related offences and a 24 per cent reduction in offences against the person. In communities where community health data is available, including Lockhart River, Aurukun, Doomadgee and Wujal Wujal, there has been a 55 per cent reduction in presentations as a result of assault and a 50 per cent reduction in alcohol related injuries.

Other benefits include increased attendance by students in local schools. In order words, alcohol management plans are working. As Liddy Clark, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, said on Tuesday, Dr Lara Wieland says that a return visit to one of the communities that she lived in for three years showed a huge change. She talked about diehard drinking patients who had finally given up drink. Dr Lara Wieland said—

They told me they were happy and that the alcohol bans had made it easier for them to finally give up without being a social outcast.

Australian Democrats Senator Aden Ridgeway said on the ABC's *The World Today* on 15 April—

The reality is there is a moral obligation to respond to the fact that violence is being played out upon women and that children are being sexually abused within communities.

The Queensland government is working in cooperation with the community justice groups to make the alcohol management plans work for the benefit of communities.

In his Cape York justice report Tony Fitzgerald recommended implementing alcohol management plans. But Mr Fitzgerald said—

The position is so serious that, despite constitutional obstacles, unless significant improvement is reported within three years, consideration should be given to prohibition on the supply and consumption of alcohol.

My government does not want to take more drastic measures, but at the same time we are determined to do whatever it takes to protect the women and children who have been the tragic victims of this alcohol problem.