



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 12 May 2004

SMOKING BANS

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.42 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

That the following words be inserted after 'Queensland'—

', noting that in recent months the Beattie government has already been involved in preliminary consultations with relevant stakeholders about such an amendment'.

We have picked up the spirit of what the Leader of the Liberal Party has said. I think it is important that we also highlight something we all know; that is, smoking kills. Cigarette packs confirm this death sentence, and still people smoke and fill our hospitals. More than 3,000 Queenslanders die from tobacco related causes every year. I believe it is essential that we take further steps to help nonsmokers live in smoke-free surroundings and to help smokers who want to kick their addiction and regain a healthy lifestyle.

The Queensland government started a review of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 last year. Queensland Health has already held preliminary consultations with various organisations. The next step is likely to involve the release of a discussion paper. Very soon the Minister for Health will be bringing a submission to cabinet. The discussion paper will invite submissions which will be analysed by Queensland Health, which will prepare a report with recommendations for the minister later this year. The discussion paper addresses not just further bans on smoking but also the full range of issues, including advertising and promotion, sales to minors, monitoring, enforcement and licensing. It also looks at options for reform in each of these areas and details initiatives taken in other jurisdictions.

I believe that there is strong community support for further restrictions on smoking in entertainment venues. I was in Ireland, as the Leader of the Liberal Party quite correctly observed, when the ban on smoking in all public buildings was introduced. Now it is reported that the British government is working on a plan to ban smoking in pubs and restaurants throughout the country. We have to remember: the Irish had very much a pub scene. So did the British. If the Irish could ban it, we should take its model seriously. California and New York have similar bans, and similar laws are being introduced in Norway and Sweden. It is reported that in the year after New York banned smoking in bars there was an 11 per cent decrease in the number of adult smokers. If we could achieve similar results we could eventually hope for an 11 per cent cut in smoking related deaths—330 Queensland lives saved every year.

Some jurisdictions are even further ahead in the battle against smoking deaths. Earlier this year California expanded its no-smoking zone around public buildings from five feet to 20 feet, which is about six metres. According to Action on Smoking and Health, more than 100 authorities in the USA have adopted some type of ban on outdoor smoking. Restrictions that target playgrounds and other places children are present are part of a growing national trend in the USA.

We have already banned smoking in some outdoor venues, such as the seating at Suncorp Stadium. The question is, of course: how far are Queenslanders prepared to go in protecting children and other nonsmokers? There is now a push in some jurisdictions to ban smoking on beaches and in parks, where cigarette smoke can drift on the breeze to be inhaled by nonsmokers and sting their eyes. We have

tough laws to cut down on deaths from guns. How tough should we be with laws to cut down on deaths from this silent and slow killer? I thank the Liberals for their support—

Mr Quinn: Thank you for your support!

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, this motion will be passed by the House tonight.

Mr Quinn: You have got it around the wrong way. Is this our motion or your motion?

Mr BEATTIE: Motions do not mean a great deal. The member knows that as well as I do. What is important is action. We have already been out doing it. I do not want to be unkind to the Leader of the Liberal Party. He has finally caught up with what the government is doing, and I am pleased about that. I am not going to trivialise his support, because it is welcome. The more he votes with us—

Mr Quinn: Whose motion is it again?

Mr BEATTIE: As the Liberal Leader well knows, we could have defeated his motion, but we will not. The more he supports us the higher his vote is going. Has he noticed that? And the more the opposition opposes us the more its vote goes down. There is a message in that and the Liberal Leader needs to seriously think about it. I thank the Liberals for their support and I urge the Nationals to join us in forming a united front to lead the debate on tackling this addictive drug.

I believe it is important that hotels and pubs get together and start thinking about phasing out smoking themselves. It would be nice if they had a phase-out plan which we could endorse. If they could do that over the next two or three years that would be sensible for them to protect their patrons and come up with a sensible outcome.