



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Wednesday, 23 November 2005

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.04 pm): I note that the primary purpose of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill is to amend the Liquor Act 1992 to implement stage 2 of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. This was as a result of incidents of alcohol related violence in the Brisbane City Council area. The bill currently before the House implements stage 2 of the reforms identified by the Premier in the city safety action plan and will place tougher licence conditions on licensees in the Brisbane City Council area who trade after 1 am. These amendments will enhance public safety in the Brisbane City Council areas by requiring these licensees to develop and maintain house policy, employ crowd controllers in sufficient numbers to ensure safety and security, cease competitions that involve contestants consuming alcohol on their premises, ensure all staff complete responsible service of alcohol training, and install closed-circuit television at each public entrance.

I hope this legislation brings some commonsense in relation to issues of security for local bush events. As members would understand, local bush events are very different from events in the city. Shows in the city have Ferris wheels and rides, whereas events in the bush do not. We have events such as the dog and hog, greasy pig chases, chook chases and pig dog racing competitions. We need to hold these community events, but the biggest problem has been in terms of providing security to hold these events. For an event such as a camp draft or a country race meeting, it would cost \$2,000 or \$3,000 for security. I use the Einasleigh races as an example. While security was being provided, there were three police cars outside those races. When anyone came out of that race meeting, the first thing the police would do is put the breathalyser on them. But they never participated in the event. They are not there to participate or be a part of the event, like some local police officers will do, and this is a big issue.

Commonsense must prevail as security, policing and licensing regulations threaten the viability of community events in rural areas. The Pentland race meeting held last week has adopted a commonsense approach to running community events and is a fine example. Local people volunteered their services as crowd controllers and security officials. There was a collaborative partnership between the local police officer and the organising committee, without any drama or interference necessary. This is finally recognition that our small communities are quite capable of organising successful community events in liaison with the local police officers. It is finally recognition that what is appropriate in the populated areas of the state is hardly appropriate in smaller communities, where events organised and run by non-profit organisations trying to make a dollar remain viable.

One of the major problems was the requirement that professional security officers and crowd control officers be brought in to run the events with local police. This was costing these committees an absolute fortune. However, it is not necessary, and the Pentland races are proof of that. Many community groups rely on revenue from events where general purpose permits apply. The regulations and restrictions being placed on organisation committees are burdensome and unnecessary. Community events that run in small rural areas bring together the whole community, whether they are run annually or occasionally.

It is vital that we preserve the social fabric that makes up these communities that have lost their race days. It is not fair to impose extensive regulations which may make the organisations think twice about staging other social and community events. The expense of meeting these regulations should not be the

determining factor in whether it is worth staging an event. In small communities the event may be the only time people from all around gather to catch up. It is not the event that attracts the crowd, as is the case in the cities; it is the opportunity to renew friendships. That is why bush events are so unique, and it is important to preserve their existence.