



Speech by

**Paul Hoolihan**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

Hansard Tuesday, 23 May 2006

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## **POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (12.34 pm), continuing: Before the adjournment of the debate on 11 May I dealt, in part, with the amendments to the Criminal Code and the matter of serious assaults on police officers. I referred to an order against a prostitute on the Gold Coast who has received a substantial reward but still owes a police officer or owes the state \$4,500. The rationale for beefing up this offence is so that our police officers can avoid becoming punching bags or victims of people who believe that they can act in any way with impunity. It sends this message to those people who would act in that way towards our police officers: you will get caught and when you get caught you will go to jail. There is no use in any community or any government recruiting police officers, training them and then putting them in a position in which they become the victim of a cowardly act in public.

The third matter I wanted to deal with relates to move-on powers that can be applied in all public places. As members will recall, these matters were addressed by the Safe Youth Parties Task Force in relation to the methods that can be used to deal with groups of youths invading family parties. However, some concern has been expressed about move-on powers being used indiscriminately or wrongly by our police.

I have to say that move-on powers have been generally available to the police in Rockhampton for a period of time. That has assisted the police and has particularly assisted the Indigenous community to save some of their members from being arrested because they would not move on and were causing difficulties. It has worked well. The Indigenous community and the police respect one another for the way in which these powers have been applied. I think it is a sad indictment of those people who comment that the police will act in that way.

As I mentioned at the start of my speech, I have worked closely with the police for a long time both in public office and as a lawyer. Although there were some who did abuse their position, I have found that in recent times there are very few police officers, if any, who do not act in a very proper manner. After being abused, after being aggressively attacked, both orally and physically on some occasions, police have had to react to the person they have given a move-on order to.

This bill will extend move-on powers to be applied in all public places and also at private functions when homes are used as recreation areas or for parties. These powers will allow the police to make an area safe for those people who want to go about their business in a lawful way. People who are evicted from any sort of public place may be given a direction to remove themselves for up to 24 hours and on receiving that direction they shall remove themselves from that place. If they do not act in accordance with the direction then they have to bear the brunt of the law.

The powers of police are constantly under review. As I said in relation to the amendments to the Criminal Code, we need to give police officers a whole barrage of options in order to make the community safe for those of us who live in it and for those people who, rightly or wrongly, perceive that there is some breakdown in law and order.

One has only to listen to some of the people who ring talk-back radio to realise that there exists a group of people who subscribe to a criminal conspiracy theory—that the law is breaking down, that society is breaking down and that we are all doomed to be murdered in our beds. That is not the case, and that is certainly shown by the proposed changes to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act which are set out in this bill.

I commend the minister for these changes. Also, I encourage her, in her dealings with the police union and the police force, to continue to provide our police with the powers they need to ensure that Queensland's laws are properly enforced. I commend the bill to the House.