



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Thursday, 2 March 2006

DRUG LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.37 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Drug Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. It is great to see that this bill is actually changing the Drug Court from a pilot to permanent status in Queensland. In speaking to this bill, I use this as an opportunity to urge all of my parliamentary colleagues on the Sunshine Coast—National, Liberal and Labor—to stand up to speak on this bill and use this as a wonderful opportunity to urge the government, urge the minister, to allocate appropriate funding in this year's budget for a Drug Court to be strategically located at Maroochydore, a key regional centre of the Sunshine Coast and a key growth area. Maroochydore is currently a National Party seat. There is Liberal on one side, Labor on another and an Independent on another.

This is a wonderful opportunity for members of all political persuasions to stand up in this House prior to a budget and speak with one voice on the importance of a Drug Court on the Sunshine Coast. I believe Maroochydore is ideally situated. There are other smaller magistrates courts in the hinterland which our magistrates visit, and they are certainly under pressure at the moment. But I believe that this is a wonderful opportunity for all members to come into this chamber and take this opportunity which they have to speak on behalf of their constituents and advocate on behalf of their constituents for the appropriate dollars to be allocated in this year's budget so that we are not disadvantaged, so that our constituents are not disadvantaged. So my challenge to all members is to speak with one voice and join me in this call.

I note that the shadow minister, the member for Caloundra, has already spoken on this issue. I urge him to echo my sentiments. To the member for Maroochydore I say, 'Welcome back!' I ask her to please participate in this debate and add her voice to this very important issue, which is very relevant to the changes and the growth that is happening on the Sunshine Coast. Unfortunately, often drug situations involve all family members.

The member for Gympie has spoken and I congratulate her on her participation. If the Attorney-General does not think that Maroochydore is an appropriate location for a Drug Court, perhaps she could look at surrounding areas, which are also growing. I ask her not to ignore the community of the Gympie electorate.

I use this opportunity to congratulate the Attorney-General on reinforcing the importance of ensuring that potential clients of this court who are involved in violent behaviour are expressly excluded from being able to take the soft option. Violence is—

Mrs Reilly: Bad.

Mr WELLINGTON: I thank the member. Violence is bad. We speak with one voice. We can work together. I am very pleased that the Attorney-General has expanded on the definition part of the bill.

I also use this opportunity to congratulate the minister on the other significant changes contained in the bill relating to the introduction of new indictable offences. While I do not intend to go over matters that members from both sides of the chamber have spoken about, I do urge all members to come into this chamber and join me in lobbying our Attorney-General, the Premier and everyone involved in the cabinet and the government to genuinely consider appropriate funding in this year's budget so that we on the Sunshine Coast can receive the benefits of a Drug Court, the successes of which we have already heard about. I commend the bill to the House.