



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Tuesday, 31 October 2006

CRIMINAL CODE (DRINK SPIKING) AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.32 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Criminal Code (Drink Spiking) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. There is no doubt that drink spiking is a problem in our community. Unfortunately, I worry that the prevalence of this problem may be greater than we believe. I am very pleased that the debate on this bill has been brought forward so that there can be an enforceable law in Queensland prior to the official start of schoolies week celebrations, which I understand start on 18 November this year.

I would hope that the debate in this chamber and the passing of this bill into a new law in Queensland will create a greater awareness of the issue of drink spiking and the problems that flow from it in our community. We are all responsible and have a very important role to play in increasing the awareness of this problem in our community. I would hope that as a result of the debate in this parliament the media and the community will also promote the awareness of this new law in Queensland and try in whatever way possible to lift awareness in the minds of the young people who may be potential victims of drink spikers. I will support the toughest law possible to try to prevent drink spiking happening in Queensland and I commend the Acting Attorney-General for bringing forward this debate that we are having tonight.

The other issue I wish to touch on is the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act Amendment Bill. Coincidentally, I was talking with a number of officers of Corrective Services over the weekend who were talking to me about their concern in relation to the state government's ability to actually carry out the monitoring and policing of sexual offenders who have been released in our community. When I read the Acting Attorney-General's explanatory notes I noted that he referred to the electronic monitoring being reliable technology that has been used in a number of international and Australian jurisdictions as an enhanced surveillance regime for previous offenders. The notes also refer to radio frequency electronic monitoring that will be utilised which can be used to restrict the movement of released prisoners at particular times of the day. I would ask the minister in his summing-up to please explain to the House how there will be the ability to actually monitor the movement of the prisoners to ensure that they do travel only within the restricted areas.

I note also in the explanatory notes that the Acting Attorney-General says that the cost of implementing the electronic monitoring will be met from funding allocated to the Department of Corrective Services. I hope that in his summing-up the Acting Attorney-General is able to clarify how there will be the checks and balances to ensure that there will be reliable monitoring of prisoners who may be referred to this monitoring program.

Without further ado, I again commend the minister for bringing forward the debate on this very important bill and let us hope that we can save many lives as a result of this becoming a valid law in Queensland.