



Speech by

Jack Dempsey

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard Tuesday, 7 August 2007

LIQUOR (RESTRICTION OF SUPPLY TO MINORS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (9.06 pm): I rise to support the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill, a very common-sense bill before the House tonight. I fully support the member for Surfers Paradise and his attempts to protect the youth of Queensland. This bill will protect the lives of our youth and save countless deaths caused by alcohol. Alcohol remains one of the most dangerous drugs in Australia and every effort must be taken to take the cool factor out of its use. Alcohol affects people of all ages and continues to be a scourge on our society. Current partnerships and strategies are to be commended that educate our community to the effects of alcohol. By taking a positive stand, we will not just save our youths but reduce the huge economic costs inflicted on society by its usage.

We talk about root cause analysis in our health system, so why not start with the cause of many of our health related problems? We talk about helping the police, so why not reduce the amount of antisocial behaviour we have on our streets due to alcohol and make our communities safer for all of our youths and citizens to enjoy? Educating our youths to make positive choices through positive reinforcement and education are some of the basic fundamental ways to recognise the dangers of alcohol. We all have rights and responsibilities, and as adults we have the responsibility to care for our youth and protect them from danger. I am glad that the minister recognises that under-age drinking is an important issue and that it has affected many generations of Australians. This is why this generation needs to make a stand and say the same as the advertisements that recognise the huge amount of human suffering and carnage on our roads, which is that enough is enough.

During this sitting of parliament we will see other legislation introduced to this House that has been amended on a number of occasions. If we choose not to take action now in a positive manner, how many more young lives will be put at risk by not even trying? How long will it be before long-term measures are in place? This government has to stop being Pontius Pilate and ignoring the truth and stating that the problem of youth alcohol abuse is too big to even start. Most parents are responsible and we have to support these parents with legislation that assists them in caring for their children. We do need long-term strategies, as alluded to by the minister, but we also need action now, because while we wait Queensland youths suffer.

Again, during this sitting of parliament we see local government legislation rushed through this House while we have legislation—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Moorhead): Order! Member for Bundaberg, you cannot refer to legislation that is before the House.

Mr DEMPSEY: I will alter the words. Again, during this sitting of parliament we see legislation rushed through this House while we have legislation before us tonight which will save lives, but unfortunately it will be blocked because of the numbers. Political point scoring should not be used to restrict this bill. To change our culture of alcohol abuse we need our civic leaders—and that includes all state government members here tonight—to stand up for the youth of Queensland, support Queensland parents and lead by example.

Finally, I ask all members here tonight to support this very positive legislation to protect our youth from the effects of alcohol. To support this bill is to send a clear message that alcohol abuse is not condoned and puts the Queensland community on the front foot in recognising that alcohol abuse is not cool and is, indeed, the largest drug killer in our community.