



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (8.55 pm): I rise to contribute briefly to the Summary Offences and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. As members have already heard from my colleague the honourable member for Burnett and shadow minister for police and corrective services, the coalition supports the majority of these amendments but has some reservations with sections of this bill. In essence, the bill aims to implement a coordination system in respect of improving the visual blight suffered by the public in the wake of errant graffiti vandals and provide police with added clarification under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

As it is clearly stated in the explanatory notes, this bill contains provisions amending a number of different statutes, including the Summary Offences Act 2005, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. In particular, the objectives of the amendments to the Summary Offences Act 2005 are to strengthen existing antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray-paint cans to minors and to prohibit persons in trade or commerce from providing a service that informs others of police traffic enforcement sites. I note that minor changes are made by this bill to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 to amend the schedule dictionary.

I will direct my comments to changes that aim to reduce the incidence of graffiti damage. Queensland Police Service records show that graffiti offences are predominantly committed by minors and young adults. By restricting the supply of aerosol paint cans to minors, a reduction in the incidence of graffiti offences is expected. The amendments will require retail outlets to display prohibition signs and employers to take standard prevention measures towards their employees who sell spray-cans.

Certainly, graffiti can cause a great deal of angst for local residents when youths and other lawless individuals who have no respect for other people's property deliberately cause damage in an attempt to gain attention for themselves. Vandalism caused by graffiti is thought to cost the community in Brisbane alone some \$10 million every year in cleaning up the damage. Queensland Rail is another target for offenders. This financial year Queensland Rail will spend an estimated \$2 million on repairing carriages and other railway property. I fully support this legislative action, which will send a stronger message to graffiti vandals that their wanton defacing of buildings in our local communities is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In doing so, I remind this House that it was the coalition which had a policy to wipe out graffiti way back before the 2004 election. We planned to restrict the sale of spray-cans to minors who used the spray-paint not only for graffiti but also to undertake the life-threatening practice of chroming.

In the Currumbin electorate there is a particular shopping centre that has been the target of graffiti vandals on a regular basis, resulting in enormous personal cost to the centre owner and, in turn, the tenants. They have had to install extensive security measures to protect their property. It is absolutely disgraceful that residents and businesses feel under siege from these vandals whom they can identify but are unable to restrain. One of our news items this week highlighted a group of youths who have been caught and charged with approximately 1,000 graffiti offences. This type of destruction on a mass scale must cease and it is about time young people learned some respect.

Calvin Pybus and June Hintz at Phantast have, for over a decade, partnered with neighbourhoods, governments, local councils and schools in an effort to provide opportunities and support for youth through artistic programs. These enlightening and proactive programs coordinated by Phantast build self-esteem in our youth and young adults and provide attractive eye-catching murals. Many honourable members of this House who travel on main roads throughout south-east Queensland are already seeing the work of this dedicated and creative pair without even being aware of it. Picture the many murals you see beside the M1 and the Logan motorways of cane fields and other landscapes. As you drive into Palm Beach you are greeted with hundreds of smiling children's faces. In many instances you are witnessing fine examples of former graffiti vandals who are now using their artistic skills in a legal manner and contributing in a mutually beneficial way to our society.

Phantast is a non-profit organisation supported by both state and federal governments to provide training for young artists through community works. Its web site states—

Phantast through its Smart Arts club strategy ... offer a wide variety of challenging and fun activities giving youth countless opportunities to pursue existing interests and develop new ones.

Phantast believes that young people from all backgrounds are capable of making the most of their lives and talents when they are given two essential things—opportunities and support. All Phantast programs are designed to maximise opportunities to acquire four basic senses—competence, usefulness, belonging, power and influence—which help them build self-esteem and be responsible rather than irresponsible. With the banning of the sale of spray-paint cans to minors and initiatives of organisations such as Phantast, it is to be hoped that a reduction in vandalism through graffiti will ensue. I commend the bill to the House.