



Speech by

Hon. Kerry Shine

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Security Industry, Licences

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.12 am): Recent cases of alleged violence involving security providers has highlighted the need for strict regulation of those working in the industry. This government is already targeting shonky and unlicensed operators to ensure that they do not get a foothold in the security industry. On 1 October we significantly expanded the scope of criminal history checks on those people applying for or renewing security licences. Since this time, the Office of Fair Trading has been checking all applicants for unrecorded convictions and using criminal intelligence and other background information provided by the Queensland Police Service to make decisions about applicants' suitability. Between 1 October and 9 November the Office of Fair Trading recorded 387 adverse criminal history check reports. This is more than double the number recorded in the previous five weeks.

While an adverse report does not necessarily mean automatic exclusion from holding a licence, it does provide the Office of Fair Trading with the ability to take into account a person's history when assessing their suitability to hold a licence, thus offering greater protection for the community. The applications of nine people identified under these adverse criminal history checks have been refused. In addition to the improved background checks, the Office of Fair Trading conducted a statewide compliance blitz during October targeting entertainment venues and licensed premises that it is thought will be frequented by schoolies during the celebrations. The blitz also targeted premises with a history of noncompliance. Officers inspected 155 premises and 764 entities throughout Queensland.

While over half of the security providers and entities scrutinised were found to be 100 per cent compliant with the act, there are still people who either engage or operate as unlicensed security providers. Although figures are currently being finalised, as at 9 November 2007 the Office of Fair Trading had issued a total of 61 warning or infringement notices totalling \$14,850 in fines. Breaches of the act ranged from failure to maintain or keep a security provider register, operating as an unlicensed security provider or security firm, and failing to update licence particulars. We are determined to make sure that undesirable people are not working in the security industry. This will help reduce the risk of security providers being unnecessarily involved in violent incidents. It will allow those patrons of licensed premises to feel safer and have more confidence that security at a venue is being conducted by licensed professionals and not those looking for a reason to be violent.