



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 7 March 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fire Safety Legislation

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.11 am): This week marks the 34th anniversary of the 1973 Whiskey Au Go Go nightclub fire, and everybody would remember that fire. In those 34 years, building fire safety has come a long way in Queensland. The year after that nightclub fire, which killed 15 people in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, the first building fire safety legislation was introduced. This was backed up by regulations in 1975, and in the past 30 years Queensland has developed some of the toughest fire safety regulations in Australia.

Building fire safety is not just about words by lawmakers; it is also about the ability to educate, monitor and, where necessary, prosecute those who do not comply. Figures from the compliance and prosecution section of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service show that in the past two years 50 successful cases have been brought against commercial building owners and occupiers throughout Queensland for noncompliance with fire safety regulations. Of these, the non-compliant commercial buildings include budget accommodation houses, aged-care premises, licensed premises, factories, warehouses, shops, shopping centres and offices. Just last Wednesday, a Brisbane boarding house owner and his company were fined \$18,000 after being found guilty on nine charges of not complying with building fire safety regulations. I highlight this case because it shows that this government and the fire service are serious about building fire safety, and so are the courts.

This work in the area of building fire safety has not been carried out alone. In the area of budget accommodation and aged-care premises, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service works very closely with local councils, the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Housing. In the area of licensed premises, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service works closely with police and the Liquor Licensing Division of the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development, just to mention a few.

Building fire safety has certainly come a long way since 1973 and we make no apologies for our tough approach—it is about saving lives. The smoke alarm legislation which will come into effect on 1 July this year will further reduce the loss of lives.