



Speech by

# Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Wednesday, 5 September 2007

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## SUMMARY OFFENCES (GATECRASHING) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (11.39 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill of significance to every Queenslanders. This bill aims to give police more powers and creates a new offence of gatecrashing to combat the growing problem of violent gangs gatecrashing private parties. The timing of the bill is particularly important as we quickly head towards Christmas and the holiday season where private parties will be held in homes right across the state.

I want to make it clear here today that gatecrashing is not simply an innocent social activity. Gatecrashing needs to be recognised as a serious offence as it holds the potential for loss of life and the substantial destruction of property. One only has to think back to the tragic case of Matthew Stanley, who lost his life at a party that had been gatecrashed, to understand the significance of gatecrashing. Just recently, a devastating incident occurred in Logan where police were called to a party that had been gatecrashed and one officer was struck in the head with a bottle. The despicable acts conducted by people who think gatecrashing is fun are intolerable and offensive.

Currently, the law is not able to deal adequately with the serious act of gatecrashing. That is why the coalition is introducing this bill. Queensland Police currently do not have the legislative powers to effectively deal with the act of gatecrashing. The simple act of trespass is a 19th century offence that does not arm police with the legislative muscle to effectively save lives and protect the property of Queensland families. Put simply, police do not have the power to move people on from around private residences. This bill gives police the power to move on people they reasonably suspect are about to commit the act of gatecrashing a private party. In light of the limited time I have this morning, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This Bill gives police the power to move on people they reasonably suspect are about to commit the act of gate crashing a private party.

Currently, move on powers around private residences are not specific to this type of offending and, given the need for police to be able to proactively prevent gate crashing, this additional power is absolutely necessary.

This Bill will work in two ways. First, it will send a clear message to any person considering gate crashing a private party that the people of Queensland say No, it's an offence and you will be punished. Secondly, it will lay out the specific offence of gate crashing and give police additional powers to deal with the very real danger this action creates.

The act of entering a private party and behaving in an offensive manner does not fit with the offence of trespass. Therefore, the penalties for gate crashing proposed in this Bill are double that of trespass. These increased penalties and the recognition of unacceptable behaviour is part of holding people accountable for their actions.

Gate crashing is a threat to the lifestyle and social life of all Queenslanders. The family celebration, an 18th birthday party, the important 21st are all under threat by what has become a well organised attack on what should be a friendly social gathering.

Research has linked gate crashing with the broader social issues of swarming behaviour and organised group violence. While more needs to be done to control alcohol supply to under age people, along with getting to the root cause of violence in Australian society, this Bill is important in acknowledging in law the unacceptable and offensive behaviour of gate crashing. It is about holding people who gate crash responsible for their actions.

I commend the Bill to the House.