



Speech by

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

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (8.14 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to the Summary Offences (Gatecrashing) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2007. I also want to congratulate the former shadow minister, the member for Burnett, for, as the member for Nicklin said, bringing this social issue to the fore in the parliament. I congratulate him on his initiative in bringing this bill before the parliament. It addresses the rising social problem of gatecrashing.

I note that the Police Minister said that we have adequate provisions. But if we do, then they are not being enforced, and I will speak in a moment about some parties that have been held at the Gold Coast that have certainly received a lot of publicity. That begs the question that if the laws are not being enforced, is it as a result of there being inadequate police numbers?

I also find the style of this government interesting. It seems to me that any contrary view, or any view that is not in complete accord with that of the Labor government, seems to be treated with derision. Basically, the police minister, in her comments, derided the former shadow minister. I do not think there is any place for that. I think that if any member on this side raises any question about climate change, that member is called a climate change denier. We hear the curses all the time from the other side. If opposition members have anything but complete unequivocal support for National Sorry Day, they are racists. I think it is an interesting style of governing that we are seeing from a government that has been entrenched in power for a long time. It does not seem to want to consider any views but its own. Members on this side are just called a rabble, and that is a disgrace.

I think the former shadow minister should be applauded for raising an issue that, as the minister for police said, has been around for a long time and that has provisions to deal with it. But clearly, this issue is not being dealt with adequately. I commend the member for Burnett for bringing this bill into the House.

Gatecrashing is not a modern phenomenon. When I was at Sunnybank State High School and at the University of Queensland, gatecrashing was something that was done. You would end up at someone's house after being at the Regatta. You would be at Toowong in someone's backyard, but it was—

**Mr Horan:** Innocuous.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Exactly. I also enjoyed the member's contribution to this debate. You did not get hundreds of people turning up, as we have seen at a number of parties today. You did not get destruction. I suppose there was a bit of mud in the kitchen. The online urban dictionary of slang defines a 'gatecrasher' as a person who rocks up to somebody's party unannounced, often forcing their way in to trash the host's home and/or steal things. Maybe I am just reminiscing about the good old days, but it did not seem that those were the sorts of things that happened, as I recall, in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

For the interest of members, I want to point out that the colloquial term of the day is 'UDI', which is an acronym for unidentified drinking injury, which is apt given that one of the root causes of gatecrashing and other antisocial behaviour among youth is under-age binge drinking. So perhaps if the Bligh government committed itself to a bona fide review of the ancient Liquor Act 1992, which it has been

promising for more than 12 months now, we would not see an increasing trend of this sort of antisocial behaviour in Queensland.

But I digress. As I was saying, gatecrashing, or the act of turning up uninvited to a party, is not a new problem. I do not recall whether I have gatecrashed parties, but I am sure someone on the other side probably knows someone who thinks that I did and that may well come up at some stage. But having said that, I am all too aware that it happens. I have heard many horrors stories from parents who have thrown parties for their teenagers and who have ended up picking up smashed bottles and plastering over punched-in walls the following day.

I cast my mind back over the past couple of years to some parties that have been gatecrashed on the Gold Coast. I see the member for Currumbin is here. I am sure she is aware of parties that have been publicised, such as the one at Palm Beach where people had their houses trashed, and recent parties at Main Beach. I remember a major gatecrashing event at Ashmore. A couple of years ago a constituent rang me after his story was well publicised in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. He literally had a situation that was mentioned by the member for Toowoomba South, and that is hundreds of people congregating in his street. When he rang the police, they told him that they had to come from Southport. As the member for Toowoomba South said, the police are often busily engaged in other activities, especially the police on the Gold Coast. In the case of this party, the police just did not come. This man was petrified. He was barricaded inside his house unable to deal with these hordes of people. Of course, it was then that we got some action from the police minister of the time in trying to manage this situation.

Parents are now having to hire bouncers and register their parties with police, as I have done on a couple of occasions for my daughter who is now nearly 18 years old. People could not believe that we were holding parties for a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old, but we wanted to celebrate those birthdays and we wanted to do it without unintended consequences.

I commend the Police Service and I am happy to commend the police minister for the innovative Party Safe scheme which allowed me to register the party with the police. As the former shadow minister noted in the explanatory notes, the police provide a number of tips and suggestions on hosting a safe party. The registration system also alerted police to the occurrence of the party and allowed them to plan for it as part of their patrols and responses. Thankfully, we did not have any incidents. Lots of parents from the school that my daughter attended were surprised that we were having a party, but they are a good bunch of kids and, thankfully, we did not have any problems.

Whilst most people can handle a few empties lying about and some aesthetic damage to property, we all know that things happen at parties. However, gatecrashing is a real problem when it becomes life threatening or proves fatal. As all members would be aware, over the summer holidays there was Australiawide media coverage of a party that spiralled out of control. A couple of text messages and a public comment on Myspace was all it took for a small gathering to be overtaken by hundreds of drunken, destructive teens.

Can members imagine the feelings of the parents of Corey Worthington, the punk party boy with stupid sunglasses who threw a party that cost taxpayers in excess of \$20,000 to bring under control? Unfortunately, in the ensuing days and weeks Corey's antics resulted in a media circus which raised serious concerns about copycat Coreys throwing free-for-all parties in our streets and suburbs. That kind of behaviour should never be condoned. However, instead of being publicly castigated Corey was offered lucrative jobs in the entertainment industry and cashed in on cash-for-comment deals. To be fair, for all the favourable publicity there was plenty that was not so kind to Corey. The fact that he attracted the media's attention at all, which is no mean feat, is indicative of how serious gatecrashing can be.

The member for Burnett mentioned young Matthew Stanley who was tragically killed after receiving a fatal blow at a party. The perpetrators of that crime were gatecrashers. As my coalition colleague said, gatecrashing is not simply an innocent social activity; rather, in most cases it represents an attack on people's rights to the exclusive enjoyment of their property. In this day and age it is not feasible for young people to threaten gatecrashers with the taunt of trespass. Gatecrashers have no respect for the host or their guests, let alone the law.

We need to send a strong message that this kind of antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated in Queensland. This message would complement the government's PR machine, which is pumping out the One Punch Can Kill campaign. However, in order to achieve maximum efficacy we need to give our police the power to crack down on gatecrashers. That is what the bill seeks to achieve.

As my coalition colleagues have indicated, this bill gives police more move-on power to remove gatecrashers and suspected gatecrashers from private parties. It is a relevant law and one that I am only too happy to support. I congratulate the former shadow minister, the member for Burnett, on his initiative. I commend the bill to the House.