




Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 6 September 2011

FORTITUDE VALLEY, DRINK-SAFE PRECINCTS

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.11 am): Recent statistics released regarding the Fortitude Valley drink-safe precinct trial—which is a fully funded, two-year \$8.5 million investment in the drink-safe precincts—are continuing to show that we are delivering strong results to make the Fortitude Valley night economy most enjoyable for those who attend on a regular basis. The results show that for the first six months the drink-safe precinct in the Fortitude Valley has been most successful, as too have been the drink-safe precinct meetings I have attended on a regular basis under the auspices of the police force in the Fortitude Valley.

The results are fantastic and they show this government's commitment to making sure that this area of the Fortitude Valley is safe and secure for the people who want to have a great time in these world-class facilities here in Brisbane. These people can feel safe and secure because we are cracking down on violence, on crime and on any antisocial behaviour in the Valley so that everyone can go out and have a great time and return home safely after their evening out.

The first six-month snapshot reveals that the extra police force that this government is funding has made 995 arrests in the Valley—mostly for good order and liquor type offences—and that 11 people have been banned from the precinct for up to 12 months. I understand that there are other people who may be banned from the area if their behaviour is such that a submission is made to the court. The police force has been very successful in ensuring that those people who do not come for a good time but to do mischief will no longer be welcome in the Valley. It also shows that the police used conflict intervention strategies over 1,200 times and took over 380 people to safe zones to rest and recuperate during the first six months. The police also took 75 people into detention for breaches of the peace and handed 79 people over to Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics for medical attention.

The trial of the Chill Out Zone has also been very successful in the first six months. It has provided support for nearly 1,000 patrons of the Valley, which represents roughly 17 patrons per night. Nearly 30,000 cups of water were handed out in the Chill Out Zone, which is an outstanding achievement. The Chill Out Zone and Chaplain Watch are ensuring that people who need assistance in the Valley are assisted. People know where to go if they want a safe place where they can chill out and recover from whatever is happening. Chaplain Watch is doing a fantastic job, going out and looking at possible intervention strategies which can have an impact straightaway on helping those people who require assistance.

Overall, the statistics are speaking for themselves; it has been very successful. Officers of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation have also played an integral part in ensuring that pubs and clubs adhere to their obligations under the Liquor Act. During the first six months, they conducted 38 investigations and undertook 134 compliance operations, and 93 breaches were detected. These figures may sound high, but they are a drop in the bucket when you consider that 50,000 people visit the Fortitude Valley alone over the two nights of a weekend. Most people go there for a good time and to enjoy the world-class facilities on offer.

I want to contrast this with a recent Brisbane City Council decision. Here is the state government making a fantastic commitment in relation to ensuring there is a safe precinct, yet the Brisbane City Council recently ripped out funding for the Fortitude Valley place management team. It has been closed down; it no longer operates. Funds for the Valley Mall upgrade have evaporated. The Brisbane City Council has ripped them out and we will now not have the pleasure of an upgrade of that mall. The Brisbane City Council is taking no action on derelict and filthy buildings and public spaces, giving visitors to the Valley a very bad first impression, and as we know first impressions often last. In spite of all this, the Valley Mall board has done a very good job.

Under the chairmanship of local businessman, Phil di Bella, we have gained significant improvements in the Valley area but we need the Brisbane City Council on board as well. The day economy in the Valley is just as important as the night economy. The Queensland state government has put its hand in its pocket and has done wonders to turn around the night economy in the Valley in six months. It is just a shame that instead of assisting us with day economy endeavours the Brisbane City Council has pulled funding out.