




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (9.47 pm): I speak on an issue which resonates with much of the population, and that is how the abuse of alcohol is having a detrimental effect on young Queenslanders. Excessive drinking leads to significant social and personal difficulties, and every day we can pick up the local newspaper and read where alcohol fuelled incidents have occurred overnight. We all know someone who has been affected by the consequences of too much drink resulting in car accidents, death of loved ones, domestic violence, crime, bad health, alcoholism, depression, lives being ruined and families torn apart.

Alcohol affects different people in different ways. Those of us who have a social drink know how relaxing this can be. It is enjoyable. However, regrettably there is a dark side to excessive drinking, and I want to emphasise today the impacts that that can have on our children. Hotels and clubs pay massive fees and charges and are heavily taxed. However, this money is not channelled into schools to fund programs for education. When massive licence fees were introduced three years ago, one of the aims was that the fees would be used towards youth education, and to date we have not seen any formal education introduced in our schools as part of the curriculum.

I am advised that there are no plans on the horizon to formalise any plans, yet clubs and pubs continue to pay these huge fees and taxes. There is a lot of pressure on clubs and pubs to be vigilant in ensuring that under-age drinkers are not found on their premises. They sneak into establishments with fake IDs, dressing older than they look and the list goes on. This threatens the livelihoods of licensees, and they are the ones who are paying huge fees and taxes. It is time that these resources were channelled into educating our youth on the dangers and pitfalls of excessive drinking, which can lead to binge drinking, violence, crime, group sex and rape.

Studies have revealed that students from as early as year 5 up to year 12 are influenced by flashy advertisements encouraging them to drink and portraying the image of being cool amongst their friends. These days there is a huge variety of alcohol on offer—different strengths, flavours, colours and tastes—and they are attractively packaged and marketed to target our youth.

I believe that education of our children should begin as an important part of the school curriculum from year 8 of high school. It is only through the power of knowledge and learning that our children will be given the tools to manage and behave responsibly around alcohol. We are all aware of schoolies week, and as parents many of us have spent a very anxious week hoping that our kids will act responsibly and survive the week to return home safe and sound. Early education could mean the difference between a student becoming a responsible drinker in moderation or a student falling into the trap of alcohol abuse.

I would like to give credit to the Liquor Accord which is working successfully on the Atherton Tablelands; they are doing a great job. I have also heard that the Liquor Accord in Goondiwindi have introduced alcohol awareness into their schools and this is meeting with great success. This is a step in the right direction.