




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.28 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (No. 2). It amends the Corrective Service Act 2006 to require all drug traffickers sentenced to immediate full-time imprisonment to serve a minimum non-parole period of 80 per cent of the sentence imposed. The bill amends the Criminal Code to increase the maximum penalty for the offence of wilful under section 469, punishment in special cases, item 9 graffiti, from five to seven years imprisonment.

The bill implements the Liberal National Party's pre-election commitment to ensure that victim impact statements are read out to the sentencing courts if the victim wishes, toughen the sentencing laws for drug traffickers who target children, require drug traffickers to serve at least 80 per cent of their sentences before parole eligibility, and require all graffiti offenders to remove graffiti and strengthen the maximum penalty for graffiti crime. I think that is something that the majority of people will no doubt support.

I recall working in the railway. I worked at Mayne Station back in 1987-88. I remember all the electric trains that came in from all the stations at night-time. At least every second one of those trains would be covered in graffiti. But it was the railway employees who had to clean up the mess. Many times they caught those offenders and the feedback that I received was that many of the offenders were youths—some of them were not—and that they would be handed correctional sentences or get a slap on the wrist. They would go in there with their free boots, enjoying themselves. I believe deep down that the taxpayers cannot afford to keep paying to clean this up.

I think it was the former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, who took the bull by the horns and made a decision to crack down hard on graffiti artists first. I believe that from the time he did that everything started to fall into place—the incidence of graffiti fell and likewise crime and murder. The city was not totally cleaned up but it was more respectable than it was due to that decision being made. I commend the Attorney-General for this because I do not think we can argue with that.

The explanatory notes state that one of the primary objectives of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code to 'increase the maximum penalty for the offence of wilful damage under section 469, punishment in special cases, item 9 (Graffiti), from five to seven years imprisonment'. I think that is definitely something to look at because you do not want to put so much time, money and effort into graffiti artists who are in jail from five to seven years. Graffiti artists need to be given the opportunity to decide whether they want to spend five to seven years in jail or three years cleaning up graffiti in the city. I believe that that opportunity could be offered to them, whether they want to be looked after by the taxpayer but achieve nothing in jail when they could be out cleaning up graffiti.

The objective of one of the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail by the minister is to 'amend the Industrial Relations Act 1999 to ensure industrial organisations cannot avoid their obligation in regard to the requirements for spending for political purposes, to make technical amendments and to remedy drafting errors and omissions'. I feel that this an offence within itself. It is

an insult to bring something like this into such important legislation—an amendment that deals with spending for political purposes.

Every different political organisation has its purpose. Whether it is the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Democrats, the KAP—everyone has their purpose. They are all different lobby groups and somewhere along the line they have a purpose. Not everyone is right. But I feel that it is an offence to include the issue of unions spending for political purposes in a bill about drug trafficking to young children. That is sad. This is what people are sick of with regard to politics. They are sick of this type of politicking where you try to legislate any opposition out of existence. We have seen it before.

We had a rally out the front of Parliament House today and there were people out there who were very concerned about their job security. We had nurses out there who play a big part. We had fireies. We had ambos. We had people from all different political persuasions. They showed an advertisement—and they were aware that this bill was going to come before the House—of the Premier assuring all the public servants that they would be looked after and that they had nothing to fear—‘We’re about building and growing and supporting the Public Service,’ which ended up being a lie. It is disappointing that this bill, which is good legislation—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Member for Dalrymple, that language is not parliamentary. I ask you to withdraw please.

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw. But it is disappointing because this is a good bill. This is good legislation, but there is now a political tag to this bill that never had to be included in the first place. There is no doubt that it is disappointing that the backbenchers are not mentioning this. This is why people are turned off politics. This is why people are protesting outside, for the very reason this clause has been put in—

Mr Bleijie: How many were outside?

Mr KNUTH: Maybe 2,000, I think.

Ms Bates: Four hundred.

Mr KNUTH: No, 2,000. I did not see the Attorney-General or any—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Dalrymple, please come back to the subject.

Mr KNUTH: Like I was saying, this is what the Attorney-General promised, the LNP promised, and basically I supported that promise. At the same time I will never support including unions in a criminal bill, a bill that deals with drug trafficking to children. I think it is beyond a joke.