




Speech By
Hon. Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Alcohol Related Violence

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.30 pm): Violence in our streets, or anywhere, is unacceptable. It is time to challenge the culture that tolerates binge drinking and losing control and to take a stand against behaviour that disrespects others and threatens their safety. Our normally peaceful Sunshine Coast community has recently been rocked by the tragic deaths of Wayne Dover in Maroochydore and Bruce Steensen in Mooloolaba. I express my condolences to their families. Their deaths have shocked everyone and caused great grief and anger, adding to a community-wide resolve to stop the violence. Court cases are pending against alleged offenders who have been charged and so for sub judice reasons I will keep my comments focused so as not to affect those processes. We want to see justice for the victims and appropriate consequences for offenders.

The state government through the Premier has promised to respond with a comprehensive package to address the issue of alcohol fuelled violence in Queensland and that will be released this month. It will be based upon community feedback as that is the only way these serious issues can be tackled—with community support—as it is going to take tougher laws for those who offend and a culture change about the abuse of alcohol and drugs in our community. Already people are speaking up with answers and a commitment to action. More than 12,000 Queenslanders participated in the government's survey with more than 1,000 Sunshine Coast residents responding.

On Sunday afternoon this week I conducted a live online forum on my Facebook page, attracting more than 100 comments and 8,000-plus people viewing the posts on this issue. Thank you to everyone who had their say and provided their input. I am hearing from people in my electorate who want to take back control of our streets and ensure they are safe. Young people—people of all ages—want to have fun in safety. The responses to the Facebook forum were in line with the state government survey results, including a call for tougher penalties for offenders, ID scanning into licensed venues, banning entry for those with a history of violence from those venues and better policing of responsible service of alcohol in licenced venues. Half of the survey respondents said they had seen violence in or around entertainment venues and most said that a lack of respect and concern for others was to blame.

A number of groups are already out there working in schools and the community to spread this antiviolence message and it is encouraging to see a grassroots response. I am keen to work with community groups as we share the leadership on this complex problem and find comprehensive solutions. There is no one silver bullet, but there are better solutions, and thoughtful dedicated citizens can make a difference.