




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2014

SAFE NIGHT OUT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (10.14 pm), in reply: I acknowledge the contributions of all honourable members to the debate on this important issue of solving the problems of alcohol and drug related violence. As I said in the second reading debate, there is no silver bullet to solving the problems of alcohol or drug related violence. What is required is a comprehensive strategy that is developed in consultation with Queenslanders, which is exactly what we have been doing over the past 18 months. We did not have a knee-jerk reaction to this issue. We listened to the likes of the member for Gregory. I note that the member for Gregory is giving me some hand gestures, so I will get straight to his contribution. He has a particular issue in his electorate involving a pub that has changed its licence category. I am pleased to say that the bill that we are debating tonight empowers local governments to enable them to say no in relation to adult entertainment permits. This is about empowering local governments. I know the member for Gregory will be very happy and satisfied with that particular provision. I thank him for his representations on behalf of his community.

This debate about alcohol fuelled and drug related violence started many years ago. As I indicated in my second reading speech, the former government started the debate with the drink-safe precincts. The honourable Minister for Natural Resources and Mines gave a very good review of what happened on the former law, justice and safety committee that the member for Mermaid Beach, the minister and I were on. That committee came up with many recommendations dealing with these issues. We travelled the state. I note that, while the member for Hinchinbrook said that there is not much nightclub night-life in Hinchinbrook, certainly when we travelled to the electorate of Townsville and went on a study tour, the member for Hinchinbrook was well known amongst the locals in the establishments that we visited.

Following the review in 2009 and onwards, we had the drink-safe precinct trial. It is no secret to the members of this House that the Auditor-General produced a report that said that the drink-safe precincts cost too much money, were hard to implement, that the implementation did not go according to the plan of the Labor Party and that there were issues with it. However, this government indicated that we liked aspects of the drink-safe precinct trial. We continued the trial and extended it on numerous occasions to ensure that we could get to where we are tonight, that is, debating the Safe Night Out Strategy.

While on the subject of the drink-safe precincts, for the benefit of members of the House I table the final evaluation of the drink-safe precinct trial. Let us remember that this was a DPC commissioned trial from the former Labor government and continued by this government. I have the final evaluation of that trial, which makes it quite clear that the start-up of the drink-safe precincts was a bit rushed, there was limited accountability and it cost too much money. However, it also states that rates of assault and so forth are certainly on the decrease. For the benefit of members, I table the *Drink safe Precincts, Evaluation summary report* and the *DrinkSafe Precincts, Final evaluation:*

24 months of the trial. The final evaluation was to ensure openness and transparency with that process.

Tabled paper: Department of the Premier and Cabinet report titled 'Drink Safe Precincts, evaluation summary report' [5744].

Tabled paper: Department of the Premier and Cabinet report titled 'Drink Safe Precincts, final evaluation: 24 months of the trial' [5745].

In terms of the drink-safe precincts, over the two years of the trial in the Valley all types of offences were down by 11.5 per cent, good order offences were down by 25.5 per cent and offences against police were down by 29.5 per cent; in Surfers Paradise all types of offences were down by 22.6 per cent and assaults were down by 23.7 per cent; in Townsville all offences per weekend drinking night were down by 1.5 per cent, including particular good order offences which were down by 18.4 per cent. There has been a decrease in the rate of assault offences by 25.3 per cent, driven in part by the decrease in the percentage of grievous serious injury occurring during the weekend drinking nights. As I said, non-government groups helped over 16,000 patrons and handed out more than 300,000 free water bottles. Guess what? There was no trading hours issue with respect to the drink-safe precincts and we managed to achieve quite a substantial reduction in those particular crimes.

The Safe Night Out Strategy is the most comprehensive strategy developed by any government in Australia. It was not a knee-jerk reaction. It was done over an extensive period of time. It was released as a draft strategy, then as an updated strategy and then finally introduced as legislation into the parliament. We took Queenslanders with us on this journey.

We did not go out like the Labor Party and announce a policy which they copied off Newcastle and then when I raised in the media 'Had the member for Rockhampton actually visited Newcastle where they are basing their policy on?', he quickly jumped in a jet and flew down to Newcastle over the weekend to have a look. That is not how we draft policy. That is not how we have debate about these important issues.

If we want to tackle this issue in good faith for the men and women who have lost their lives because of alcohol and drug related violence then we have to treat this issue seriously. Announcing a policy, then forgetting that you have not actually been down to see the place where you have copied the policy from is a disgrace and does not show good faith to the people who have lost their lives because of this issue.

Then those opposite brought forward the star candidate for Stafford to solve all the problems of alcohol related violence. I have to say that I think the member for Stafford underperformed tonight, particularly given the opposition leader put him on a pedestal and led us to believe that he was about to give a sermon from the mount in terms of alcohol and drug related violence. He could not last the distance. He only lasted seven minutes. I am not sure what he is going to do for the next seven, nine or 10 months before the next election.

Mr Nicholls: I don't think he likes it. I think he's bored. I don't think he likes it.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Treasurer. I agree; I think he is already bored and does not like it. This was his big issue—he campaigned on this sole issue—and he could not even speak for 10 minutes. We afforded him the opportunity of 10 minutes. He could not speak for 10 minutes. I went to a conference last year where he spoke for half an hour on the issue. That was when he was a doctor. As a member of parliament representing his electorate he can only speak for seven minutes on such an important issue.

We tackle these issues seriously. We tackle these issues with Queensland's support. Over 13,000 Queenslanders had input into this Safe Night Out Strategy. It is about changing the culture. Everyone is responsible for this issue. It is about saying bad behaviour will not be tolerated. That is why we have implemented the penalty and offence reforms and provided for safe and supportive environments.

In her contribution the member for Gladstone raised the issue of privacy. I thank the member for Gladstone for her support for the bill. We recognise the need for privacy considerations in relation to the ID scanners. That will be addressed in a practical framework for the implementation of the networked ID scanner system. In order to achieve this, the government's intention in the bill was that both regulated premises and approved operators will be subject to the obligations and responsibilities already provided for under the Commonwealth's Privacy Act 1988. It will be the responsibility of regulated licensees and approved operators to ensure that their respective internal controls and procedures, including staff training, are consistent with the objectives of the Commonwealth Privacy Act. Of course, there are penalties and offences in there if they do not do that.

The bill provides that the commissioner may approve an application to operate an approved ID-scanning system if the commissioner is satisfied that the applicant is a suitable person. A person's suitability is not limited to the person's criminal history but may include the person's ability to operate an approved ID-scanning system in accordance with the objectives and intentions of the bill.

The technical specifications of the ID-scanning system and ID scanner were released for industry and public comment from 8 August until 25 August. The member for Nicklin raised why we are having this discussion now. It is to get a baseline. In order for the Queensland government statisticians to do the future work they have to start somewhere. The letters that the member for Nicklin received or the one that he talked about relate to achieving a baseline. We have to start somewhere before we can achieve the end results with statistics.

Once an ID has been scanned and details confirmed as accurate or amended, it is intended that only authorised persons be able to access scanned ID information. ID scanners and systems must incorporate and use a fire wall and must have intrusion detection software installed and configured to detect, block and lock excessive failed log-in attempts or any other potentially malicious activities.

Under the draft technical requirements, for the benefit of the member for Gladstone, it is intended that all patrons' records will be transmitted to the central system at least every 24 hours. All data from scanned patron IDs and associated photographs must be automatically deleted from both the local venue host and central system after 30 days, unless the data relates to a banning order or a licensee ban currently in force. I hope that addresses the issues that the member for Gladstone raised.

As I said, the Safe Night Out Strategy has been developed over a comprehensive period of time. I am a father of three children. As I have said, my daughter Taylor is 11—time flies when you are having fun. She is heading into year 7 next year, which is middle school. I am pleased that this Safe Night Out Strategy will teach her, as much as the school can—as parents we have a responsibility too—as she grows up the implications of drug and alcohol fuelled violence. This will be before they get into a situation where peer pressure is too much for them to handle. We will do what we can as parents. I am sure all Queenslanders will do that. We have to also make sure that the curriculum is there. That is why education is such a key.

As I said, this is the only plan in Australia to comprehensively deal with the issue. There is no one silver bullet. Trading hours is not the silver bullet to all these issues. The solution to the problems of alcohol and drug related violence is a comprehensive strategy—one that is developed with the support and help of Queenslanders. I thank the over 13,000 Queenslanders who contributed to the Safe Night Out Strategy when we went out and consulted to develop the most comprehensive plan in Australia tackling this issue.