




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2014

**CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS (BILLBOARD ADVERTISING) AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.' The sentiment in the wise words of Nelson Mandela are etched in the child and family focused policy that the KAP has developed regarding billboard advertising in Queensland. I am very proud to stand here in the Queensland parliament tonight to debate, on behalf of the Queensland people whom I represent, the implementation of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. Mr Deputy Speaker, would you be able to silence these squawking parrots over here?

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I would ask the member for Dalrymple to refer to members in the chamber by their correct titles, please.

Mr KNUTH: What first brought my attention to this issue of inappropriate content use and geographical placement within the billboard advertising industry was the number of people contacting the KAP head office complaining about the failure of the advertising and marketing industries to apply a classification ratings code to billboard advertising and their inappropriate placement in public areas frequently occupied by children and families.

With this in mind, we personally went to the Queensland people asking them what they thought about inappropriate content being displayed on billboard advertising and their geographical placement. The response received from the majority of people was a call for the implementation of a classification rating and classification zoning system to regulate billboard content and geographical placement. This is common sense.

During our discussions with concerned members of the Queensland community there appeared to be a recurring reference to particular billboard advertisements such as: 'rip and roll' ads on bus shelters; Brisbane's sweetest adult club Honey B's billboards; Sexpo billboards; and 'Want longer lasting sex' billboards. Recently complaints have been made to us about Foxtel's 'Festival of WTF' billboard and 'Congratulations you're having a lesbian' billboards.

Two main issues kept resurfacing whilst in discussion with members of the Queensland community. They were: the constant exposure to families and children of M and MA content on billboard advertising; and the geographical placement of M and MA billboard advertising in public spaces that are frequently occupied by families and children. On further investigation into the concerns voiced by community members, we researched the particular billboard advertisements

consistently being referred to. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I will have to present these articles in my reply speech for members to contemplate before voting.

I clearly state that the articles which I will present in my reply speech expose a self-regulatory system which has failed to meet community expectations. Recognising the failure of a self-regulatory system, I argue that this bill must be implemented to stop advertisers and marketers from taking advantage of a broken and failed system which engages the problem after the damage is done.

I sincerely hope that members of this House have taken the time to read through the bill and realise this is a preventative policy which will stop rogue advertisers and marketers abusing a weak system. The public have expressed increasing concerns about the outlandish use of M and MA content on outdoor billboards and, in particular, their geographical placement. That means that these M-rated billboards are close to public parks and schools.

It should be noted that the Advertising Standards Bureau is failing in its task to meet community expectations in terms of what is acceptable and not acceptable with regard to billboard advertising. The Advertising Standards Bureau has displayed inefficiencies when dealing with the issues of inappropriate content in public spaces that are occupied frequently by families and children. It is obvious that the Advertising Standards Bureau is reactionary as opposed to preventative when dealing with inappropriate billboard content and geographical placement.

The failing of community expectations is reflected in the Advertising Standards Bureau 2012 community perceptions research, which states—

The community is in general more conservative than the Board regarding themes of strong language and sex, sexuality and nudity. With regards to language there was widespread concern over the exposure of children to strong language. This is an area where community views appear to have become more conservative since 2007.

The highest level of community unacceptability for any advertisement shown in the research was 54 per cent. The mediums of advertisements potentially providing children access to advertisements were a substantial source of concern for those ads with the highest levels of unacceptability. After conducting our initial investigation into the complaints received, we then proceeded to call a meeting with the KAP policy research team to formulate a planned response to the concerns of the Queensland community.

The first point of call was to put in place a methodology in the form of a thorough literature review of the sexualisation and commercialisation of children relating to advertising by: researching the Bailey review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood, as an international comparative study to validate our direction on the proposed policy; researching academic literature, peer reviewed journal articles, the federal government's Senate inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment in 2008 and regulations that govern outdoor signs which include assessing the effect of sexualised images on children and on gender equality; researching the Queensland Classification of Publications Act 1991; researching the Commonwealth Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995; and engaging with the Australian Family Association, the Australian Christian Lobby, the National Civic Council and face-to-face engagement with the general public.

A non-scientific method was used when conducting the research study. The outcome of the six-month research study to develop a public policy to meet the concerns and demands of the public associated with billboard advertising standards has delivered the creation of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I thank the House for considering this bill. I have a lot more to say in my reply speech. I thank the House for considering this bill.