



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.48 pm): I rise in support of report No. 69 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on our budget estimates hearing. I thank all of the members of the committee, the chair and everybody in the hardworking secretariat. I would also like to thank the two ministers. On the day I thought they answered the questions well and frankly and, despite some time differences that were mentioned by the member for Nicklin on that first day, the questions were actually very well balanced. It can be frustrating sometimes to be one member on a committee when you have a particular question you want to ask. I understand the opposition getting frustrated with that, but I felt everybody was given a fair opportunity.

I wish to speak about the \$44 million over four years that has been allocated for the Safe Night Out Strategy. It goes across the portfolios of both the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police. I think it is a comprehensive strategy. The member for Brisbane Central should be congratulated on the strategy. I have been involved for over 20 years in the liquor industry. In that time I have worked very hard to try to minimise harm. What I have seen from Labor in that time is knee-jerk response after knee-jerk response after knee-jerk response which has cost the industry millions of dollars, cost people time in court and in other places dealing with tickets and caused funding problems for various providers. It is a really good thing to now have a comprehensive strategy with \$44 million being allocated to the various agencies to be able to implement this strategy. It will be looking at society as a whole. We all know that drug and alcohol violence is a problem in our community. We need to make social change. This strategy will see the implementation of banning orders, the implementation of additional technology in conjunction with scanners on front doors and the ability for police to have a bit more teeth in the application of the legislation surrounding people in and around these 15 declared areas. I was very pleased that the police have got the resources. I was also pleased that there is going to be additional funds made available for a trial in the CBD in Brisbane where people can be taken when they have overindulged and can be dealt with in a different framework. It will keep our hospitals free and keep those people off the street where they might harm themselves or others.

The area that concerns me the most is the growth in drugs. It was interesting for me to hear some of the statistics come back about the reduction in crime that has happened as we have gone about dealing with the criminal motorcycle gangs and other people who have been known for a long time to be both dealing in and profiting from the distribution of drugs and the impact that has actually been having on our society, particularly in some of these Safe Night Out precincts that have been designated. The police having extra resources to deal with this will be a very good thing. It just goes to show that we do have a very strong plan for Queensland. We have a very bright future under an LNP government. The objective is to make it the safest place to live, work and bring up a family. As someone who has four teenagers who are all starting to think about what it might be like to go out and have a drink, I know that having legislation around a coward punch, having police empowered and

having the courts empowered to be able to punish people means that if you go out and have a responsible time you will be able to have a good time and if you do not act responsibly you will be held accountable for your actions. I think that is a great outcome. I thank both ministers for allocating resources to it in this budget.