




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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**TACKLING ALCOHOL-FUELLED VIOLENCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL;
LIQUOR AND FAIR TRADING LEGISLATION (RED TAPE REDUCTION)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.03 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, since human beings made that extraordinary breakthrough and became able to ferment simple sugars to produce alcohol, it has modified the behaviour of people who consume it. That is a fact. Let's be honest: alcohol can be used responsibly. It can be genuinely enjoyed by people who consume it or it can help to create a more agreeable social environment. Alcohol can also be used irresponsibly. Its consumption can be abused and people can do or say things that they would not otherwise do or say. However, this bill is not about the virtues or otherwise of alcohol in and of itself. If it were, this would be a bill proposing prohibition. But no-one is talking about that, are they.

History tells us what a monumental screaming failure that policy was in those jurisdictions where lawmakers got carried away enough to think that they could force people to abstain completely. Otherwise law-abiding people who enjoyed a drink were suddenly placed on the wrong side of the law. Fast-forward to the recent past and come a little closer to home. Former prime minister Kevin Rudd embarked on his own personal social engineering crusade when he determined that people were consuming excessive volumes of premixed alcoholic drinks, dubbed alcopops. Labor's solution was to introduce an alcopop tax to try to reduce the consumption of premixed alcoholic drinks. This was another attempt to try to alter the behaviour of consumers with respect to alcohol. The result was the opposite of what was intended by Labor's bright spark social engineers. Priced out of premixed standardised drinks, people went to the bottle shops, purchased large bottles of unmixed spirits and mixed their own which were usually much stronger in terms of alcohol content. That was another monumental screaming failure by certain lawmakers who think that they can defy the love/hate relationship that human beings have had with alcohol for thousands of years.

Furthermore, the eye-watering levels of taxation imposed on alcoholic products in Australia for decades has similarly failed to prevent the violent, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour that is objected to by the overwhelming majority of people in the community. So we know that making alcohol unlawful and we know that making alcohol more expensive has not addressed the problem. This brings us to the mechanism that is being proposed in this bill: fiddling around with the trading hours of licensed premises, locking people out and picking winners on the drinks menu. We should again look at history as a guide.

I am too young to remember when pubs closed at 6 pm, but I am aware of the practice during the period known as the 'six o'clock swill'. The law which was intended to reduce alcohol consumption instead encouraged rapid consumption within a short time frame. Reduced trading hours did not have a significant effect on reduced alcohol consumption. In many cases patrons would buy alcohol at bottle shops to consume at home after the six o'clock swill. What on earth makes the Labor Party and the

Katter party think that fiddling around with trading hours and lockouts and making up new rules about when a licensed premise can serve a certain type of drink to their patrons is going to stop violent, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour by people who have consumed alcohol. History tells us that it will not and it will have unintended consequences.

Prohibition, taxation and restricted trading hours have all failed dismally to deliver the outcome that the Labor Party and the Katter party are seeking to achieve through this bill. More recently we have had lockouts in our entertainment precincts and a moratorium on extended trading hours for licensed premises, yet here we are proposing to impose the lockouts earlier and reduce the trading hours of licensed premises. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different outcome. What are the Labor Party and the Katter party going to do next time when these measures do not work? Will we be back in here doing the same thing again? What will their rationale be the next time when a small minority of people continue to abuse alcohol and revert to unacceptably violent, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour?

While I am too young to remember the monumental screaming failure that was closing pubs at six o'clock and the six o'clock swill, the fact is that I am now a little bit too old to go out until three o'clock in the morning. The measures that are being proposed by Labor and the Katter party are not going to impact on me personally, but this is not about me; it is not about my personal preferences. The fact is: what are these measures going to actually do to reduce violent, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour in and around licensed premises?

Why should the overwhelming majority of people who do the right thing and go out to have a good time have their options and their choices taken away because of a small minority of idiots, which is exactly what these people are? If we could solve the problem by passing a law today to erect signs in and around licensed premises right across Queensland saying 'no idiots past this point' we would do it, but, of course, idiots rarely self-identify when asked to do so.

Lastly, I ask all Labor Party MPs and all Katter party MPs to be honest with themselves for just one moment and ask this simple question: do they really think people are going to cop this sweet, go home and tuck themselves safely into bed because the Labor Party and the Katter party say so? They are not. They are going to spread out into the suburbs, into private homes and back yards, where they will be even more difficult for our very good officers in the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service to deal with.

Furthermore, they are prepared. They knew before they went out that the Labor Party and the Katter party had already decided that they would be locked out of licensed premises earlier than they used to be. They also knew that, even if they are inside after the earlier lockout, they can only consume beverages that the Labor Party and the Katter party have decided they are allowed to drink. Not to worry: as I mentioned, they are prepared. They have been to the bottle shop earlier and that bottle of spirits, those bottles of wine or that carton of beer will be waiting for them at home or at their friend's place. They are not going to be told by the Labor Party or the Katter party what they can and cannot do. The Labor Party and the Katter party are kidding themselves if they think this will not happen.

We have to make people more responsible for their own actions. The consequences and the penalties for violent, irresponsible and antisocial behaviour need to be more significant to get the message through to the public. We have to remove this minority of idiots from licensed premises so that everyone else—the law-abiding majority—can go out and enjoy themselves. This is exactly what the LNP's Safe Night Out Strategy was doing, and it was proving to be successful where it had been deployed properly, with the required resources. It was properly consulted on during the term of the previous LNP government, and it should have been supported by the Palaszczuk government when it came to office just over 12 months ago.

In my part of the state, in North Queensland, the parliamentary committee hearings in Cairns and Townsville delivered very clear feedback from a range of relevant and well-informed stakeholders. They do not want these earlier lockouts and reduced trading hours. That feedback is being ignored by the three Labor MPs from Cairns, the three Labor MPs from Townsville and the Katter party.

I do not support the government's proposed interventions in relation to alcohol fuelled violence because I do not think history shows that the interventions being proposed will have any material effect on the antisocial, violent and unacceptable behaviour demonstrated by the minority of idiots, who have been perpetuating since that wonderful breakthrough in the mists of time when we were first able to ferment simple sugars into alcohol.