




Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (7.50 pm): The evidence is clear. There are journal articles, peer reviewed data and statistics from across the world that demonstrate that this policy will work.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I rise to speak in favour of the Tackling Alcohol-Fuelled Violence Legislation Amendment Bill. The committee actually said in its recommendation—and if the member read the recommendation he would see it—that it will collect adequate information and data after the introduction of the bill. It is recommendation 1 in the report and I refer to that. I think that perhaps the member needs to read the report again.

In his contribution to the debate the member for Mansfield encouraged us all to focus on the right outcome. But I would have to question the member for Mansfield and all of those opposite: is the LNP focused on the right outcome in this debate or the right outcome for big liquor? How much did the LNP sell the right outcome in this debate for? The member also talked a lot about data. As the Attorney-General said, there are dozens upon dozens of peer reviewed, irrefutable pieces of research from Australia and around the world that supports the government's policy and this bill.

We know that alcohol is the most widely used drug in Queensland and that it is associated with more than 1,100 deaths and more than 33,900 hospitalisations each year. Those figures alone should be enough for the members opposite to support this bill. At the last election the Palaszczuk government made a commitment to the people of Queensland to keep their loved ones safe when they went out after dark. Similarly, young people want to know that they are safe when they go out with their friends and parents want to know that their kids will come home. One in six Queenslanders has been the victim of alcohol fuelled violence and two-thirds of Queenslanders, or 66 per cent, consider the city, or the centre of their town, to be unsafe on a Saturday night. The research also shows that, after midnight and for every hour that alcohol continues to be served, the risk of being assaulted or being the victim of alcohol fuelled violence increases.

After extensive consultation with industry and community stakeholders, the government developed a comprehensive multifaceted policy framework that will build a safer community and a vibrant night-life by tackling alcohol fuelled violence. Our key goal is to drive cultural change around drinking behaviour by promoting responsible practices that will create a safer environment for everyone and boost local economies. I support the bill's objectives to tackle alcohol fuelled violence, particularly late at night, through an evidence based multifaceted approach.

The bill will also provide greater clarity and improve operational efficiency in the regulation of licensed premises through miscellaneous amendments to the Liquor Act and will ensure consistency across Queensland's statutes dealing with directors' liability through amendments to the Fair Trading Act. The Palaszczuk government's policy and this bill are based on a large body of research and interstate and international experiences. In Newcastle, upon the introduction of liquor trade restrictions, there was a 37 per cent reduction in assaults and a 26 per cent reduction in night-time emergency department assault presentations. Can we argue with assault presentation data? In Kings Cross, upon the introduction of liquor trade restrictions, there was a 32 per cent reduction in assaults and in the Sydney CBD entertainment precincts, a 40 per cent reduction in assaults.

The government recognises that alcohol fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour is a complex issue. As such, it requires a collective response involving the whole community. The government will continue to consult and work in partnership with community groups and licensees to improve safety and amenity in and around licensed venues. As part of the comprehensive policy to tackle alcohol fuelled violence, the government will implement a number of non-legislative initiatives, such as a three-year multimedia education and awareness campaign targeting young people, particularly men.

Research has indicated that the total cost to the Australian economy of alcohol related matters is over \$14 billion. That figure can be broken down to being almost \$3 billion to the criminal justice system, \$1.6 billion to the health system, over \$6 billion to productivity and \$3.5 billion in costs associated with traffic accidents. Safer venues mean that more people go out at night and increased diversity in our licensed premises. Safer venues also makes it safer for employees, DJs, bar staff and musicians.

It must be clear that the government is not changing the hours of trade; the government is changing the hours that alcohol is served. Licensed venues will still be able to stay open beyond the hours of liquor service to provide other services such as food, non-alcoholic beverages and entertainment. In Newcastle, where a lockout has been in place since 2008, since the introduction of liquor trade restrictions the total number of licensed premises has more than doubled. That is a 110 per cent increase. There was also a 140 per cent increase in licensed restaurants and boutique bars.

There are many cities around the world that have venues with closing times of 2 am, including Boston, Los Angeles, San Diego and Sacramento in the US and Ottawa and Toronto in Canada, and the entirety of Ireland—or 2.30 am in the case of Dublin. The reality is that these international destinations are well-known tourist destinations. It is nonsense to suggest that these international tourist destinations do not have a night-time economy because they stop the sale of alcohol at 2 am.

Opponents of the government's policy have not presented any evidence to the government to support their claims of job losses or a loss of business income.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I would love to see the member's data. I engaged with all of the 40 or so licensed venues in Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast that are represented on the Rockhampton safe night out precinct committee and the Capricorn Coast Liquor Accord and asked for feedback regarding this bill. However, I have not had any response from any of the venues. There was certainly no flood of emails or phone calls with concerns about the bill. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I had no response at all. Also, to my knowledge I have not had—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I engaged with the constituents—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Keppel, I would ask that you direct your comments through the chair, not towards the member for Lockyer.

**Mrs LAUGA:** I engaged with the constituents of my electorate and in particular the 40 or so licensed venues that are represented on the Rockhampton safe night out precinct committee and the Capricorn Coast Liquor Accord and I received no response whatsoever. Also, to my knowledge I have not had any constituents who oppose this bill contact my office by email, phone or mail. In fact, two constituents called into my office on Monday to let me know that they think that this bill does not go far enough. They want to see alcohol sales limited to 10 am to 10 pm and a minimum drinking age of 21 years. Although this policy does not form—

**An opposition member:** Do you support that?

**Mrs LAUGA:** No, I do not. Although this policy does not form part of this bill, it is interesting to note that there is support in my community for even tougher alcohol laws than are on the table here.

On 5 January I received a letter from a constituent in Tungamull, which is in my electorate. The letter states—

Dear Ms Lauga,

I am writing to you in response to the tragic death of 18 year old Cole Miller yesterday after he was punched in the Valley on Sunday Morning. I want the Queensland Government to bring in laws that can't be challenged by lawyers to bring an end to the alcohol fuelled violence that currently plagues this great state.

There have been too many tragic deaths caused by one punch drunken perpetrators on innocent people who are simply out to have a good time with their friends.

I received a similar response from constituents when I engaged on social media about the bill earlier this week. It is no surprise then that a poll conducted in February this year by Galaxy, commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, found that almost three-quarters of Queenslanders support the late night trading hour measures recently announced by the Queensland government to reduce alcohol fuelled violence.

Introducing a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3 am was supported by 84 per cent of respondents. We would rather explain to a young person that the Palaszczuk government is imposing a call for last drinks at 2 am than explain to their loved ones that are not coming home because they are lying in a hospital bed or, worse, because they were killed by a senseless act of violence.

In considering their position on this bill, I urge all members to think about the families affected by too much alcohol, the impact on our health system of too many alcohol related hospitalisations and emergency department presentations and the unnecessary pressure placed on police and the justice system to deal with alcohol fuelled violence. I commend this bill to the House.