




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (12.07 am): We have not got one minute to lose on this issue. There are those who advocate that we should take our time. People are being injured. People are being disfigured. People are, in some extreme cases, losing their lives on the streets today because of alcohol fuelled violence. We have not got a minute to spare in terms of whether we have action on this or not.

I congratulate Minister Lynham and the Attorney-General on their very successful stewardship of these highly responsible laws. Where certain liberties have a direct causal impact and take away greater liberties, it is our duty to examine those. It is our duty, where that is proven to be the case, to act to make sure that those greater liberties are protected.

What we are seeing is that the greater liberty of public safety is being impacted. The evidence has been mounting over the last 10 to 15 years. This is not an issue that started yesterday. It has been getting worse out there. I do not hear from the opposition any position that there is not a problem. I think there is an acceptance that there is a problem, and I acknowledge that. The issue is: will we deal with this problem?

The evidence out there is very strong. As the Minister for Road Safety, we regulate and take liberties off people for the safety of the public all the time. In the 1970s there were 31 fatalities per 100,000 people in this state. It is now down to five. How has that happened? It has happened because we have taken various liberties off people such as being able to drive a car while they are drunk or while they are taking drugs.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Lockyer, you are making a habit of interjecting tonight. I ask you to desist.

Mr BAILEY: We enforced them to wear a seatbelt. We enforced them to stop speeding because it is a danger to other Queenslanders. We use that principle in this parliament all the time. So let us not hear any rhetoric about this being unusual or unacceptable. We do it all the time. It has been an effective policy outcome that we have to keep getting better at. It has saved thousands of lives. There are thousands of Queenslanders here today because of road safety measures where we have taken liberties off people for the greater good. That is exactly the same principle that we are applying here today when it comes to alcohol fuelled violence.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about the prevention of disfigurement of people. We are talking about the prevention of violence and in some cases death. We are talking about the prevention of crime. I have not heard too much from the other side about this. They like to lecture us

fairly piously about Labor being soft on crime, yet I have not heard an opposition member mention the word 'crime' once in this debate. Why? Because they are choosing to do nothing about crime. Violating somebody physically and violently is a crime. The evidence is very clear in other states. There is a huge amount of peer reviewed evidence that the reduction of alcohol trading hours will reduce alcohol fuelled violence. The evidence is overwhelming. It is peer reviewed. It is very strong. I might add there is the experience of Minister Lynham as a surgeon.

Consider this, Madam Deputy Speaker. Here is a man who is highly dedicated, who has decades of experience as a surgeon saving people's lives and who was prevented from doing his job because increasingly his time was taken up with putting back together the smashed bones of young people in this state and stitching together their slashed skin. Increasingly, he had to operate on those kinds of people more and more and on other people less because of this problem. Is that not evidence? Why would a surgeon leave such a highly skilled profession or at least put it aside to come into politics unless it was his experience and his evidence that motivated him to do that? We have to consider that.

It is not a fair and reasonable thing for us to say that somebody's pleasure is a greater right than somebody's safety. That is not fair and that is not on. The rights of somebody to continue drinking between 3 am and 5 am pales into insignificance compared to the right of somebody not to be disfigured, not to be smashed up and in the emergency department and in some cases with brain injuries and in some cases dead. It is not fair for us to be backing somebody's right to pleasure over the general right to safety.

The opposition have put up a number of arguments that need to be dealt with. It is interesting that there are members on the other side who support this legislation. I have not heard any of them have the courage to actually say that, but it is easy to spot them because you get history lessons, you get philosophical discourses, you get verbal ballet. They barely speak about the bill. If you listen to the speeches, you know who really supports it because they do not want to talk about the bill very much in their speech. We get routine rhetoric from the opposition. Trite phrases are no substitute for evidence, and the evidence is overwhelming. This is the opportunity for MPs today to stand up for Queenslanders who are being maimed needlessly in this state. This is the time for them to stand up and show us whether they have the courage to back those people and to stop those disfigurements happening. That is the challenge.

This is a pivotal moment in the parliament in terms of responsibility in this state. It is a pivotal moment, and the outcome and how people vote will be on their conscience. In a future debate when I get a lecture about Labor's position being soft on crime, I will remind every single opposition MP that they voted against action on alcohol fuelled violence. Do not ever give us a lecture about preventing crime if you are going to vote against this bill, because this bill will prevent crime. That is what the evidence shows in other states. It is very clear. You are going soft on crime. If you are voting against this bill, you are going soft on crime in this state. It is the easy way out for you.

Importantly, we are supporting this legislation. Why? Because there is a clear evidence base. Yes, there is majority support out there—up to 74 per cent of Queenslanders support it. But, importantly, we are backing this because it is the right thing to do. It is a compassionate thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do by Queenslanders. It is evidence based. It is an act of care on behalf of this community. I agree with Minister Miles. When I was in my 20s I went out in the Valley. I love live music. I have been there and not a lot positive does happen after 3 am. It is a minor infringement of people's rights for public safety which I support.

I heard a few people talk about how offensive certain things are. What is offensive is not acting. That is the most offensive thing to do. This is the chance for opposition MPs to stand up for their communities. This is the opportunity for them to stand up against crime. I acknowledge the contributions, particularly of the member for Thuringowa and the member for Barron River—ambulance officers who have been picking up the pieces and taking them to hospital to people like Minister Lynham to fix up. They understand the damage that is going on out there. I acknowledge that front-line experience. That deserves to be acknowledged as evidence. Their experience, their career experience, deserves to be acknowledged as evidence.

It is an insult to say that there is not enough evidence. It is an insult to the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. It is an insult to the Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol. It is an insult to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. It is an insult to the AMA. It is an insult to Clubs Queensland. It is an insult to the Queensland Police Service and to the Queensland Police Union of Employees. It is an insult to the Trauma Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. It is an insult to the Nurses' Union. It is an insult to the Salvos. It is an insult to the Public Health Association. It is an insult to Healthy Options Australia. It is an insult to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. It is an insult to the Ambulance Service. It is an insult to all of those groups

who care about our community, who know the evidence base is clear. Let us not have this lazy and trite four-word phrases from the opposition against a mountain of evidence. I think it was summed up when one of the members was quoting a Young Liberal and not a health professional on this debate. I commend the bill to the House.

(Time expired)