




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS)
AMENDMENT BILL; FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (SMOKE ALARMS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (9.16 pm): I am going to make a reasonably short contribution because a lot of information has been spoken about already tonight. This bill is very important for our communities. It is certainly very important for a lot of individuals, for people like Louie and Christine, who are in the gallery tonight and who are very strong advocates for making our community safer with better fire detection in people's houses. I thank them for coming here tonight and for pushing this issue very hard.

In recent history we have seen the results of multiple house fires and tragedies that have concluded in the loss of life. A domestic house fire in Queensland, as previously stated, happens every 4.7 hours. I will never forget the tragedy that unfolded on 23 August 2011 where 11 people, including eight teenagers and children—one who was only three years old—lost their lives. As a father of young children—my eldest daughter is five, my son is four and my youngest daughter is two—thinking about that child who was only three years old certainly hits home. I would hate to see any parent having to suffer through that. This left massive scars in the Tongan and Samoan communities but also in the Logan community. I will never forget the times when then mayor Pam Parker was on the TV expressing her absolute grief and sorrow of what had transpired. It was certainly an emotional time and I feel that she summed it up very well.

In looking at the coroner's inquest, in all honesty, I feel this issue is bigger than politics. This is a pressing matter that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible and as effectively as possible. The coroner's findings on the Slacks Creek fire, which were handed down on 28 November, found that the smoke alarms were not maintained or were not present in the house in a working fashion. He also noted that, if there were functioning smoke alarms within the dwelling, there would be a reasonable prospect that some, if not all, of the victims would have escaped. Therefore, one of the recommendations from the inquest was the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms. They should be the only type of smoke alarm installed in residential dwellings. It is certainly pleasing that the committee unanimously agreed to this.

My main concern when it comes to this legislation is the implementation date. I agree with the submission of Smoke Alarm Solutions to the inquiry, which is as follows—

We feel the proposed timeframes of 5 and 10 years (respectively) for dwellings that are sold, leased, government owned and domestic in nature all have too long of a lead time to comply with legislation and there is not enough urgency created to ensure action is undertaken. Many catastrophic events have the possibility of occurring in the next five or 10 years.

The whole aim of this legislation is to reduce the possibility of loss of life. Therefore, I feel delaying this urgent action out to 10 years is not prudent. It is not logical. We need to act on this as soon as possible, but we also need to ensure that have a system in place which is easy for people to install

these alarms in their houses. Let us not make it confusing. Let us have a system which people can easily implement. That is why I support the bill introduced by the member for Kawana. Having a shorter phase-in period will make a huge difference in potentially saving a life—waking up a child from a smoking room, waking up a grandparent or waking up a family member so everyone can get out safely.

I say again: 10 years really is too long. I do not want to see anybody in my community delay implementing these important safety measures until 9½ years time. We need it done as soon as possible. I plead with government members to support a shorter period of time to implement these safety measures. I do not want to see any more people in Logan City, South-East Queensland or Queensland losing their life when we can make a difference here tonight. I plead with all members of the House to support a far quicker implementation period.