




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (1.31 am): I thank the minister for his presentation in the House tonight. As a father of four sons, all young adults, all regular visitors to nightclubs and the entertainment precincts of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach and some of the hotels around the Coast, and time spent at Griffith University at the rec bar, I have to say that my concern about this legislation is not that I do not want to see us tackle the issue of alcohol fuelled violence; it is the fact that this legislation ignores the elephant in the room. The elephant in the room is the war on drugs.

I attended the hearings on the Gold Coast in relation to this legislation. We had presentations from Dr David Green, the director of the emergency department at the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service; Miss Liz Green, the acting nurse unit manager from the emergency department of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service; and Dr Kevin McNamara, the medical director of alcohol and other drugs from the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. They raised some interesting points on that occasion. I think that they are important points to be made and I want to read directly from the transcript.

Dr Green, the director of the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department, said that he is an emergency physician. He is also the director of the Robina Gold Coast emergency department. He is the second longest serving ED director in Australia. He said that over the years he has been called upon to treat, observe, manage and look at the problem of alcohol fuelled violence within the Gold Coast community. He said that alcohol related trauma and alcohol related violence is not just a disease of nightclubs and those precincts; a lot happens in the house.

He said that over the last few years they have noticed there has been an increasing change in the nature and patterns of recreational drug use on the Gold Coast. He said the issue of alcohol alone was that alcohol would increase some impulsivity but decrease motivation. Basically, it acts as a sedative drug where people would have risk-taking behaviours but they may not be able to carry them through. But in combination with stimulants such as amphetamines, alcohol and amphetamines have increased impulsivity, increased risk and increased aggression and inclination rather than demotivation that may happen with alcohol alone.

As a father of four sons I can tell members how traumatic it was when I and my colleagues from the Gold Coast, as members of this parliament in the previous term, were called to a meeting room with the commissioner and the deputy commissioner and we were given a briefing about the protective measures we needed to undertake in respect of our kids. As I look across the other side of the House I am not sure that there are too many members who have young adult or teenage sons. I am sure there are some, but I am not sure how many there are. I cannot tell members how stressful it was to go home and sit with my sons and have to say, 'Here is the phone number of the Commissioner of Police, here is the mobile phone number of the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Gold Coast and the reason I

am giving you these is just in case you become a target when you are out with your mates in Surfers Paradise and 000 doesn't work and you can't get a hold of me because one of those'—and I want to use a word that is unparliamentary but I will not—'criminal gang members or leaders, one of those bikies who is out there running these methamphetamine labs, or their mates decides to target my kids.' It was not the nicest thing to have to sit and explain to my family that there would be police patrols coming past our house while the legislation was being reviewed with respect to criminal gangs and the tougher penalties our government introduced with respect to criminal gangs and repeat offenders and the strategies we rolled out to try to break up the gangs and the bikie cells on the Gold Coast.

The elephant in the room for me tonight is simply this: why is it that this legislation only tinkers at the edges? Why is it that those on the other side of the House have completely ignored the 10-point plan that we put in place in terms of our safe night precincts? And why is it that on the other side of the House there has been virtually chirping crickets on the issue of drug use? The reality is there and it is in the evidence that was presented throughout the hearings. The evidence is there and it is clear. It is from some of the leading experts in our nation: one of the longest serving ED directors in our nation. He says that the problem has increased significantly because of the use of methamphetamine. Yet the other side of the House is proposing to water down the laws that deal with criminal gangs. These—and I was going to use that unparliamentary term again—mongrels are peddling and producing drugs, selling them to our kids and dropping them in their drinks at nightclubs and other venues around the state and yet there is not one word in this legislation about dealing with that issue.

I know that the criminal gang laws are under review. I thought it was very interesting this morning that the Attorney-General stood in this House and said that this legislation is about zero tolerance on alcohol related violence. What I did not hear her say is we should also have legislation that is about zero tolerance on drug production, on criminal gangs and bikie gangs that want to run methamphetamine labs in our state. We do not know what the review holds. The problem is that even announcing the fact that there is going to be a watering down of the legislation that we introduced has already sent a message to the bikie gangs, the criminal gangs and the drug producers that the Labor government in this state is planning to go soft on crime. We have rolled out the welcome mat and they are back in force. We heard this week about a \$1 billion drug haul of materials required to make these drugs, one of the biggest drug busts in the history of our nation. By all means let us put a bandaid on the problem, tinker at the edges with some politically popular rhetoric—because that is what we have heard from the other side of the House—but let us not actually deal with the problem.

Earlier this evening, we heard the Minister for Main Roads, Minister Bailey, state—

We have not got a minute to spare on this legislation, it is so important.

Yet what have they done today? They have done a deal with the guys up the back from the Katter party. They have traded their souls for a half-baked piece of legislation that does not deal with the real issue, which is drug fuelled violence that we see in combination with alcohol. It does not go anywhere near dealing with the real issue. They have sold their souls. The minister says, 'We have not got a minute to spare,' yet the deal they have done says it will all sit out there for another 12 months. I do not think that is good enough. I cannot understand why Labor is not behaving seriously in respect to this matter. Why have they put something in front of this House that is simply a bandaid solution that tinkers with the edges of the issues? They do not deal with the issues that Dr Green has talked about. At the hearing on the Gold Coast, he talked about the need to deal with drug related violence in the home, that is, drug related violence that occurs in relation to domestic violence. He talked about the side effects of alcohol abuse because of a lack of education. By all means, let us send a message to the world that we are a nanny state. Let us shut down the nightclubs an hour earlier in some areas, but completely ignore the 10-point plan that our government had for making our precincts safer with more police, higher visibility policing, scanners, actually enforcing the rules around the responsible service of alcohol and supporting the staff in the clubs and precincts. Let us put a bandaid on it.

(Time expired)