




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.19 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Tackling Alcohol-Fuelled Violence Legislation Amendment Bill. Alcohol fuelled violence, particularly in our night-life precincts, is a scourge that we need to address to preserve the safety of young people in our communities. As a mother I want to know that my kids are safe when they head out with their friends. I want to know that we have taken every practical step to ensure they do not fall victim to a coward's punch or other forms of physical violence. As an elected representative I want to keep my constituents safe to ensure that no family in my electorate ever has to wake up to their loved ones having been subjected to senseless violence in our community. That is why as a member of the 54th Parliament I voted in favour of the former LNP government's Safe Night Out Strategy, which was a well thought out, concrete plan aimed at delivering a safe night out rather than no night out at all.

When I spoke on the Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill I reflected on the fact that my electorate of Mudgeeraba is home to many who use our Gold Coast night-life precincts in Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Main Beach and elsewhere for a good night out with their friends. These young people drink responsibly, look after their mates and they do not inflict harm on other people. I also said at the time that unfortunately there are always those rare few who try to turn a good night out into a night in hospital for those who behave well, drink responsibly and look after their mates. Our Safe Night Out Strategy was established to address this issue and followed months of consultation and discussion about alcohol and drug related violence. We committed \$44.5 million to deliver a safe night out which included over 60 initiatives designed to change the culture of night-life in Queensland, particularly in areas like Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise, which are frequented by young people from my electorate.

Unlike those opposite, we knew that good policy does not punish the majority, who do the right thing and head out for a responsible and safe night out, for the sins of a few. We knew that a quick fix or a one-size-fits-all blanket approach to policy-making would cripple our night-life, put industry at risk, impose hardship on business and restrict the freedom of our young people in our communities to enjoy a night out with their friends. We knew that to stop the violence we needed to change the culture. We knew that we needed to crack down on those who are making our night-life precincts dangerous and, as a result, our Safe Night Out Strategy included compulsory drug and alcohol education from years 7 to 12, establishing safe night precincts to ensure a coordinated prevention and support approach, creating a new offence called unlawful striking causing death—a specific legal penalty for coward's punches—increasing penalties for antisocial behaviour and empowering our police to get tough on offenders, and an awareness campaign for responsible behaviour. In turn we saw our night-life precincts safer, better policed and with young people who were more aware than ever of how their actions can impact others. The data spoke for itself: assaults down by nine per cent, sexual offences down by 18 per cent, property damage down by 10 per cent and drug offences being detected more effectively by police.

Unfortunately, just 18 months since we passed our Safe Night Out Strategy, the Labor government is attempting to replace it with a hastily cobbled together, misguided blanket approach to what is an important social issue. What is worse is that it is doing this without any reliable data, as has been confirmed by the committee, attempting to legislate first and ask questions later. Of greatest concern is that there is no certainty that this bill will deal with the real issues behind violence in our streets. This government's plan is a complicated patchwork set of rules that will force a 1 am lockout on some businesses and let others trade till 3 am. Meanwhile, nearby casinos like Jupiters Casino on the Gold Coast in my electorate will apparently be allowed to serve alcohol all night long while others are forced to stop. After a year in office this Labor government is still presenting no real solutions to problems which were already being addressed by the former LNP government. We on this side of the House know that this issue is far too important for a quick political fix and, unlike those opposite, we want to see a real policy solution to this very real problem.

The government's bill does not address alcohol fuelled violence in the home. As a survivor of domestic violence, it would not have mattered if a pub or a club was open till 6 am. The violence was brought home anyway and it did not have a curfew. Alcohol fuelled violence in my home started at 7 pm on a Friday night and after lunch on a Saturday afternoon, and if we were really unlucky it continued after the Catholic hour on a Sunday whilst we went to mass and my father had his mates around drinking. If there was no alcohol brought home then my father would just drive to a mate's house and drink there. Both my mother and I could easily have been victims of a one punch at home. One shove in the wrong direction towards the piano or the kitchen bench could easily have resulted in a death in my house. You did not have to be in a nightclub precinct for that to occur.

Having observed a shift at Gold Coast University Hospital I watched more young drunk girls taking up beds in the ED than I did men. They were ugly and they were nasty and they were violent to the staff and they did not care if they hit out at those trying to help them. I watched a woman assault a nurse in front of me. The woman had drunk an entire bottle of vodka and passed out on the street, where a good Samaritan had called an ambulance. The woman was a frequent flyer to the staff at Gold Coast University Hospital and when she woke up from her stupor her fists started to fly. It was 10 pm and the nurse that she assaulted was my sister. Like everyone in this House, I want to keep our young kids safe. But I believe that this legislation will only push the problem out into areas where there are no police or no cameras and that this complex matter requires much more consideration.