




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.52 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to tackling alcohol fuelled violence. We want the parliament to pass laws to limit the hours alcohol can be served to reduce the incidence of violence. The government's legislation proposes to call last drinks across Queensland at 2 am. Safe night precincts will have the option of applying to call last drinks at 3 am if they impose a 1 am lockout. There is too much violence, too many injuries—too many tragedies. As members of parliament I think we should make our decisions based on our own experience and the available evidence.

My electorate experiences many of the issues this bill seeks to address. We are home to many of Brisbane's iconic venues: the historic Regatta and Normanby hotels; famous student drinking haunts like the RE; we are home to the world's best sporting ground, Lang Park, which features some 32 bars and last financial year sold two million schooners of beer; the venues that tens of thousands of people visit before and after those games in Paddington and Caxton Street; not to mention any number of smaller venues that I am not cool enough to have visited. I will be at one of those on Saturday—Brewski—launching a new beer that raises money to support the Great Barrier Reef, but much of the other beer flowing into all of those venues comes from my electorate too—the famous Castlemaine Fourx brewery.

I am proud to represent these entertainment districts. I know the proprietors of many of these establishments. They are good people. I know that some of them will be disappointed with my support for this bill. I can understand that. But the fact is that alcohol and violence have an impact on our neighbourhoods and on the young people who flood into them to enjoy a night out. The residents of Petrie Terrace in particular experience regular unpleasant side effects of living near a late-night venue precinct. One of the tragedies that started the public discussion about alcohol fuelled violence also happened in my electorate in January 2005. It was one of those terrible one-punch-can-kill tragedies. An early morning fight between two groups of men erupted after someone apparently jumped an unofficial taxi queue on Petrie Terrace. In the ensuing scuffle 31-year-old Nigel Lee was punched in the face and knocked to the ground unconscious. Medical evidence presented to a court revealed Mr Lee's nasal bridge was destroyed by the punch and he drowned in his own blood within minutes. At the time the then opposition justice spokesperson, the member for Caloundra, said about this high-profile case, 'There is no human activity more serious than killing someone.'

More recently at the Regatta, also in my electorate, a paramedic experienced a horrible assault. Ambos see the absolute worst scenes imaginable day in, day out: car accidents, overdoses, strokes and heart attacks. They endure these heartbreaking scenarios so that they can help people when they

need it most. Alcohol fuelled violence against our ambos is now so bad that they have taken the unprecedented step to upgrade their self-defence training. Minister Dick outlined that to the House this morning.

I speak from other experience too. It is hard to believe now, but there was a time that I myself used to have fun. Before I had kids, before I became this cranky old man, I did on rare occasions visit some of these venues. In that time I have discovered two truths which I think should help people get some perspective on these laws. The first thing I have learnt is this: nothing really good happens after 3 am. You know it is not going to get better after 3 am. I know sometimes it feels like it really might, that you have had an awesome time and it can only get better, but it will not. The second thing—and I can guarantee this—is that you will not wake up the next day wishing you had drunk more. You will not wake up wishing the club had been open longer. You will not say, ‘This hangover is too mild; I need a bigger headache.’ You will not say, ‘Curse those alcohol fuelled violence laws.’

Having reflected a bit on my experience, I will turn to the evidence. I know we have heard about the sheer weight of opinion in research circles, but let me describe some. Miller et al in 2014 synthesised existing evidence and knowledge to improve our understanding of good practice in minimising harms associated with alcohol misuse. They found that lockouts reduced preloading. Mazzerolle et al in 2012 conducted a longitudinal study of violence in entertainment precincts with lockout laws. They found lockout laws reduced violence inside premises. The New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research looked at the impact of their lockout laws a year after their introduction and found that in Sydney there was a 32 per cent reduction in assaults in Kings Cross and a 26 per cent reduction in the CBD in the first eight months. Miller et al’s research in 2012 looked at, amongst other things, Newcastle emergency department data and found a reduction of more than 340 emergency department attendances per year—all this while their night-life continued to flourish. As figures supplied by the New South Wales police show, there was a 110 per cent increase in the number of licensed venues in Newcastle. But, more importantly, Newcastle has experienced a cultural change with patrons preloading less. That is because, as that 2012 research also found, they are going out earlier and spending more at venues. Business and tourism grow when patrons feel safe. Compare that with the 65 per cent of Queenslanders who consider the city to be unsafe on a Saturday night—up from 52 per cent.

I stand here in clear conscience supporting these laws based on my experience and the evidence, but what are those opposite doing? We know the evidence is conclusive and we know that many of those opposite support these laws based on their own experience. We have heard the fulsome statement from the Leader of the Opposition in 2010, when he said—

Through my travels throughout the state I have been horrified and disgusted to see the results that a night of alcohol and crowds has on local communities.

‘Horrified and disgusted’, Madam Deputy Speaker!

We know that many of those opposite have said privately that they support the laws. I listened to the member for Moggill’s speech earlier, which contrasted with what he had to say when he was the president of AMA Queensland. In a press release dated 2013, Dr Rowan is quoted as saying—

As President of AMA Queensland and as an Addiction Medicine Specialist, I am deeply concerned by the number of seriously injured people presenting to emergency departments following a night of alcohol-driven mayhem.

He went on to say—

AMA Queensland agrees with the views already expressed by Maxillofacial surgeon Dr Anthony Lynham who says ‘the 3 am closure is a great initiative but won’t work on its own.’

Lockouts need to be maintained and measures must be in place to prevent venues that now close prior to 3am from extending their trading laws.

He further stated—

The lockout and restrictions need to apply to all pubs and clubs, we can’t allow people to simply move from one venue to another—the rules have to be consistent ...

Something has changed and it is not public opinion. We know the Queensland public overwhelmingly supports these laws. So what is going on? What is motivating them? It is politics and nothing else. The Leader of the Opposition thought that, if the government were defeated on this legislation, which we support so strongly, it would help his claim to finally be premier. That is all he cares about. He has no interest in the lives that will be lost or the evidence. He even disregards his own views. It is shameless and reckless and, as the Premier has said, on their conscience be it. This government stands with the community when it comes to taking action on alcohol fuelled violence. The LNP would rather do nothing, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.