



Speech By  
**Hon. Bill Byrne**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2016

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Community Safety**

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.19 am): After that contribution from the member for Everton, it is somewhat ironic that I am going to be speaking about clowns today. The Palaszczuk government is focused on keeping Queenslanders safe, as all sensible Queenslanders know. While we understand that Queenslanders have a robust sense of humour, the idea that we have people dressing up as clowns with the intent to scare others is a dangerous and stupid notion that deserves outright condemnation from this House.

The Queensland Police Service work tirelessly to ensure each and every one of us feel safe in our homes and within the community, and I cannot thank them enough for their dedication and efforts. That is why the Palaszczuk government condemns the recent clown craze that has hit our state and the antisocial behaviour associated with it. What we are seeing here in Queensland, following a craze originating in the United States, is people dressing up as clowns and attending public places in an attempt to scare and threaten people. Unfortunately, what we are seeing are these people dressing up and attending locations where young people are present, and, as highlighted in media reports, this behaviour is causing a huge concern.

We understand that the Queensland Police Service has received reports of concerning behaviour involving people dressing up as clowns with the specific intent to frighten. The message I would send to anyone taking part in this clown craze is that our police do an important job in keeping our communities safe, and the last thing our state needs is for our policing resources to be wasted due to people running around dressed up as clowns intimidating and scaring members of our community. Police have made it clear that they will not tolerate anyone engaging in intimidating or antisocial behaviour. I am also advised that police and department of education staff are working closely together to ensure the safety of Queensland staff and students. The education minister also advises that, like police, principals will be taking a tough stance against any student found to be associated with these activities and will impose disciplinary consequences in line with their schools' responsible behaviour plan.

Everyone deserves the right to feel safe, and we hope that people considering taking part in this craze stop and think about the impact it is having on members of their own community. I understand that this craze has been prompted by a movie series called *The Purge*, which has a disgraceful socio-economic undertone with part of it being murdering homeless people. It represents a prostitution of society's character. It affronts all that egalitarian and inclusive Australia represents. This craze should be condemned.