




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT ORDERS)
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.43 pm): Today I rise to make a short contribution on the Penalties and Sentences (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. There are a number of significant legislative reforms the Attorney-General is piloting through the parliament this afternoon and some of those are very significant, including amendments to the Evidence Act protecting victims of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting, taking steps to amend the criminal law in Queensland to protect those victims of domestic and family violence. This afternoon I particularly want to comment on the re-establishment of the Drug Court in Queensland. At the outset I want to associate myself with comments made by members of the government including the members for Stretton, Pine Rivers, Capalaba, Ipswich West and Ipswich, who all made thoughtful contributions to this debate.

I also want to do something that I have never done before in the House, and it will probably be a long time before I do it again: I want to associate myself with the comments made by the member for Condamine. The member for Condamine is a member of the opposition but gave a very thoughtful and, I believe for the member for Condamine, heartfelt speech about the impact that drugs have had on someone who was a close family friend. Shorn of politics and rhetoric, he spoke plainly about the impact drugs had had on his family and the necessity and the importance of having a mechanism like a Drug Court in our criminal justice system to help those individuals and families. It was a very thoughtful contribution and I commend him for that. I will be making some comments about the LNP shortly and I do not want to put the member for Caloundra in that group either. He spoke very briefly about a specific provision in support of it, and I do not include him in my comments this afternoon.

This is a day that should never have happened in the Legislative Assembly. This is a day that should never have come to this House. The only thing more sickening than the dishonesty of the LNP is its hypocrisy. This afternoon speaker after speaker has had the temerity to stand in this House and criticise the Labor government for reintroducing a Drug Court program that should have never been abolished. Each of them—the member for Mansfield, the member for Beaudesert, the member for Currumbin, the member for Broadwater—voted to abolish that court yet came into the House this afternoon and said that they were supporting its re-establishment but criticised the Labor government for doing so, including expenditure that the government had made, quite necessarily and properly, to re-establish that court. There is nothing the LNP can be trusted with in this state—nothing!

The member for Mansfield moves through the southern suburbs of our city—suburbs like Wishart and Mansfield and Rochedale—pretending he is some soft liberal in touch with the community, but he is the hardest of right-wingers in the Liberal National Party, and I have seen him operate, and we saw him operate today. I would have had more respect for the member for Mansfield if he had come into this House and said, 'We do not believe in diversion, we do not believe in courts and we don't support it.' Of course he wants to be hypocritical and two-faced. He wants to say to his community that he supported it. I tell members what: one leaflet he will not be circulating is his voting against the court and

abolishing it, like he voted against the Murri Court—of all courts to be abolished in this state, giving status and voice to Indigenous people in our justice system but paid a very small stipend. Those opposite destroyed all of those courts on the anvil of their austerity led by the Leader of the Opposition when he was the treasurer. I would have had more respect for the members for Mansfield, Beaudesert, Currumbin and Broadwater if they had done that. The member for Moggill, who adopted the same line, was not in the parliament but was quick to read out the talking points again. I had more respect for the member for Moggill. I thought he had some intellectual honesty about him, but this afternoon he proved again that he was in the group of intellectually dishonest members of the LNP.

Dr ROWAN: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments personally offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. Of course the member for Moggill attacked the investment that we made to bring this court to life. Those opposite cannot even read the first page of the explanatory notes that sets out the reason the expenditure was made and why we reached this point—

The Queensland Government commissioned the Drug and Specialist Courts Review ...

We put money into a review to create this court. When did that review report? In June. Four months later we have before the House the legislation seeking to re-establish this court. We were criticised for the time it has taken to do this. There are few attorneys-general in any parliament who has worked so vigorously and diligently as the current Attorney-General to move an enormous legislative workload through this parliament, opposed almost every step of the way by the LNP. This bill is yet another example of significant reform for our state—reform that should never have been necessary.

We had the member for Broadwater lecturing the House about the waste of money in establishing this court, how long it had taken and the scourge of ice. The reason we have the scourge of ice in our community is that the members for Broadwater, Mansfield, Currumbin, Beaudesert, Moggill and Maroochydore did nothing when they were in government. We had three years of inaction.

I want to put on the parliamentary record the firm action that the Palaszczuk Labor government has taken to address ice. The members opposite are running around electorates with their flimsy one-page pamphlet, which is designed to generate fear in the community about crime and the association of drugs with crime. Of course, today the members opposite are happy to say that they support the re-establishment of a diversionary process but, out in the community, they are creating fear and dissension.

In 2015, within months of coming into government, as health minister I announced an investment of an additional \$6 million a year in new services to respond to the growing problem of ice in communities in Logan, the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cooktown, Charleville and Cunnamulla. In Logan in particular, that meant \$1.65 million to fund six additional full-time clinical staff to deliver the Drug and Alcohol Brief Intervention Team service in the Logan Hospital emergency department; two full-time clinical staff to deliver services that were particularly focused on developing strategies to assist parents who may be using substances and caring for children; and two full-time staff to provide training and professional development to enhance the capacity of the community sector in Logan in the early identification of drug related issues in families. The DABIT service in Logan alone has seen 2,000 people to divert them away from substances on to a path to wellbeing.

In February 2016, thanks to the lobbying of the member for Townsville, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Mundingburra, our government allocated \$1 million to the Salvation Army to help build a brand-new drug and alcohol rehabilitation service in Townsville.

Mr STEWART: Hear, hear!

Mr DICK: I take that interjection from the member for Townsville, who was so vigorous in his advocacy for that centre. A few weeks ago in Townsville that centre was opened to deliver services in partnership with the Salvation Army. In October 2016, I announced a further \$43 million investment over five years into alcohol and drug services provided by non-government agencies as part of our connecting care to recovery plan. In June this year, I allocated \$600,000 to Sunrise Way in Toowoomba. I acknowledge the work of Kerry Shine, the Labor candidate for Toowoomba North, to support the ongoing work of that 20-bed facility. That investment would not have been made unless Kerry Shine had been standing up for his community—unlike the current members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South. On 15 September this year, I opened a brand-new, 13-bed short-stay intervention unit at Logan Hospital to provide specialised support for people with drug and alcohol problems. These are real, front-line investments that put additional clinical and community resources on the ground.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: I hear the members opposite interjecting. The way I was brought up was that, when you did something wrong—like abolishing the Drug Court—you said sorry and you kept quiet. But not the LNP members, because there is no point to which they will not fall to grasp political power and take political advantage.

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Mr DICK: The member for Surfers Paradise is happy to interject, but not speak to the bill. I encourage him to speak in this parliament about why he voted against the Drug Court during the Newman government and is now supporting it. That is more rank hypocrisy.

In conclusion, once again, I commend the Attorney-General for this significant reform—reform that would have been entirely unnecessary if it were not for the wickedness and mendacity of the Newman government to abolish the Drug Court in the first place. That demonstrates that, fundamentally, we cannot trust the LNP with our criminal justice system, the courts, the Public Service and proper public administration in this state. That is what we will be telling people every single day between now and the election.