




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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LIQUOR AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.20 pm): I always wondered how the ‘Mannequin Challenge’ got started—you know that silly social media phenomenon that went viral where people film themselves in a frozen state? Premier Palaszczuk and her Labor team probably could take credit for sparking this global phenomenon, except they took it to a whole new level of governing in a frozen state—and it ain’t no joke! They have been frozen at the wheel where the key feature of their time in government when they do act is to undo LNP policies without putting anything better back in their place or, as we have just found out, to bungle yet again when they muck up their legislation. They rush in amendments and throw them into another bill without them having appropriate scrutiny before the House.

This Labor government is out of its depth. It is now taking one of the policies that we had implemented out of the deep freeze. It is defrosting an LNP safety measure for patrons in entertainment areas, and that is ID scanners in safe night precincts. It is ditching its lockout laws, as they were flawed—as we warned them—and did not address the real problems of alcohol fuelled violence.

My Maroochydore safe night precinct has been asking for certainty and action since Labor came to office because so much was put on hold, put on ice, when they had already been working effectively and in an integrated way with the police, security, taxis, public transport and Liquor Licensing to try to have the best approach for addressing behaviour in that precinct. They wanted to have the ID scanners linked so that they were all on the same page with technology and they had the ability to get on with it so that those who were doing the wrong thing could be banned and thrown out of these areas to keep others safe. What did Labor do? They threw it into another review. They put it on ice. Costs increased and it caused a lot of trouble for people who were working hard at the local level to try to keep on top of these issues and keep people safe.

We want people to be able to go out safely and have a good time, to have a drink if they want and to do so without the threat of some ratbag threatening their safety. It is about time this important safety measure was available, although, as the member for Currumbin outlined—and I acknowledge her contribution—Labor has to fiddle with it and add its own twist, with more bureaucracy and red tape that is not about safety; it is just about expense in how it is administered.

Mrs Stuckey: Safety wasn’t mentioned.

Ms SIMPSON: Safety was not mentioned; it is all about bureaucracy and expense. Licensed venues need certainty and clarity so they can get on with running their business, employing people, making a profit and creating a positive environment in our hospitality industry. Local venue operators in my electorate have been waiting over two years for this do-nothing Labor government to give them clear direction about the laws on simple things such as what ID scanners they will be required to use. It has been very unfair. It has been very unfortunate that this government was so spiteful in the way that it went about undoing previous legislation simply because it did not want to admit that the LNP was on the right track.

The former LNP government had collaborated with industry and other stakeholders to put together a comprehensive plan to tackle alcohol fuelled violence. There was clear evidence that the 2014 Safe Night Out Strategy was working before the Labor government took control of the reins and left industry in limbo for two years. It was a strategy that targeted intervention and high-visibility policing. It should have been given a chance to work, given all the time and consultation that was involved in putting it all together.

The early results across the 15 safe night precincts were very encouraging, with overall assaults down by nine per cent, sexual offences down by 18 per cent and property damage down by 10 per cent in the 2014-15 financial year. The LNP government established 15 safe night precincts across Queensland and had a comprehensive plan that included compulsory drug and alcohol education in schools and tougher penalties for violent offences, including a new offence of 'unlawful striking causing death', which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. We empowered police to issue banning orders and gave them more resources to be able to respond quickly to alcohol and drug related violence. We were working with local stakeholders and licensees to ensure better compliance with liquor licensing rules and safer venues.

I acknowledge the members of my safe night out committee who have worked hard and have been at the forefront of trying to ensure that the confusing policy changes and backflips would not undermine the good work they have done, but it has been challenging. I applaud local licensees and the community in my electorate for the work that they have done to try to keep people safe and to allow people to have a fun night out.

In regard to lockout laws, which this do-nothing government is repealing, the Sunshine Coast is a case in point that lockout laws did not save lives in our area. We have had lockout laws for probably about 10 years, but tragically there were still deaths in our area. That is why we said that a more comprehensive approach was needed than just this headline-grabbing useless approach of this Labor government.

Addressing alcohol fuelled violence requires strong tailored local plans and quick local action to stop the rot early. There is no single solution to improving safety; it has to be an integrated approach, with strong communication that involves all stakeholders. Information sharing to stop situations spiralling is vital. Lockout laws do not save lives; they simply have people left outside venues as well as some inside venues. Ironically, we saw greater problems with people outside some of the fast-food shops that became very popular where they were hanging out, waiting for their mates to come out of the licensed premises. Anecdotally, that is where there was more trouble. Ideally, you want to get people out of these precincts when they have finished at the licensed premises as soon as possible, with efficient public transport and with good security—which I fought for—around our taxi ranks to ensure that people can safely get out of the area.

I want to mention the issue of education. Alcohol and drug abuse is a scourge in our community, but it has been around for generations, although there have been different drugs in the mix. We have to change the culture. We have talked about the law. We need the right laws, the right resources and the right people as stakeholders working together. We have to change this culture of binge drinking and ensure that the next generation does not see it as a beautiful option when they are out to celebrate or, in fact, when they are facing difficult times. It is time for all generations to acknowledge that this has been the problem. There has been a ready reach for the wrong substances to get people high or to sometimes celebrate. Let people have a good time, but they should not get smashed and they certainly should not smash up other people. We need this culture to change. We need the laws to be right. We need the resources in place, but as a community we need to support our young people when they are out having a good time, to keep them safe to make sure that they get to go home to their families.