




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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### **LIQUOR AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to speak to this bill with a great sense of frustration. I am frustrated at the time that has been wasted because the Labor Party chose to take a political stance on such an important issue, rather than objectively gathering and assessing the evidence. No-one disputes that the issue of late night violence is closely linked to the consumption of alcohol. How we consume alcohol—where, when and even how much we drink—is a matter of individual choice. However, it is a choice that is affected by culture. Like most areas of cultural expression, the most extreme versions of that expression are performed by our young people.

As the father of three young daughters in or nearing their teenage years, that is something to which I give a lot of thought. The fact is that I am raising three young women in a culture that condones and even encourages alcohol consumption. Research shows that if they can make it through their early 20s without consuming alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs they are unlikely to do so for their whole lives. As a father, how do I help them make it safely to their 20s, when our culture will be like a riptide in those dangerous years? You know what? I am going to use every tool and every weapon that I can lay my hands on: education, conversation, supervision and enforcement of compliance.

The LNP's Safe Night Out Strategy took a similar comprehensive approach. It instituted compulsory drug and alcohol education in all Queensland schools from years 7 to 12. You could hear parents such as my wife, Peta, and I cheering. We would have actively supported those classes through conversations at home, at the kitchen table. It introduced a new offence to explicitly address the practice of so-called 'king hitting' through unlawful striking causing death. It increased penalties for other violent and antisocial offences. It empowered police and ensured that they had the resources to enforce compliance and it provided the safe night precincts to enable saturation policing if required. It also improved the requirements and compliance measures for licensees to provide a safe environment. The safe night precincts addressed the need of a large state such as Queensland to have a comprehensive model, rather than a one-size-fits-all model. The LNP's approach was a thoughtful robust legislative response that was painstakingly developed through extensive consultation.

When the Labor government was elected, early evidence showed that the LNP's approach was working. However, in their spite and haste to deny the LNP government any achievement, the Labor Party removed the safe night out laws and replaced them with a blunt and simple lockout laws approach. That is not evidence based policy, so it is not surprising to find that we are already being asked to pass another piece of legislation that reverses much of Labor's first go at this. Parents such as my wife, Peta, and I can only watch this bungling and pettiness with utter frustration.

I realise I am running out of time, but as a country member I want to draw special attention to the tightening of the temporary late-night extended hours permit regime. This part of the bill is necessary because the first attempt was so badly drafted. However, the way that Labor is trying to address this will have a negative impact on licensees in country Queensland. Temporary permits will be restricted to six a year and the commissioner will not be able to grant more than one day in a calendar month, or two or more consecutive days in a calendar month for a single special occasion that occurs over

consecutive days. A special occasion is a special, unique or infrequent public event of local, state or national significance; or a wedding, birthday or private occasion celebrated at a function that is not open to the public.

Apart from being retrospective and extremely complicated for licensees to build a business model from, this gives no recognition to Central and Western Queensland, where the social calendar is sensibly dictated by climate. Our festivals, weddings, tourism events and race days—very importantly, our race days—are concentrated in the cooler months from Easter to spring. Our country pubs make their money in that part of the year to carry them through the hotter months such as we have seen in Western Queensland over the past three months, with 45-degree days being experienced over the Christmas period. Sometimes, country pubs are the sole venue for special occasions and may host multiple such occasions simultaneously. Keeping their businesses viable and acting as a private function venue, while also playing a key role in supporting the local tourism economy, all just got a whole lot harder, retrospective to 1 January 2017. If I were a sceptical Western Queensland member, I could almost believe there is a hidden agenda to shut down country Queensland.

I call on all sides of government, especially those opposite, to remember that Western Queensland has a very unique situation when it comes to hospitality and events. I call on everybody, including those opposite, to remember that when you are drafting legislation you need to take into account Western Queensland and the events we have there, because they are our money spinners. They are the ones that put money into the economy. They are very important to us. For example, for a small town such as Alpha, 27 July is an important day because it is race day. We must consider such events when drafting this sort of legislation.