




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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**POLICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (IDENTITY AND BIOMETRIC CAPABILITY)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.36 pm): I rise to speak on the Police and Other Legislation (Identity and Biometric Capability) Amendment Bill as introduced by the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services on 15 February 2018. At the outset I want to thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its speedy consideration of the bill and the changes which are primarily geared towards counterterrorism preparedness by our law enforcement agencies in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games. The LNP will not be opposing the changes as proposed in the bill. The changes primarily stem from a COAG agreement in October last year when all first ministers agreed to establish identity-matching services, the IMS, as part of the intergovernmental agreement. On that note, I want to thank the federal coalition government for its leadership on these reforms and the work done by our federal Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon. Peter Dutton.

As outlined in the explanatory notes, the intergovernmental agreement agreed to share and match identity information to prevent identity crime and promote law enforcement, national security, road safety, community safety and identity assurance outcomes. Under the IGA, each jurisdiction has agreed to make the necessary legislative amendments to facilitate the collection, use and disclosure of facial images and associated identity information between participating entities. With this legislation Queensland will be the first state to enact these changes, with legislation still sitting before the Commonwealth parliament. The main source of information includes driver's licence images and associated data held by the states and passport and immigration images held by the Commonwealth. Given the volume and growing importance of this information for counterterrorism and law enforcement, the IMS will establish a streamlined and nationally consistent process for sharing it.

The police believe that access to the IMS will be a substantive benefit to law enforcement and community safety, particularly in relation to terrorism and serious organised crime investigations. It will also enhance police capabilities with regard to identity crime and community safety—that is, identifying missing persons or deceased persons at disaster events and major events, road safety in the detection of unlicensed drivers or multiple licensed persons, and also identity verification.

In Queensland, amendments will be required to the Transport and Main Roads and Queensland Police Service legislation to explicitly provide that relevant information may be shared for the purposes of the IMS. Current transport legislation constrains the ability of the state to participate in the IMS owing to limitations on the disclosure and use of personal information. Currently, the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 enables the use and release of personal information and digital images collected by TMR for limited purposes. It does not allow disclosure to entities for the purposes envisioned under the IMS.

The LNP believes that there will be some missed opportunities in relation to the changes made to the Liquor Act for the Commonwealth Games. The Gold Coast Commonwealth Games is the largest event ever hosted by Queensland and will showcase our state on the world stage. Approximately 6,600 athletes and officials and 690,000 individual unique visitors are expected to attend. With the majority of

the Commonwealth Games being held on the Gold Coast, it is anticipated that there will be increased patronage of liquor licensed premises on the Gold Coast, which is why it is puzzling that this bill relates only to the licences within two safe night precincts at Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach. As the Queensland Hotels Association submitted to the committee, to expect Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach alone to accommodate these numbers is unrealistic and exacerbates safety and transport concerns. The extended trading hours should apply to all licensed venues in the Gold Coast local government area, which is clearly defined and offers ease of enforcement.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** For those members whom I hear interjecting, I will come back to that later. This should be an opportunity to spread the economic benefits as far and wide as possible on the Gold Coast. It is not only about the two weeks when the games is being held; we are trying to show what this state has to offer so that we can encourage visitors to come back and spend more money, creating tourism jobs in the long term, not just during the Commonwealth Games.

As the non-government committee members noted in their statement of reservation to the committee report, ensuring that visitors can come, enjoy a safe experience and spend money at local businesses will boost tourism in the retail and hospitality sector and create job opportunities in the short and long term. We think there are some missed opportunities and that the government should have been more receptive to suggestions put forward by the industry stakeholders, specifically, for the extended hours for the Commonwealth Games trading period to not be deducted from the standard six-day allocation given to licensees, to expand the extended trading hours to encompass all licensed venues in the entire Gold Coast local government area, and that the safe night precincts across the state where other Commonwealth Games events occur be afforded the same extended hours as those on the Gold Coast. These seem to be common-sense suggestions that spread the benefit of the changes much wider than intended by the bill.

I thank the members of the committee for their contribution to the consideration of the bill, particularly the member for Southern Downs and the member for Lockyer. I realise it is the first time they have participated as members of a committee and I think their thoughts and deliberations in relation to this legislation were valuable.

We do not want Labor's Commonwealth Games legacy to be some kind of ID scanning debacle like we saw happen last year with the Crown Prince of Denmark, or a few nightclubs and bars in Surfers Paradise or Broadbeach being so jam-packed that nobody will want to enjoy a safe night out on the Gold Coast. We do not want our games to be like the Glasgow games. We should be aiming for much better than the Glasgow games. As I mentioned, I think there are some missed opportunities in relation to the changes to the Liquor Act. We do not believe that the Labor Party has consulted widely enough.

I want to touch briefly on identity theft and identity crime, because it was covered in the explanatory notes to the bill as a key enabler of organised crime and major crime, including drug trafficking, money laundering and terrorism events. Recent estimates by the federal Attorney-General's Department indicate that each year identity crime across Australia costs \$1.6 billion, with the majority of that amount—around \$900 million—lost by individuals through credit card fraud, identity theft and scams. According to the Federal Police, identity crime continues to be a key enabler of serious organised crime, which, in turn, costs Australia \$15 billion annually. This crime crosses our borders, which is why it is important that there is a national solution and that each state does its part.

As part of this debate, I think we should be encouraging members of the public to do what they can to protect themselves from those who commit identity crime and identity theft. These criminals often prey on the most vulnerable in our community, which is very sad. We must continue to promote awareness and education so that everybody can be diligent.

I would also like to thank the minister for considering recommendation 2 and making sure that the legislation is to be reviewed. I want to talk specifically about what I envisage is a possibility that could happen on the Gold Coast during the games, which could cause great international embarrassment. I hope the minister will consider this as we debate this bill. We are expecting 690,000 unique visitors to the Gold Coast, which will be a fantastic thing, but that means that, if they all want to go out after 3 am we need to get 22,258 people into each of 31 premises that will still be open. I am not suggesting that everybody is going to go out, but if we do the maths on the venues that are available compared to the total number of licences across the Gold Coast local government area, which is 1,262, we can see that there would be only 500 or 600 people per venue, assuming that everybody wanted to go out, which we know is not going to happen.

There are 242 premises in the safe night precincts of Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise, with 47 available post midnight and 31 available between 1 am and 3 am. That means that, potentially, on a night such as the closing ceremony we could have tens of thousands of people on the Gold Coast

unable to get into a venue, lining up outside venues, or visiting a bottle shop and wandering around. If we want to have a law and order problem, not having more venues open and available is going to create that issue. Although I understand that not everybody who goes to the games is going to go out late at night, those who want to go out at night need to be inside a venue that has a security scanner at the door and has security guards so that people can be checked. That is the ideal standard. We know that, on this occasion on the Gold Coast, not everybody is going to get into those venues that are available. So we are faced with the problem of the scanning issue for those licensed premises that do not have those facilities.

It is going to be a judgement call as to whether we are going to turn the streets into chaos because the licensed premises cannot cope, or the hotel rooms are going to be turned into nightclubs because people have gone to the liquor barns, bought all the liquor they can and have taken it back to their hotel rooms, or everybody is going to tuck themselves into bed neatly late at night and get up very early in the morning for a jog along the beach. All of those things are possibilities, but I am very concerned and I know that the QHA members and other people who have been involved in the liquor industry for a long time are concerned—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** The member can say 'vested interests', but the simple fact is that these people week in and week out make sure that tens of thousands of people across our state have a safe night out.

These are the people who have invested in security. These are the people who have invested in CCTV. These are the people who have their RMLV. This is their lifeblood. This is their industry. They are not looking to cause any problems. They are looking to take advantage of what is going to be Queensland's biggest ever tourism event.

During the games there will be stress on public transport and that is why changes have been made to public transport. With the aquatic centre, the hockey centre and the games village at Southport why do we not have extended opening hours at Southport? Why will everybody be forced onto public transport up and down the coast and then have to line up at a venue they cannot get into which will cause frustration and annoyance. People will be carrying bottles in and out of these places because they are going to want to consume alcohol and have a good time. They have come to watch the games and soak up the atmosphere. To limit them to 31 venues is fraught with danger for other areas of the coast and for hotels that do not have the safety procedures and security in place to secure their venues. It will stretch the police resources out of precincts and into private premises up and down the coast to deal with some of these issues.

I ask the minister to seriously consider looking at the liquor licensing provisions for the Commonwealth Games that form part of this bill to see if we can come up with some common-sense approach that would allow these businesses—and some might say vested interests but I have no interest in any liquor industry premises—to benefit from the Commonwealth Games in the same way that retailers that have had their hours extended can. People who invest their own capital in running a small business should have an opportunity to benefit from this great event that is being hosted here in Queensland.

There is a lot of upside but there is some potential downside. I do not think the strategy that is being put forward in this bill is a strategy that will minimise the downside. I believe that problems will be pushed away from areas where the resources are, where the professional people are, where security companies are operating and where CCTV is in place, into private residences and establishments where groups of people will get together, turn the music up loud, annoying people who want to get up and go for a run on the beach in the morning, rather than going to a venue that has been designed and purpose built for them to have a good time.

It was a different time, but during Expo liquor licensing was freed up. People have great memories of that time. Policed right, using modern technology and looked after in appropriate ways and with RSAs and RMLVs and other safeguards in place, I think the industry of the Gold Coast is experienced and qualified enough to manage a massive influx of tourists having a good time—if the government will let them. Not all of these places are nightclubs with pumping music. Some of them are just bars where people will want to sit and have a casual drink. They will not be able to do that on the time scale that they want because they will be restricted.

As I have said, in my opinion that will mean that if you have a liquor barn you are about to get a high turnover and if you have a residential premise where people will be staying on holiday you are about to have a lot of parties in your premises that may cause problems. There are 15,000 volunteers. At the end of the closing ceremony if those 15,000 volunteers visit those 31 premises that is 483 per premise.

**Mr Ryan:** They are not all there at the same time.

**Mr WATTS:** Of course they are not. I take the minister's point that they are not all there at the same time. I absolutely accept that, but is he looking at the numbers of people that will be there? There will be 690,000 unique visitors over the period from 70 nations. There will be 6,600 athletes and 15,000 volunteers. If one looks at the number of venues that can access these late night trading hours, it is 31 venues once you get to three o'clock in the morning. If anybody thinks those 31 venues are going to be able to cope on any one of those nights I would be very surprised. I will be interested to see Minister Lynham lining up in one of those crowds so he can make an assessment himself about whether he thinks the provision of licences was enough or not. Not everybody wants to go to bed early in the evening, particularly when they are on holiday enjoying all that the Gold Coast has to offer.

Further to that, these people are going to return home after potentially having had a bad experience in Queensland because they had to line up. We are hoping that their IDs will get through the scanner. I am concerned that the maths has not been done on the number of venues available. I hope that the Attorney-General is advising the minister to make some amendments going forward that will lead to a more sensible approach for the people of the Gold Coast and also to extend that to areas where other people are hosting Commonwealth Games events.

The bulk of the bill mirrors what is required by the Commonwealth government and will minimise the exposure of the people of Queensland to terrorism threats and identity theft and other crime that result from our agencies not being able to share their data across borders. We have no problem with that part of bill. I welcome and acknowledge that the minister has listened in relation to the review. I think the review is a solid idea.

When it comes to liquor licensing I am very concerned about our international reputation and the difficulty that we will have managing that volume of people in that small footprint over that period of time. It will certainly stretch police resources. If it is opened up to other venues they will all employ security. They will put people on as their licence requires. There will be far more qualified people in the local government area of the Gold Coast able to exercise some control and management over the crowd than if all these people are funnelled into two tiny little footprints that will simply not be able to cope with the volume of people. Their frustration will be vented out on the street where security does not have jurisdiction and where the police will be left with the difficulty of dealing with it. It is much better to deal with it in a venue under CCTV with security in attendance and all the other measures we have around alcohol distribution in our state.

I encourage the minister to seriously consider looking at the liquor licensing provisions. I know there is a philosophical belief on the other side that we should shut all these venues and everyone will go home to bed. I do not think everybody who is coming to the Commonwealth Games will be going to bed, particularly if they have seen a great event and want to go out and party with their friends and enjoy their international trip here to Queensland. I implore the minister to seriously consider and discuss with the QHA as a matter of urgency options to manage the influx of people into the Gold Coast local government area.