




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 17 November 2021

JUSTICE LEGISLATION (COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE—PERMANENCY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.17 pm): In speaking to the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Permanency) Amendment Bill 2021, I note that the bill will make permanent particular parts of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, which is due to expire on 30 April 2022. I have no issues with making permanent the reforms in the bill that are related to domestic and family violence.

We were concerned when the initial temporary measures taken during COVID were proposed to be adopted as a permanent change to the Liquor Act. This would have allowed licensed restaurant operators to apply for a permanent condition of licence. I also noted at the time that the Queensland Hotels Association, the QHA, were against making this change to the Liquor Act permanent. This would have increased the number of liquor outlets in Queensland by 8,000 and placed restaurants in direct competition with the already established liquor outlets that have followed strict licensing laws and pay substantial licensing fees in the service and sale of liquor. We acknowledge that the government has significantly watered down these changes to the Liquor Act and note that the changes are now acceptable to the QHA.

The government has to be very careful that it does not use the COVID-19 emergency to push through unnecessary legislative changes that were only designed to be temporary in order to get business through the pandemic period. The government is, however, using the pandemic to wind back the clock to 1973, when our last segregation policy was renounced in Australia. Now we have another segregation policy, which is mandatory vaccination. Those were terrible days in history when certain members of our society were ostracised and not provided with the same rights and freedoms that others enjoyed.

Make no mistake about it: when the government uses the pandemic to marginalise certain members of our society—taking away their rights, threatening them with the loss of freedoms and the loss of employment—it is implementing another form of segregation. All the government has done is anger people to the point where those who are fully vaccinated are now united with those who are unvaccinated against these draconian measures.

I note that this is the 'Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Forced Vaccination) Bill'. All this is doing is creating an angry response from business owners who are now in the position that they have to sack valued employees because of permanent health reasons or personal reasons not to get vaccinated. In my region the tourism industry, cafes, pubs and clubs have already suffered enough and are now feeling pressured to enforce and police patrons visiting their premises, which is impossible. It is a ridiculous policy which is made on the run without any thought to the long-term massive impact this will have on people's everyday lives and small business throughout the state.