




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Weapons Licensing; Regional Queensland, Hospitals

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.42 pm): First I want to address the weapons licensing issues we are having in Queensland. It is a really big issue that keeps coming in to the electorate offices of all KAP members. It is causing a lot of angst and is taking a lot of unnecessary time for QPS, acknowledging that we have uniformed police officers who do this work. We are taking them out of the field to do this work. The more effort that is needed for weapons licensing, the fewer police there are on the beat.

It now takes 35 weeks for a licence and 46 weeks for PTAs. It is one of the most discriminated against sectors in society now. It think it has bred mostly out of ignorance. People usually start from the point of, 'Well, guns kill people so the fewer of them out there the better.' If we are honest with ourselves and talk to friends and people in the cities, that is the attitude that underlies a lot of what we are dealing with. I get that the minister has to deal with that in his political approach to this situation.

The reality is that gun shops are now shutting down because no-one can carry those sorts of debts for so long, waiting for their product to sell. We are creating conditions, whether deliberately or not, that are unsustainable. That means we will have more police officers doing that work. That is less safe because we are collating more firearms and ammunition at the same time in the one spot rather than distributing them to other areas. It is creating unsafe conditions. If we care about community safety, we need to address that.

In terms of QCAT, QPS and Weapons Licensing are saying that they do not want anyone appearing there to have any legal representation. Why wouldn't they want them to have legal representation? No. 1, it can help process matters faster when both sides have some legal representation and know what they are talking about. No. 2, why would you deny them that right? Why would QPS even ask for that? We need to measure that up. That is not interfering with the legal process; it is just about fairness.

I refer to Cloncurry Hospital. Cloncurry just had a devastating mining tragedy. We are very lucky it was not bigger. We are expanding mining. The other week there was the wonderful news of CopperString, which will expand it further. It is one of the only regions of my electorate that has expanded in terms of population and it is due to expand a lot more, but it has an antiquated hospital that, quite frankly, is an embarrassment. It does not meet the environmental or operational standards that it should. Horrible stories are coming out of there and it is a joke. It does not need an entire new hospital but just an expansion. This is a town that deserves it. It has delivered over a billion dollars in royalties to this state. We do not want to hear anything more about the Gabba or Olympics spending. Let us get the fundamentals right. These poor people, who are delivering so much to the state in terms of all they produce, deserve an expansion of the hospital. Not only that, with the expansion of mining we need it.

In the same vein, the Charters Towers Hospital is over 100 years old. We all have been asking politely for a long time, but it is time to act. With the growth that will come in that region, the 100-year-old facility at Charters Towers finally needs to be renewed.