

~~Madam SPEAKER: Could you please pause the clock. I warn members on my left. There are too many interjections.~~

~~Mr SPRINGBORG: We certainly have a document that was actually prepared and circulated as a direction to consultants by the Labor Party shadow minister when she was the assistant minister in 2005. That document asked for investigations into the implementation of co-payments, including co-payments for health subsidy schemes such as the Spectacle Supply Scheme, the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme and also co-payments for non-urgent surgery.~~

~~This is the first time that this document has ever been released—the document which the Labor Party itself instructed for the development of co-payments for services in Queensland.~~

~~Tabled paper: Document titled 'Schedule 1 The Consultancy Services' [5359].~~

~~(Time expired)~~

~~Madam SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired. That is the finish of question time.~~

SAFE NIGHT OUT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (10.31 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Bail Act 1980, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Criminal Code, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987, the Liquor Act 1992, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Summary Offences Act 2005, the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act 2013, the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 and the Wine Industry Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [5360].

Tabled paper: Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [5361].

I am pleased to introduce the Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. As we all know, Queensland is a great place to enjoy a night out. Our night-life is vibrant and diverse, offering world-class venues that cater for all. Overwhelmingly, Queenslanders and visitors to our great state enjoy our night-life safely and without incident.

Unfortunately, alcohol and drug fuelled violence is not a new phenomenon in Queensland or throughout the country. The Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 forms part of the government's Safe Night Out Strategy, a comprehensive action plan to tackle alcohol and drug fuelled violence in Queensland. The government has consulted the community extensively in developing the initiatives that form this bill. The message was clear: the community wanted something done about the violence and the culture that creates it.

The final strategy will deliver positive changes for the people of Queensland. It is not a bandaid solution; it is a comprehensive and holistic approach aimed at changing the culture that leads to antisocial and violent behaviour. Along with such initiatives as enhancing liquor licensing compliance, it contains enhanced education and social marketing campaigns to create long-term cultural change in the community. We believe that only with long-term cultural change that real, sustainable impacts will be delivered to the Queensland community. The government is now moving swiftly to implement the strategy. While some of the initiatives are administrative in nature and can be implemented straightaway, others require legislative change—the changes contained in this bill.

The bill includes a number of significant criminal law reforms. Fresh measures are called for to counter the dangerous trend of innocent people falling victim to senseless violence at the hands of people who are drunk or high on illicit drugs. We have all seen the devastating and too often tragic effects of coward punches—not just in our state but across the nation. The bill creates a new Criminal Code offence of unlawful striking causing death to directly target these unacceptable and cowardly acts of violence within our communities. The offence will be punishable by a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Where the offender is sentenced to a term of imprisonment of less than life, they will serve a mandatory 80 per cent of that sentence in prison before they can apply for release on parole. An offender sentenced to life imprisonment will be eligible to apply for parole under the current parole eligibility scheme.

The important and at times dangerous and challenging role performed by Queensland's front-line service providers, such as ambulance officers, nurses and hospital staff, is expressly acknowledged under this bill. Tougher penalties will be introduced for serious attacks against these officers. The bill also provides for mandatory drug and alcohol assessments for intoxicated offenders who commit offences of violence. All offenders charged with a prescribed offence of violence committed in public when intoxicated will face a new mandatory bail condition. It will require the person to attend a drug and alcohol assessment and referral session to help connect the person with rehabilitation providers and provide an opportunity to engage in brief drug and alcohol assessment and counselling.

As part of our commitment to crack down on alcohol and drug related violence and antisocial behaviour, the bill includes measures to strengthen the sentencing process. The bill ensures that the court cannot lessen a sentence because of the voluntary intoxication of an offender. People need to take responsibility for their actions. Mandatory community service orders for particular offenders who commit a violent offence in public when intoxicated will be imposed and the courts will be empowered to impose longer bans from licensed premises, including lifetime bans where necessary.

The bill also strengthens penalties for offences involving steroids to make sure they are consistent with the heavy penalties that apply to other dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine and ecstasy. The bill also makes important amendments to the Liquor Act 1992 to help ensure that the state's liquor licensing framework is best adapted to ensure a safe night out for all.

Legislative changes will ensure that licensees comply with the act's requirements to provide a safe environment for patrons and community members in and around licensed premises. The meaning of 'unduly intoxicated' will be amended to close an existing loophole and ensure that licensees can be prosecuted for serving an unduly intoxicated person regardless of whether the person is affected by alcohol or drugs.

Amendments will make it easier for the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming to condition licences to prevent issues in and around the licensed premises and protect the amenity of the local community. Notices will now be able to be issued to licensees to immediately prohibit or restrict them from engaging in or advertising unacceptable practices or promotions and amendments will ensure police and liquor compliance officers can effectively gather evidence when undertaking covert operations.

Local councils will have the power to prevent applications for adult entertainment permits being made in their council area and it is intended for this amendment to commence on 6 June 2014 in line with the introduction today of the bill. This is part of our commitment to empower local communities.

A new licensing regime for restaurants and nightclubs will be established to address the issue of restaurants trading as de facto nightclubs. The bill also establishes a framework for the creation of safe night precincts which, following consultation with local communities, will be established in key entertainment precincts across the state. Licensees in a safe night precinct will be required to join an incorporated association, which will be the local board for the precinct. Eligible members of the boards will also include local businesses, members of chambers of commerce, and representatives of local community organisations. The association's goals will reflect a commitment to preserving safety and amenity in the precinct. As a not-for-profit association, the local board will be eligible to raise funds in pursuit of its goals. Queensland government agencies, including police, transport and ambulance services, will work closely with the boards.

The bill also contains provision for local government representatives and community organisations to be part of the local precinct management. This approach reflects the government's commitment to working closely with licensees and community groups to build safe and supportive environments that grow dynamic and vibrant night-time economies.

Local communities will be empowered through the local boards to ensure that key entertainment precincts across Queensland are managed in the most effective way possible to safely deal with high volumes of patrons at peak times. What is needed in Airlie Beach may be different to Toowoomba and Broadbeach and, importantly, those decisions about managing the 15 respective safe night precincts will be in the hands of the local community.

A significant part of the management of the safe night precincts is the use of networked ID scanners to manage violent or disorderly patrons. The bill will amend the Liquor Act to require liquor licensed venues approved to trade past 12 midnight in a safe night precinct to operate an ID scanner that is networked to a broader ID scanner system from 8 pm until close of trade each day.

Licences considered low risk will be exempt from this mandatory requirement unless otherwise conditioned by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming. The Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming will also be able to require other licensed venues to operate networked ID scanners in the interests of managing community safety. Although there are many benefits to the use of ID scanners, there are also important privacy issues to consider and the bill incorporates important safeguards to ensure personal information is adequately protected. As a final change to the liquor licensing framework, the current moratorium on extended trading hours applications will be removed from 31 August 2014. After this date, applications for extended trading hours after midnight will be able to be considered.

The bill makes sure that police have the powers to ensure the unacceptable behaviour of a few does not ruin the enjoyment of our night-life by the greater majority of law-abiding Queenslanders. Police have a new power to ban a person from a licensed premises, safe night precinct or public events where liquor is being sold due to their violent or disorderly behaviour. A police banning notice can be for the duration of an event or for an initial period of 10 days. A senior sergeant, upon reviewing evidence of a person's conduct, may extend the banning order for up to three months in appropriate circumstances. Appropriate review processes are included for both the initial and extended banning notices. These new police banning powers in the bill will replace the ineffective civil banning order provisions under the Liquor Act.

The bill also provides for the trial of a Sober Safe Centre in Brisbane. If a person is intoxicated and behaving in a way that could result in harm to themselves or another person or is causing a public nuisance, the bill will allow police to detain them and take them to the Sober Safe Centre for up to eight hours. The person will not be charged with an offence; rather, they will be detained for their own safety under the supervision of a relevant healthcare professional. The person will be released once they are no longer intoxicated and a danger to themselves or other persons. People who are admitted into the Sober Safe Centre will have to pay a charge as part of the cost of their detention. The bill will also provide for an increase in a variety of penalties where the offences occur in or in the vicinity of licensed premises. This includes public nuisance, obstruction or assault of police or a person disobeys a police move-on direction.

The government is committed to the preservation of our diverse and vibrant night-life. Overwhelmingly, most Queenslanders do the right thing when they go out and the government wants people to be safe and enjoy themselves. The Safe Night Out Strategy is all about protecting Queenslanders and all that is great in our wonderful night-life, because we believe that a safe night out is a great night out. This can only be achieved by a can-do government with a strong plan for a brighter future. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (10.42 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Madam SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (10.42 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill by 18 August 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.