



Speech by

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (6.04 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill tackles head-on some difficult social issues, specifically hooning and chroming among young people. I will deal with hooning first. Lapping in Ipswich has been a problem since before I was born. For many years there has been a culture of young people getting together in the Ipswich CBD, catching up with their friends and driving a few laps of town. But, while lapping has been around for a long time, what we are dealing with today is not the same problem that we were dealing with 30 years ago.

No longer do we have just a handful of locals catching up in town. Ipswich has become one of the three big spots for hooning in south-east Queensland along with Redcliffe and the Gold Coast. People meet in Ipswich to show off their cars, hang around on the streets and drag-race. Recently I met with residents of the Villa Maria nursing home in Limestone Street and had a long chat to the ladies about their ongoing frustrations with the lappers. Whilst most lappers probably do not know that Villa Maria is even there, the ladies are constantly kept awake by people revving their cars as they pass by and by noisy people hanging around in the street swearing and yelling almost directly below their bedroom windows.

In the two and a half years that I have been the member for Ipswich, I have tried to take a tolerant approach. I, like the council, have tried to work with the lappers to encourage better behaviour, but frankly I have had enough. With the hooning legislation we passed through the parliament last year, the Beattie government has sent a strong message to street hoons. This kind of thing is not on. For the first time, these new laws give police the power to confiscate vehicles and the new laws are working effectively. Since they were enacted, 37 vehicles have been confiscated in Ipswich—a sign that police are well and truly on the job.

But still for some drivers the message is not getting through. It is not okay to rev your engines in the centre of town on a Friday night. It is not okay to drag-race through our streets. It is not okay to keep the residents of a nursing home from sleeping peacefully in their own beds, and it is certainly not okay to drive around like an idiot and kill yourself or your friends, as has happened twice in Brisbane Street, Ipswich in recent years. These hooning laws have made a real difference, but there is more change that still needs to happen. I call on the lappers who are not behaving too badly to put some pressure on the others to tone it down, and I call on those people who are driving like absolute clowns to get out of town. I am meeting with the council and the police next week to look at what more can be done.

I also want to talk briefly about the issue of chroming. Ipswich, I am happy to say, has led the way when it comes to addressing chroming. For five years the state government through the Department of Families has funded the Ipswich Management of Public Intoxication Program, which deals specifically with the problem. With IMPIP funding, Drug Arm runs a street patrol in the Ipswich CBD on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Drug Arm talks to young people who are hanging around on the streets and chroming and puts them in contact with the many agencies, youth shelters, youth justice service, police, Queensland Health and others who can help them with the problems that they have.

While I would never suggest that we have totally succeeded, there is no doubt that, without this approach of meeting kids in their own space and their own time and hooking them up with the services

that can help them, the problem of chroming in Ipswich would be much, much worse. Still, there are gaps in the program. I am pleased to announce today that Ipswich's response to chroming is stepping up a gear. From next year the street patrol will continue but a community organisation will be employed to provide better case-by-case support for kids wrapped up in the chroming culture.

For years the chroming scene has been characterised by a small group of hard-core kids who have been very difficult to help and a larger group of hangers-on. This new case management approach will allow us to really support those kids and families with serious problems. At the same time a new program of holiday and weekend activities will give bored kids something better to do than get wrapped up in the chroming culture, and there will be better support and information for parents and families. The amendments we are making today, which make it illegal to sell volatile substances to people who are likely to sniff them, adds another weapon to our armoury. This is an important bill, and I commend it to the House.