



Speech by
GLEN ELMES

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard, 14 November, 2007

LAW AND ORDER

Mr ELMES (Noosa--Lib) (5.57 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on law and order. So far during this debate we have heard a lot about the new laws, new equipment and so forth that the government has put in place. In my contribution I would like to talk about the effects of violence, particularly violence fuelled by drugs and alcohol, on my community of Noosa. It is indeed a worrying trend that there seems to be a greater combination of alcohol and drugs supplied to kids under the age of 18 and some of the so-called adults who are over the age of 18 and are able to legally gain access to places where they can be served alcohol.

So that we do not see any silly references in media releases tomorrow, I state that I am speaking in support of the police. The Noosa electorate has some of the most wonderful policemen and women working at police stations at places such as Noosa Heads, Coolum, Eumundi and the police beats at Tewantin and Hastings Street. They are wonderful people who work under a great deal of stress. They do the very best that they can for their community.

We need a crackdown to ensure that this is not just a matter of increased police numbers, as I have said in this place before. There needs to be a far greater degree of parental control. We need to see far greater numbers of licensing commission inspectors at work. We only have three or four staff on the Sunshine Coast and they have to get out there and inspect the clubs and pubs while they are operating to make sure that they are adhering to the conditions of their particular licence. Those three or four people are expected to service all of the Sunshine Coast up to Gympie and out to Murgon. Great examples are sent to me on a daily basis of the sorts of things that are happening in my community.

I have an example here from the Sunshine Coast Daily dated 28 October that contains a report about 100 kids going berserk at Coolum. There are comments from a New South Wales police officer who was there and witnessed the incident at the time. One of the posts in the paper afterwards stated-- That's pretty much a standard weekend at Coolum Beach. It's just that this time someone called the police. There are other examples of how thugs have turned a coast pub into their own fight club. In this case it is a Noosa hotel. There are a whole series of reports that have come to my office from service station operators that tell of fights breaking out at service stations. A person cannot buy fuel after 9.30 at night unless it is paid for up front. The service station does not accept the fuel tankers that come to fill up their bulk supplies at two or three o'clock in the morning because of the hooning, the vandalism and the gangs that are wandering the streets.

I have received a report from a cabbie in my electorate who, on 4 October on the Hasting Street rank, was stopped, the passengers taken out of the cab and assaulted by a gang of young thugs who had spent the night in Noosa. As yet there has been no action on that incident. Pushbikes have been stolen, there is vandalism and fighting--the list goes on and on. There is an open invitation to the people of my electorate to come in and give me examples such as those that I have spoken about. In many cases the police tell me that at any time they are understaffed and that they need far more support from this government. What has happened--and I have raised this so many times in the past-- is that there is understaffing at Noosa. In 1991 there were 31 police attached to the Noosa Heads station. In 2007 the figure had risen to 34 or 35. The population in Noosa has doubled over that time.

What members will also find is that while it is safe to say that on the roster there are 31 police, if the number of officers who are on long service leave, leave, sick leave, light duties or assigned to other duties are deducted, the numbers fall away substantially. We need to make sure that we are getting those extra police in there, that we are holding the senior police that are available and that we do act.
