



**Support to Liquor Amendment Bill  
GLEN ELMES**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

**Hansard, 7 August 2007**

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**Mr ELMES (Noosa--Lib) (9.01 pm):** I rise very briefly tonight in support of the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill. I have been sitting here for most of this debate listening to the comments that have come across the chamber from those opposite and I am wondering whether I live in a part of Queensland that does not exist--

**Mr Nicholls:** Not for much longer anyway!

**Mr ELMES:** Not for much longer anyway! We will all be done over by the government anyway! But it must be that I live in a part of this state that does experience under-age drinking. It must be that antisocial behaviour only exists in Noosa and it does not exist anywhere else in Queensland. I wonder what this government is doing about the restriction of the supply of alcohol to our young people. I am pleased that the minister for police is here in the chamber.

**Mr Hoolihan** interjected.

**Mr ELMES:** Perhaps you should enforce it, member for Keppel. Perhaps just once this government should enforce something. The minister for police is in the chamber. She should be making sure that the police go out there and enforce the law. That is what they should do. This government also allows for a farcical regime of licensing of outlets that encourages the sale of alcohol to under-age people and to people who buy alcohol and then on-sell it. Most importantly, following all of the failures of policy over the last 10 years, members of the government are going to oppose the one bill that comes along that has been presented here tonight by the member for Surfers Paradise that is at least attempting to do something about the problem.

There is no doubt about it: the abuse of alcohol is a scourge on Queensland teenagers. Alcohol, as we know it, can be drunk in moderation as adults. It can add to the odd social occasion and it is very much part of the Australian culture. For better or worse, we have to accept that that is the case. But the abuse of alcohol, especially by minors who have little experience in the effects and the consequences of binge drinking, is very dangerous indeed. If one looks at the statistics, the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University reports that from 1999 to 2002 116 Queensland teenagers died from alcohol related deaths. Of greater concern, we should note that this is 1.2 times greater than the rest of Australia. Further research from the Queensland University of Technology demonstrates that the number of 14- to 19-year-olds who consume alcohol on a daily basis has doubled between 2001 and 2004. Research shows that teenagers are most at risk when drinking as compared to other age groups. Teenagers are more prone to taking risks with their lives and the lives of their friends when under the influence of alcohol. All we have to do is look at any newspaper in Queensland any day of any week and see yet another car wrapped around a pole or driving headlong into another vehicle somewhere and you can bet your last dollar that alcohol is involved.

Alcohol abuse leads to higher incidences of teen violence, higher incidences of unruly and unsocial behaviour and, more worryingly, higher incidences of domestic violence. Make no mistakes: a bottle of grog in the hands of an at-risk teen is just as dangerous as a loaded gun and it should be taken just as seriously by this House. I commend the member for Surfers Paradise for this bill. It goes a long way towards preventing the sale of alcohol to minors through careless parents and other friends. This bill puts the onus on the parent or guardian purchasing the alcohol to ensure that it is consumed in a safe

and lawful manner. I support this House encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children, and as the parent of a teenager myself I really appreciate the motive behind this bill. I urge this government to support the bill. I and my coalition colleagues regard the importance of the health of Queensland teenagers above partisan politics.

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