



Speech by

Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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CRIME AND MISCONDUCT AND SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (5.41 pm): I am very pleased to rise to speak on the Crime and Misconduct and Summary Offences Amendment Bill 2009. My comments tonight will be limited to the rock throwing part of the bill. I heard the member for Bundaberg say that we are too soft on crime. The only thing that was soft was how he spoke about this bill. I do not intend to be soft. This bill targets the behaviour of gutless and cowardly offenders who throw rocks off our bridges at vehicles travelling at high speed along our motorways and are therefore at very serious risk of a fatal accident caused by this stupidity.

In Logan City we have had too many incidences of this cowardly act. Drivers and their passengers have been put at risk of serious injury or death because of it. We certainly do not want to tolerate it anymore. Other motorists and their passengers are also put at risk of serious injury or death because of this act.

The incidents most of us remember relate to our emergency services vehicles—our ambulances—that were targeted by rock throwing. I do not know anyone who could condone this type of behaviour. We need to send a very strong and clear message to those who commit this offence. That is why I am pleased to see the offence carry a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment, regardless of whether someone involved in the incident is hurt or not. Taking two years out of someone's life is certainly a strong message that I am glad we are sending.

The activity is endangering the lives of those travelling in the vehicle involved as well as the lives of those around that vehicle. The possibility of a fatal accident is real. One can imagine the scene of devastation, the tragic loss of life, the years of suffering and pain of the injured; one can imagine the traumatic memories that haunt our emergency services personnel attending, witnesses and the funeral industry staff who come to remove the bodies from these scenes. This type of offence does not only affect those directly involved; it has the potential to affect many.

The incidents involving our ambulances were certainly disgusting. These types of incidents carry the risk of a fatal accident involving our ambulance officers on their way to a code 1 and the risk of the death of the patient who as a result would not have an ambulance arrive within its appropriate response time. It goes on and on. As I say, it is quite disgusting.

I am extremely pleased to see this bill introduced. This is a crime that an offender really should be ashamed of. We have had rocks thrown at a bus resulting in injury to a female passenger. We have had truck drivers suffer eye injuries. I am pleased to see that this new offence will provide police with further charging options, particularly in the less serious cases where it has been from only sheer luck that we have not seen carnage. People travelling on our roads and motorways need to know that they can drive without fear of such stupidity. I know that this bill is welcomed by my electorate and I commend the bill to the House.