

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 25 July 2007

SUMMARY OFFENCES (SCHOOLIES EVENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. A.M. BRESSINGTON obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Summary Offences Act 1953. Read a first time.

The Hon. A.M. BRESSINGTON: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I have introduced this bill as a direct result of concerns expressed by constituents in Victor Harbor who have contacted my office on numerous occasions about the problems they have experienced because of anti-social activities that accompany the schoolies event. This bill aims to take some proactive steps to ensure that future events of this kind limit the negative elements which may be attracted to Schoolies Week by ensuring that gatecrashers and those for whom such events are not intended may be discouraged or excluded from attending. It also aims to ensure that those schoolies who may be tempted to behave inappropriately, disruptively or even criminally are placed on notice as to community expectations and their legal obligations in terms of their conduct at such public events by regulating the conditions under which they can lawfully participate in such events. It seeks to send a clear message that anti-social behaviour will be accounted for through civil or, sometimes the worst possible scenario, criminal legal mechanisms.

My office has attempted to research schoolies events and contact organisers of such events, in both Victor Harbor and Queensland, but have as yet been unable to obtain any direct contact back from the persons approached. Perhaps it may be the wrong time of year to be able to do so. However, I am advised that in many cases local councils have contact with event organisers or input into the organisation of such events in their local areas.

I would like to make it very clear that this is not about banning Schoolies Week or trying to stop young students from blowing off steam in their transition from school into what they may perceive to be freedom and the life that the adults of our community move into. This is about protecting members of the community who, for some reason, somehow, over a period of time, seem to have lost their civil rights to feel safe and secure in their environment because around 8 000 young people invade their town for a period of days and, basically, have carte blanche to destroy property. I have been contacted by one gentleman whose fence has been annihilated three times now, and it has cost him \$6 000 to have it restored. It seems to me that a very small element of young people who, given an inch, take a mile. This piece of legislation is to try to send the message that that is unacceptable.

The crux of the bill is that the organisers of Schoolies Week will be required to hold the event in an enclosed area. Rather than having it in a city or town centre park, the event could be moved, perhaps, to the Wayville showgrounds, where the rave parties are sponsored or held, and there is little impact to the rest of the community when that occurs. Alternatively, organisers would be responsible for providing some sort of barricade or enclosure to enable young people to attend Schoolies Week. It is also a

requirement of the bill that people who attend Schoolies Week in an enclosed area are required to present a photo ID, perhaps a school card that already exists, which shows that they are in fact an enrolled student at a school in the year that the event is being held. That is to exclude as much as possible the people referred to as 'toolies' who have no business being at an end-of-year rite of passage celebration for school students.

It is not a complicated bill. I have spoken with the RAA about this, which is an integral part of the organisation of the transport for students to schoolies, and it said that it would be difficult to make these arrangements but that it was not an impossibility. As I said, is a simple bill. It requires identification to be shown at point of entry that a person attends a school in the year of the event being held. It also requires the organisers to ensure that the rest of the community is not inconvenienced or put at risk in any way at the time of this event. I commend the bill to the council and look forward to the debate.

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA secured the adjournment of the debate.