

HOTELS AND SPORTING EVENTS — PLASTIC GLASSES

Grievance

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [9.29 am]: Mr Speaker —

The SPEAKER: Before the member for Collie-Preston starts his grievance, I advise members that yesterday several items were brought into this place. Permission was sought to do so for the purpose of the debate. The Minister for Police sought permission to bring several weapons into this place. I will not prevent the member from making his grievance today with certain items; I am merely making the point that if members want to bring items into this place for the purpose of debate, there is a process that they need to go through. I am the Speaker, and members need to let me or an Acting Speaker know, and certainly let the chamber staff know, that they intend to bring items into this place for the purpose of debate.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I seek some clarification on that, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes, certainly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was it the case that the Treasurer sought your permission prior to bringing toilet rolls into the chamber?

The SPEAKER: No, he did not, and he was called for that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: On the same issue, Mr Speaker, before I start my grievance, I apologise. My understanding is that the items brought into the chamber yesterday were weapons, and I thought that that was the issue.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but it applies to any items. I say this for the benefit of everybody in this place. If an item is to be used to enhance the process of debate, we need to know about it.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Anyone who sits next to the member for Girrawheen with a big knife would be worried! It is a big job.

Grievance Resumed

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I grieve to the Minister for Racing and Gaming. In recent times, the press have reported on the issue of glassing and people who smash glasses and then poke or stab other people in the face, resulting in serious and horrific wounds. There has been some talk about looking at that issue, and that is the subject of my grievance today. I have brought into the chamber an array of high-impact, high-quality plastic glasses. They are certainly not like the plastic cups that are used at Australian Football League matches, which are flimsy and fragile to say the least and are not the best cup to drink out of. I will bang one of these plastic glasses against my desk to prove how strong they are and how hard they are to break. It is quite obvious. I do not expect the minister to say that hotels and other venues will have to provide these types of plastic glasses from today onwards. There could be an education program for major sporting events, which have a high concentration of people. I do not expect these plastic glasses to be used in restaurants. They do not usually have the same problems because people are seated, although that is not to say that problems do not happen in restaurants. However, I point out that these plastic glasses are reasonably priced, high impact and recyclable—they have all the attributes of glass. Although I have not had a beer out of one of them, I certainly had a couple of glasses of water this morning after having a beer! The quality is there.

When we talk about plastic glasses, the first thing that people think about are those awful ones that they get at the football; they are pretty average. If these plastic glasses, which can be refilled and reused, were used at the football and other events, it would reduce the incidence of glassing. We all know that glasses get broken at sporting events and people cut their feet. Those sorts of accidents occur at times because these days people do not take the time to clean up their mess if they drop something; they think it is someone else's problem. What happens then? Someone, whether little or big or young or old, comes along and walks on the glass and then that person needs stitches. We need to do anything we can to prevent those sorts of injuries and also to prevent the emergency departments becoming overloaded with people who need stitches, especially in summer. Once when I took my daughter to the emergency department, there was a queue of people who had general cuts from glass. The cost to the health system of those sorts of injuries must be huge.

I ask the minister to consider this issue. Perhaps some incentives could be provided for certain venues to trial these plastic glasses and phase in their use. Some encouragement could be provided for venues to do this. At the moment the suppliers just turn up and drop off their products in the area. There is no real need for change because it is easy and simple. I am not saying that legislation is the way to do it; I am just saying that, in the first instance, we need to get behind the industry and encourage venues and provide them with some small incentives

to have a trial. As members can see, a variety of plastic glasses are available. There are middy glasses, martini glasses and ordinary orange juice glasses, which the minister has probably drunk out of many times.

I think there will be a knee-jerk reaction from hoteliers and some sporting venues in that they will not want to use plastic glasses and will keep using glasses or the flimsies that are used at the footy. That is why I am saying that we need some sort of program, incentive or phase-in period. If we can save just one person from being glassed in the face, that is enough for me to say that we should be doing this. Not so long ago there was a photo in *The West Australian* of a guy who had stitches right down his face. That was the injury on the outside; the inside injuries were to his mental state and to his facial nerves. That person will never be the same again. I have certainly had one or two glasses of beer and I said that I would never drink beer out of a plastic cup, but the high-quality variety of plastic glasses that are available has changed my view. As I have said, these plastic glasses are not the rubbery, soft-sided plastic cups that are used at the football. They are reusable and can be recycled if they get broken. They have all the attributes of a glass, bar the capacity of a glass to shatter.

In conclusion, I thank Hospitality House in Bunbury, which has gone out of its way to supply these glasses so that I could use them as a display today. I will quickly go through the price list. A beer glass costs \$1.45, a heavy-based spirit glass costs \$2.70 and a red wine glass costs \$2.30. The price of these plastic glasses is not out of the ordinary. Although I do not have the comparative prices for glasses, I am sure that they would fit with these prices. I ask the minister to take this matter on board. I think a phase-in period and some incentives to encourage venues to use these plastic glasses could save some people from receiving horrific injuries.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [9.38 am]: I thank the member for Collie-Preston for his grievance. It was a good grievance about a very important topic. Firstly, I acknowledge that assaulting a person by hitting that person in the face with a glass is a vicious act. Obviously, it is dangerous and, as the member has said, it can cause extreme injuries. I am sure that none of us in this place would condone, defend or accept such an act. It is a very good point. Secondly, I thank the member—I will get on to the topic in a moment—for bringing those plastic glasses into the chamber. It was good to see the types of plastic glasses that are available, and I am happy to look at them, how they can be used et cetera.

I point out that we already have mechanisms whereby this can happen; in fact, it is happening. Section 64 of the Liquor Control Act empowers the Director of Liquor Licensing to impose conditions on a liquor licence, such as restricting the use of glass. The Director of Liquor Licensing can do that under section 64(3). He does that when he takes into consideration the public interest and the desirability of imposing such conditions to ensure the safety, health and welfare of a person; to minimise harm and ill health; to ensure public order and safety et cetera. The mechanism currently exists under which no-glassware conditions can be applied. It happens now. For instance, the Director of Liquor Licensing regularly imposes no-glassware conditions on major sporting events at Subiaco Oval and the Western Australian Cricket Association ground and other large entertainment events, such as The Big Day Out. It is also not uncommon for licensed premises, such as hotels that obtain a one-off extended trading permit to trade over a special event, to be subject to a no-glassware permit condition. I just wanted to let the member know that that is the position at the moment.

One of my strategies with Northbridge and other troubled areas takes into account the fact that 95 per cent of people who go there are good people. I do not want to impose measures that will affect everyone. I would rather try to concentrate on those people who are causing the issues. Sometimes glassing is probably more about the character of the person who commits the offence than about the premises. The point the member is making is that when there is glassware, it gives them the opportunity. The local tavern I visit quite regularly when I am in Perth has had hardly any problems. It takes families with kids, and I go there with my family all the time. A while ago it had a one-off glassing incident, when somebody came from somewhere else. Although it was terrible and no-one would condone it, I do not believe it is practical to impose a total ban because of that one incident. With the powers that the director has, we need to look at working with the hotels, clubs et cetera. He can ask them to show cause why he should not impose restrictions. That then gives them the right to come back and argue their case. Licensees can, and some do, utilise the types of glasses that the member has talked about. The issue is about considering all the public. We all like to have a nice beer or wine out of glass. Where there are problems, I have no problem with the Director of Liquor Licensing imposing restrictions. I am happy to look at those types of glasses. I think that different types are used. What the member has brought into the chamber is really interesting and I am happy to have a look at them and follow up on it.

The other point I make is that the Department of Health, WA Police and local government authorities can make a request at any time to the director for the imposition of such conditions. If there is a health or a police issue, they can ask the director to consider restrictions being imposed and the director can ask the venue to show cause why he should not impose them. As the member would have recently seen, the police will not be backward in coming forward when doing that. The police already have the authority to seek a prohibition order from the Director of Liquor Licensing, including a life ban. That is targeting those troublemakers. I just let the member know that of the six applications that the police have made to ban people from premises, two related to persons committing a

glassing offence. We are therefore trying to attack them. The member and I are on the same wavelength. It is a question of how we get there.

Mr M.P. Murray: The only thing is that I see that as being after the event.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Yes. If the police are reporting bad premises or problems arising where they see dangers, the Director of Liquor Licensing can impose restrictions. They are currently assessing around 10 glassing assaults. New South Wales had 215 glassing assaults in 12 months. No-glass-after-midnight conditions are imposed on a venue after more than 12 assaults have taken place. New South Wales also has 45 venues that have no-glass conditions after 10.00 pm. Victoria had 62 glassing assaults and 15 venues there have no-glass conditions. Forty-one premises in Queensland have recently been issued with a show-cause notice. We do that here, so they are similar to us.

We are very aware of the issue. I am happy to follow up on those types of glasses to see exactly what can be used. I think some of them are already being used in some areas. I think, though, we must be very careful. It is a bit like the situation with Northbridge. We must not impose draconian measures when there are a very limited number of incidents. We must still give people the opportunity to go out. We talk about Perth being a dead city. I do not believe that Perth is a sleepy hollow. I think it is a great city.

Glassing is dangerous and we need to be vigilant. I give the member my word that we will continue to be very vigilant. I meet with Karl O'Callaghan reasonably regularly, and with Barry Sergeant, on these very issues. I take the point the member raises, but I just do not think we are at a stage where we must impose no-glass conditions completely. I think we still need to do it on a case-by-case basis but continue to monitor it. I thank the member for the grievance. It is a good one.