

Dr MILES: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in dingo conservation on Fraser Island. It is true that the dingo population has suffered —

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Ms Trad: They want to kill them, not conserve them.

Dr MILES: Right. There have been a couple of recent euthanasia events. I am happy to get the member a recent survey of the dingo population. I can also provide an update at that stage of the investigation into the strychnine poisoning that the member mentioned. ➤

<Regional Queensland, Penalty Rates

Mr PEARCE: <My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations>. Will the minister please advise the House how regional Queensland will be impacted by the recent decision of the Fair Work Commission to cut penalty rates?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Mirani for his question. Never a finer advocate for workers' rights has this House ever seen. The recent decision by the Fair Work Commission is a straight pay cut to the take-home pay of some of the lowest paid workers in Queensland. In particular, this will rip money out of regional Queensland economies. We are finding that up to \$150,000 workers are facing savage take-home pay cuts for working on Sundays and public holidays ranging from \$40 to \$127 a week — an annual pay cut of between \$2,000 and \$6,000.

All that Liberal governments are good for is cuts, cuts, cuts — cuts to jobs, cuts to funding in health and education, cuts to services, and now cuts to the lowest paid workers' take-home pay. They have an opportunity to redeem themselves because Labor has introduced a bill into the House reversing these penalty rate cuts. I was flabbergasted when Minister Michaelia Cash indicated that this would not flow on. How naive is that statement! Anyone who knows anything about industrial relations in this country knows that it is built on flow on and precedence. Already we are seeing it in Queensland. The unions are bargaining and it is now hitting nurses. Already we are seeing companies coming forward proposing cutting nurses' Sunday penalty rates by 25 per cent. I table that for the record of the House. *Tabled paper: Queensland Nurses' Union document titled 'The slippery slope is happening'.*

For a federal industrial relations minister to get up and say that there will be no flow on and no precedence clearly demonstrates that she knows nothing about industrial relations — even less than the member for Kawana did. I urge the Malcolm Turnbull government to support Labor's bill to stop these penalty rate cuts to low-paid workers.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would like clarification as to when the Premier will come back so I can be in the House to listen to the answer to —

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. Resume your seat. That is the end of question time. ➤

013

PRIVILEGE

<Noncompliance with an Order of the House by a Minister



Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly — ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (11.32 am): I rise in response to the member for Hinchinbrook's matter earlier. I have the matter now which I would like to table, and I apologise for the delay.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 23 March 2017, from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, to the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, regarding petition no. 2681-17 and 2707-17. ➤

<LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa — KAP) (11.33 am): <I present a bill for an act to amend the >Liquor Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

This bill relates to pub licence fees. The genesis of this bill was a letter to me from a pub in a small town in my electorate. About 50 people reside in that township and maybe 100 to 150 in the shire. The letter which was written about three or four years ago was handwritten and in scratchy writing said, 'I made \$38,000 last year net profit including the manager's wage. I am paying 3½ grand or just above for my pub licence fees, which I understand is a flat rate that everyone else pays in Brisbane. The Normanby Hotel or the Regatta Hotel in Brisbane is paying the same fee that I am which is approximately 10 per cent of my annual net profit. My accountant has told me that there is no point keeping the place open for that level of profitability, but if you visit the pub in this town it is the only commercial building in the town.' There are always a few people in there. It would mean everything to the people in that town. It is a central place if there is a rodeo or if tourists are travelling through the town that is where you stop for directions. It provides the only internet service and the only accommodation in the town.

Without that pub, the town would collapse completely along with the social fabric of the town. He is paying 3½ grand which is the same as what a pub in Brisbane pays. It never used to be the case. It used to be based on litreage or volumetric sales. It is something that has crept in and has been overlooked. This fee, as I understand it, is a cost recovery for the Office of Liquor and Gaming to recover the cost of their operations. The estimated administration cost to the Office of Liquor and Gaming is \$2,819. In 2016 the annual licence fee for a commercial hotel licence is \$3,507. I do not think there is going to be a massive shortfall for the government. We are looking at probably 110 licences across the state that would be affected.

What we have arrived at is that the best way to pull out these small pubs in these towns is to create a concessional fee for commercial hotel licences in very remote Australia. The area classified as 'very remote Australia' means the area under that name in the *Australian Statistical Geography Standard: Volume 5—Remoteness Structure, July 2011*. That is published on the ABS website. That was the most practical way to determine these pubs and I think it captures it best.

To get back to why we would do this, I think most western MPs here or anyone who visits those areas understands that a pub is the social hub of those areas. Without it, you do not have much at all. It operates a lot more like a community club. That is an interesting point to raise because clubs pay an annual fee of \$600 for the same type of activity. We are advocating a 90 per cent reduction for these small pubs, so that goes from about 3½ grand down to roughly \$350. We would come under some of these large commercial clubs that pay only \$600. I think that fits with the intent of what these fees are based on, because these pubs are as much a community club as they are a commercial enterprise. As I told the House before from that example in this small town, if someone is making only \$38,000 in net profit they are mostly doing that for love, not for the money.

I do not think that is unfair. If we look at the Regatta Hotel or other Brisbane hotels, they are a completely different commercial animal and they belong in larger captive markets. A completely different dynamic exists in those markets. There is zero competition in these areas. It is not like another one will pop up or be built. No-one will borrow money from the bank to start up a business that returns \$38,000 net profit a year. I can speak with some authority on this because I was a rural valuer for many years in North Queensland and I had the opportunity to value many of these pubs to see the viability and profitability of them. Usually you included the manager's wage because if you did not there was not much point to a lot of it.

014

I cast my mind back to a conversation I had with a publican in a small town in my electorate the other day. He is paying \$80,000 a year in insurance, about \$30,000 on electricity—and the electricity prices are a real killer—and \$7,000 for his water, and he said, 'Mate, I'm struggling.' Again, he had the only pub in that town. These people are under stress and we have put the notion of this bill to them and they are very excited by it. They have said that it would be pleasing if someone would help. We have been very lucky to have the QHA support this initiative. They also support rural bush pubs. It is great that they do not just look after their big guys; they have a lot of compassion and concern for the small pubs.

This is not an earth-shattering, all-encompassing bill, but it will make a difference and it will be appreciated. It will be a great signal from this parliament if we can save these small pubs and reduce their costs. If we can do anything like that, it will be very well received. The feedback has already been excellent. I ask members to engage with their local publicans in these remote areas. I am sure those publicans look forward to talking to members about this and getting some support for this initiative.

My final major point is that we want to market Queensland as a tourism destination because it is seen as a real strength in our economy. Part of that is outback tourism, but we simply do not have outback tourism if we do not have outback pubs. If mum and dad are planning to do a drive through the gulf or up through the western areas, they would go through McKinlay, Boulia or Einasleigh but what if there is no pub there? If those towns do not have a pub, there would not be much of a tourism package there. If we are going to sit here and do nothing and not try to help these people, eventually they will fail. If these people are making \$38,000 a year net profit, once they have finished there they are not going to keep going. That is not enough to keep these things going.

If this parliament can help these people in some way—and maybe this is just the start of something—then we would be doing a good thing, not just for those people in those areas but for tourism in Queensland. This would provide outback tourism. If people are driving through Einasleigh, they can stop at the pub and get a cold soft drink and a cold beer, if it is in the evening, they can buy a counter meal and ask for directions, they can use the internet and they can ask for advice on what tourist destinations to explore. If those tourists meet a couple of the locals, that is the experience they want. These publicans provide a tourism service out there, and a lot of it is done by love.

This is quite a simple bill. We are just talking about 110 pubs in Queensland—it is not a big number. The cost to the government of delivering this would be just north of \$300,000. The initial feedback I have had from pubs in my area is that this would be fantastic. I was quite surprised by that, because I did not think \$3,500 down to \$350 would make that much difference but I can assure the House that it does. I challenge everyone to go out and engage with anyone they know who is in one of these small pubs in a remote area, and I am sure they would get the same response. On that basis, I seek the support of the House for this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.43 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

~~Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee~~

~~**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.~~

~~DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT~~

~~School Group Tour~~

~~**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Before we move to the next order of the day, I would like to welcome to the gallery students from Mudgeeraba State School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba.~~

~~AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE~~

~~Report, Motion to Take Note~~

~~Resumed from 2 March (see p. 484), on motion of Mr Kelly~~

~~That the House take note of Agriculture and Environment Committee report No. 29, tabled on 3 January 2017.~~



~~**Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (11.44 am): I rise to speak on report No. 29 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee on the review of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme, known as DRAS, which was tabled on 3 January this year. This was a review by the Agriculture and Environment Committee, of which I was formerly the chair, and administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This report was conducted in accordance with the committee's public account responsibilities pursuant to section 94 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.~~

~~This scheme has provided financial assistance to drought affected farm businesses since 1969 and remains a key component of the Queensland government's package of assistance programs for drought affected businesses, families and communities. The DRAS is an important scheme as it assists~~