



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Chairman
Finance and Administration Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 4000
24 March 2017

Dear Chairman

Re: Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017

I am the Manager of Economic Development and Tourism at the Southern Downs Regional Council. Below is the Council's submission to the inquiry of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017.

**Please address all
communications to:**

The Chief Executive Officer
Southern Downs
Regional Council
PO Box 26
Warwick Qld 4370

mail@sdrcl.qld.gov.au
www.sdrcl.qld.gov.au

abn 59 786 792 651

Warwick Office

64 Fitzroy Street
Warwick Qld 4370

Stanthorpe Office

61 Marsh Street
Stanthorpe Qld 4380

t **1300 MY SDRC**
(1300 697 372)

f **07 4661 0333**

Southern Downs is situated 1 hour South of Toowoomba and 2 hours South West of Brisbane in Queensland. The major centres include Warwick, Allora, Killarney and Stanthorpe, with the region stretching along to the New South Wales border and covering 7,122 km². The Southern Downs Region boasts a vibrant rural lifestyle with many things to do and see. The four season climate is a world away from typical Queensland regions and offers a variety of scenery, flora and fauna.

The Southern Downs Regional Council supports the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017, which will provide residents and visitors with choice and convenience they previously haven't been able to access within the Southern Downs Region. Council resolved to support a submission to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to extend allowable trading hours, by the National Retailers Association (NRA), at the meeting of June 23, 2016. The previous support by the Council provides evidence that the Council wants extended trading hours in the Region.

One of the highest priorities for the Southern Downs Regional Council is to facilitate the creation of jobs for residents. This Bill will help to create more shifts for workers in major retailers and will offer more opportunity for local small businesses to prosper. Evidence from other regions that have extended trading hours, suggests that smaller retailers make more sales when they are open at the same time as major stores. Further data from the NRA indicates that Sunday trade represents approximately 13% of the week's trade; it is anticipated that, if the major retailers are open longer and the smaller traders are also open then, the smaller retailers will be swept along with the majors. This also means that the smaller retailers may have the option of providing more work, which will help to raise the quality of life of more people within the Region.

The major retailers in Warwick have shown confidence in the town's increasing catchment by investing significantly. The McConaghy Group are spending approximately \$40m expanding its Rose City Shopping World, including a full line Coles Supermarket; and Bunnings are preparing to build a new facility worth approximately \$17m. This level of investment stands as a testament to the growth of the retail catchment of Warwick. Further jobs will be created in these developments in Warwick if this Bill is successful, which is why it has the support of the Southern Downs Regional Council.

Some Stanthorpe traders have indicated that they have increased their Saturday trade as a direct result of Aldi opening in town. This is due to shoppers in districts and towns further south and west, including Tenterfield and Texas, choosing to shop at Aldi in Stanthorpe rather than Warwick. These traders are confident that, if Aldi and Woolworths are also open on Sunday, they may see a further increase in trade.



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Please address all
communications to:**

The Chief Executive Officer

Southern Downs

Regional Council

PO Box 26

Warwick Qld 4370

mail@sdrcl.qld.gov.au

www.sdrcl.qld.gov.au

abn 59 786 792 651

Warwick Office

64 Fitzroy Street

Warwick Qld 4370

Stanthorpe Office

61 Marsh Street

Stanthorpe Qld 4380

t **1300 MY SDRCL**
(1300 697 372)

f **07 4661 0333**

The Southern Downs is an accessible and affordable short stay destination. Data from the Council's Visitor Information Centres (VICs) suggests that a large percentage of our visitors and tourists come from the South East Queensland region. The Queensland Government expects the population in South East Queensland to increase by 2 million by the year 2041; the assumption can be drawn that the increase in population in South East Queensland should result in more residents, tourists and visitors to the Southern Downs.

The Southern Downs Regional Council is currently preparing a new Economic Development Strategy and Tourism Strategy. The Council will build on the Region's strengths and natural assets to attract more investment, jobs and visitors. One of the opportunities for growth is to ensure community and service infrastructure requirements keep pace with community and visitor expectations so as to support sustainable population and tourism growth. This means increased access to a larger range of retail services for residents and tourists, which this Bill facilitates.

The Council's Economic Development and Tourism Unit is working with the Chambers of Commerce and Traders to provide business skills development to ensure the local businesses provide outstanding customer service and maximise the opportunity to increase income through trading longer. The Council is conscious that an extension to trading hours needs to benefit all stakeholders and is endeavouring to ensure that there is no disadvantage caused by this Bill.

The Southern Downs Regional Council believes an extension of the current allowable trading hours for non-exempt shops will provide more flexibility and convenience not only for tourist visitors, but also for resident shoppers and workers. Many of our local workers undertake shift work, or work in other centres, which makes it more difficult for them to access shops during traditional retail hours. This will also mitigate the retail dollar leakage to Toowoomba.

The new Southern Downs Regional Council has a major focus on fostering and supporting business growth and diversification. A feature of Stanthorpe is the CBD area, which is different from other towns in South East Queensland is that it has a European influence from the large migrant community that settled in Stanthorpe in the 1940's and 50's. While a feature of the Warwick CBD is that it has a number of imposing sandstone and colonial buildings that are not seen in other centres. The Council's Economic Development and Tourism Unit is working with the Chambers of Commerce to ensure vibrant CBD's, with unique public realm and architecture, which will appeal to residents and tourists. Council is trying to transform what are currently inactive CBD areas on weekends into a lifestyle focused and thriving precincts, which will create jobs and increase the value of local expenditure.

Traditionally consumers have faced many barriers and costs if they wanted to compare products and seek out the best deal. They can only buy from retailers in the surrounding geographic area and have to spend the time travelling out of town to make basic purchases. Warwick and Stanthorpe have competitive pricing and product range. If local retailers were open on Sunday there would be a reduction of spending leakage to the nearby city of Toowoomba providing an economic boost to the local retail shops.

The Southern Downs Regional Council sees leisure tourism as one of the growth sectors of the economy. Shopping is an important part of the experience when travelling for pleasure. The Council wants to ensure that the towns in the Region can offer the same shopping hours as the rest of South East Queensland to make the experience complete. The Council wants to enhance the Region's competitive advantages by supporting this Bill.



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Please address all
communications to:**

The Chief Executive Officer
Southern Downs
Regional Council
PO Box 26
Warwick Qld 4370

mail@sdrcl.qld.gov.au
www.sdrcl.qld.gov.au

abn 59 786 792 651

Warwick Office

64 Fitzroy Street
Warwick Qld 4370

Stanthorpe Office

61 Marsh Street
Stanthorpe Qld 4380

t **1300 MY SDRC**
(1300 697 372)

f **07 4661 0333**

In the 2016 calendar year the Stanthorpe VIC served nearly 24,000 people and the Warwick VIC approximately 16,000. Austrade figures indicate that the Southern Downs hosted approximately 787,000 visitors in the year. Stanthorpe's resident population is approximately 7,000, while Warwick is home to approximately 15,000; the whole Council Area has a population of 36,000. An influx of 787,000 visitors is significant across the year. Southern Downs Regional Council wants to ensure that the shopping experience in the Region is consistent with the experience the visitors would expect. This Bill will ensure trading hours consistent with other Regions in South East Queensland. The Southern Downs Regional Council wants to ensure that the businesses in the Region can continue to attract visitors, if the Southern Downs Region does not have extended trading hours, the Council is concerned that the Region will lose visitors to those regions where trading hours are consistent.

Council officers and VIC staff often receive comments and feedback from tourists and visitors that they arrive to find that there is very little open on weekends and evenings. The CBD provides a unique experience for visitors to the Region. It offers dining, shopping and accommodation. The architecture and public realm is different from any other experience in South East Queensland and during winter our Region is the coldest part of the State, which attracts a large number of tourists. The data captured in the Council's VICs indicates that the majority of the tourists and visitors to our Region emanate from South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales, areas that have had extended trading hours for a considerable number of years. The Southern Downs Regional Council is concerned that if the visitors to our Region do not experience a similar shopping convenience that they're accustomed to, they will choose not to return, thereby damaging the overall economy.

Visitors to the Southern Downs can be broadly categorised by the destination within the Region they choose. Stanthorpe attracts visitors looking to experience cold conditions. While they are in the Region they seek food and beverage experiences and enjoy activities surrounding the cooler climate. Many of the visitors to the Southern Downs who are attracted to these pursuits also expect to be able to shop as a part of their experience. This Bill will allow the Southern Downs community to offer the extra shopping hours the Region's visitors expect.

Consumer demands are also constantly changing, with consumers looking for increasingly convenient shopping options. They want to be able to shop when the time suits them and not when the shops are traditionally open. Many people in Warwick have indicated that they drive to Toowoomba to shop on Sundays because there is nothing open in the CBD. This represents a significant leakage of retail dollars from the local economy, which the Council is keen to address.

The Southern Downs Regional Council supports this Bill because it is consistent with the Council's ambition to create more jobs and attract more investment in the Region. The uniformity of trading hours will also help to mitigate retail leakage from the Southern Downs Region, which will also help to attract jobs and investment.

If there are any questions regarding this submission, please call Scott Templeman, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

Yours sincerely

Scott Templeman