

12th May 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to express my support of the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2017.

My name is Michelle Donna Ryan, I am the Owner/Publican of the Dajarra Hotel, 1 Mark Street Dajarra, Queensland 4825. My Hotel is located in the remote Indigenous community of Dajarra, in North West Queensland which is 150 kilometres South of Mount Isa, and is the only Hotel in the community with a population of approximately 90. Over the past 10 years I have witnessed many changes in rural Queensland that has had a significant impact on my Hotel and the wider rural economy including drought, an increase in fly in fly out workers, and an increase in poverty in remote communities.

The licensing fee we currently have to pay is totally unfair, unjust and over the top, when you consider we are paying the exact same fee as Hotels in much more populated and urban areas. A Hotel in a remote community is pivotal to community life and is not just a business that sells alcohol to adults. In fact, our top 10 sellers are non-alcoholic products, with alcohol sales making up less than 50% of our overall sales.

I would like to put forward the following for your serious consideration, as I believe sadly if the licensing fees aren't changed we like many other Hotels in similar locations will have to close our doors:

1. Our Hotel Insurance has gone from [REDACTED] per year in 2007 to [REDACTED] in 2017.
2. Mining and Drilling exploration since the introduction of the mining taxes and other changes to the mining industry has significantly decreased. Due to this, my business has lost more than [REDACTED] per year in revenue from accommodation and meals. In this area of Queensland alone 8 drilling rigs that regularly operated have left and have not returned.
3. When I purchased the Dajarra Hotel in 2007 there were no licensing fees
4. Changes to the cattle industry and the live export debacle have had a serious impact on my ability to earn a living. In 2007 there was in excess of 40 station workers in the area, who would frequent my Hotel at least once per month, today there is less than half that amount. This is also due to the increased use of helicopters and motorbikes for mustering which results in less staff on stations. Also companies and property owners with multiple stations are now only maintaining one property's buildings/dwellings therefore restricting the number of people spread across an area. This in turn also impacts upon the potential number of tradesmen that used to frequent our area and Hotel when maintaining the other dwellings.
5. Due to the sale of the rail line from Mount Isa to Townsville alcohol freight has been removed from the rail and can now only be transported by truck. This gave the main two Hoteliers in Mt Isa a monopoly on the supply of alcohol to the region, resulting in small Hotels such as mine to pay full price for stock, the same as the general population with little to no discount. This plus the cost of freight to the Dajarra Hotel which is a 300 kilometre round trip from Mount Isa forces me to raise the price of our stock at point of sale and therefore resulting in us not being able to provide goods to community members at a competitive price.
6. Due to changes in the law around alcohol consumption and noise restrictions in recent times the general population have changed their drinking habits. In 2007 65% of my profit and turnover was from alcohol sales over the bar, today it would be less than 10 percent. Therefore, having an extremely significant impact on my ability to cover operational and general running costs of the Hotel.
7. The cost of electricity is 50% more expensive today than it was in 2007.

8. There are many financial incidentals that a rural Hotel has to cop including, APRA/AMCOS Fees, Asbestos registers, Food licences, RSA certificates, RMLV certificate, Increased council rates, fuel and freight charges, not to mention the many and varied bank charges that are forced on small businesses.

You can only take so many bites of the cherry, before you are only left with a seed, and that seed is the seed to economic failure. I thank-you for your time and consideration and look forward to your positive response.

Kind regards,

Michelle (Shelly) Ryan

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