



Speech by

Mr J. HEGARTY

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Hansard 14 April 1999

ANZAC DAY TRADING HOURS

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands—NPA) (6.37 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to support this motion to bring on for debate tonight the Liquor Amendment Bill 1999. From time to time all legislation needs amending or replacing as changes in society mean that what was formerly adequate legislation meeting the needs of society becomes outdated. As members of Parliament, we have an obligation to our constituents to enact timely legislation, to fulfil our duty to provide a safe environment where citizens can go about their daily lives with the knowledge that law and order is sufficient to ensure public safety.

This motion to debate the Liquor Amendment Bill 1999 tonight relates to legislation to put in place measures to ensure public safety and minimise disruption to approved public gatherings. Among their other responsibilities, people entrusted with public office also have to have uppermost in their minds the cost to the public of the range of services provided by Government, which in nearly all cases will be short of the public's expectations. One way that prudent economic savings can be achieved is through timely legislation enacted to prevent the unnecessary expenditure of money and human resources.

The Liquor Amendment Bill 1999 is just such legislation, and will provide measurable economic savings to all Queensland taxpayers if it is debated tonight, passed and then proclaimed within the next week in order to be in force by 24 April. In past years, because of shortcomings in the current legislation, some members of the public have been exposed to derision and instances of physical harm at Anzac Day dawn services. This situation is likely to be repeated year after year if necessary amending legislation is not enacted now.

We hear nearly every day about the strain on our health services, with too many demands to be met by limited resources. Why, then, should we delay legislation that could prevent a further contribution to the strain on our health services? Why is a debate as important as this being postponed? Police services are also being depleted to ensure public safety, but why deplete that finite resource in protecting sections of the population that will not need protection if this legislation is passed tonight to remove, or at least vastly limit, the potential for police intervention at events such as Anzac Day dawn services?

Above all else, this legislation is about showing the people of Queensland, whom we represent, that we are prepared to act whenever necessary to legislate to ensure safety at peaceful gatherings—at Anzac Day dawn services and on other occasions— especially if, as it is in this particular instance, it is to regulate trading hours on one day of the year which is held dear to all Australians and which we have honoured since 1915, that is, Anzac Day. I think it would be deplorable if a small piece of amending legislation could not provide the means by which to continue honouring that day. I support the motion of the member for Gladstone for that reason.
