Hansard 8 December 1999

### TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—LP) (4.31 p.m.): I have indicated to the Minister outside of this place that the Opposition will be very pleased to support the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990. I have assured the Minister that the speaking list will not be too long.

The history that has led to the formulation and introduction of this Bill is very well known. It was obvious after the gazettal of the public holidays for 1999 that the Government would face some fairly difficult circumstances. There were attempts to get together the various interested parties—the consumers, the retailers, and the unions also obviously had an interest—in order to overcome the conflicts that this Bill will resolve. A consultation process took place. In the end, something which is fairly uncommon in politics occurred—that is, most of the interested parties managed to agree. I think that that is a credit to the Minister, the Government and to all the people who displayed goodwill towards an issue that had to be resolved.

As a result of the amending provisions in the Bill, consumers will be able to have reasonable access to food from retail outlets over the Christmas and new year period. It will also make it possible for staffing and rostering problems to be worked out. The many possible and unforeseen Y2K problems will also be minimised as a result of the trading and business arrangements that have been made possible through the provisions of this amending Bill. Overall, it is a good piece of legislation. In a Bill such as this, one could be tempted to allow oneself to talk about the more complex and controversial trading hours issue. That is not meant to be the case today, nor is it my personal desire or that of the Opposition. We are pleased to offer support to the Government. I hope that the provisions work to the benefit of all those who came together with a view to resolving the issues.

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