



Speech by

Mr D. BRISKEY

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard 7 October 2003

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (2.56 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor Amendment Bill 2003. Firstly, I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Merri Rose, and her department. I would also like to acknowledge the peak bodies that were part of the consultation process—Restaurant and Catering Queensland, the Queensland Hotels Association and Clubs Queensland—in particular for their work and support of these important amendments. As many on the south side would be aware, I worked in the industry for a decade.

Mr Reeves: Where did you work?

Mr BRISKEY: I worked at the Colmslie Hotel many years ago, and at a number of other hotels owned by that family. This bill gives me an opportunity to commend many of the Queensland families who have been involved in the industry for many years. As the member for Mansfield mentioned, the McGuire family is one. The Fitzgibbons are another family that has been involved in the industry for many years. These families and many like them have run establishments that have trained staff and provided only the best quality of service to patrons. I know that these families are very supportive of the amendments that the minister is bringing before the House in this bill today. I believe, and they believe, that the introduction of training and advancement in any industry should be applauded.

Already in the liquor industry we see training in the responsible service of alcohol. This type of training ensures that people serving alcohol to patrons are aware of problems associated with excessive consumption, facts about alcohol and also an issue that I had to deal with on an almost daily basis—that is, handling difficult customers. The culture of an organisation or any business comes from management. In the case of the liquor industry, of course, that comes down from the licensee and/or the nominee. The way in which a business approaches the service of alcohol and the way in which it manages its staff and patrons is intrinsically linked to management from the top down and its attitudes and understanding.

It is this culture which can influence and shape an establishment and its staff and their relationship with customers. When culture and management come together it is often the case of setting an example—in other words, what monkey see monkey do. Therefore, mandatory training under this amendment to the Liquor Act will ensure a safer environment and help reduce and eradicate irresponsible practices starting with management and trickling down to the staff behind the bar.

I might mention the training that I received almost 24 years ago at the Colmslie Hotel. That is exactly what was happening there in those days. John Jeffs, who I know is still with the McGuire group of hotels, trained me and all other staff in these important areas of customer service, of dealing with intoxicated patrons and of ensuring that the patrons of the establishment were served well and, most importantly, that when they had had enough they were moved on their way.

This bill to introduce mandatory training for prospective licensees and nominees of Queensland's liquor industry is indeed a significant step forward. The bill, which seeks to enhance professionalism within the liquor and hospitality industry through mandatory training, will consider the law, best practice, risk management and harm minimisation. The benefits are many and varied. It will increase not only professionalism but also a greater awareness of the legal liabilities associated with an industry that is no doubt worth tens of millions of dollars annually.

While many people, and I am sure that on occasion Mr Deputy Speaker and many members of this House have done so, enjoy having a quiet drink—in moderation of course—there are many people whose lives have been adversely affected by it. In this way mandatory training will ensure a continuing commitment among those in the industry to the objectives of the Liquor Act and, very importantly, the principles of harm minimisation.

A liquor licence is a privilege, not a right. There is no need to enter into a moral debate on the service and consumption of alcohol. Suffice to say that any proposal to address community and industry concerns about irresponsible operators whose business operations result in substandard training, practices and non-compliance with the act should be supported. Improving the professional operation of liquor outlets throughout Queensland will improve the image of the industry and increase professionalism and accountability amongst licensees and nominees. The introduction of this bill will fill a gap in the industry, ensuring newcomers are formally recognised for their awareness and training, most notably in the responsible service of alcohol but also in a general awareness of the Liquor Act. Through this training, I believe new licensees and nominees should have a full and thorough understanding of their duty of care and very important responsibility under the Queensland Liquor Act.

I join with the minister and the Liquor Licensing Division in thanking the industry for their support of the bill. This type of training will improve Queensland's liquor industry. It will ensure and maintain the reputation of the liquor industry and increase professionalism in the hospitality sector. Before I take my place in the chamber, I would like to congratulate the Fitzgibbon group and Brian in particular on the opening of their refurbished bar down in the Valley that the honourable minister—

Mr Reeves: The old Rat and Parrot.

Mr BRISKEY: The old Rat and Parrot. What was it called before that? The old Osbourne?

Ms Rose: No, the Dead Rat.

Mr BRISKEY: The Osbourne and then the Dead Rat and then the Rat and Parrot and now the Fringe Bar—a very nice venue indeed. I say congratulations to Brian Fitzgibbon and his family on another major hotel redevelopment in Queensland.