



Speech by

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Member for MOUNT OMMANEY

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TOURISM, RACING AND FAIR TRADING [MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS] BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.21 p.m.): Although this bill relates to amendments to 15 pieces of legislation, I will confine my comments to the amendments to the Security Providers Act 1993. There have been some concerns raised about the status of security service providers by some ordinary Queenslanders and tourists. Some security service providers, operators and licensees operating in Queensland in recent years have been mistaken for, or have been purported to be, Police Service officers. The amendment to section 14 of the act allows the deferral of a decision to grant or refuse a licence pending the outcome of any proceedings against the security industry applicant which constitute a disqualifying offence.

The bill amends the definition of a disqualifying offence to include any breach of the prohibition against pretending to be a police officer contained in the Police Service Administration Act 1990. Licensees in some areas of the security provider industry wear uniforms which may be mistaken by the public for police uniforms. This measure would act as a deterrent to the possibility of a licensee exploiting any such confusion and abusing an individual's rights or liberties. Language differences, cultural influences and limited experience with Australian authorities make ethnic communities and tourists from some countries heavily reliant on their perception of persons in authority while in Queensland. The unconscionable practices by some security providers can lead to reduced confidence in our dedicated Police Service officers. Queensland's image as a tourist destination may be tarnished by such conduct and this could create an impediment to growth in our great tourism industry in Queensland.

The government made a commitment prior to the 2001 state election to address problems with the security services, guards, and crowd and traffic controllers by introducing regulations to ensure the public were not misled by those imitating Police Service officers. Prosecuting the crowd or traffic controller for wearing the wrong uniform is not good enough if we are to protect the good reputation of the Queensland security services industry. It is appropriate that an executive officer or partner who is in a position to influence the conduct of the corporational partnership and who is responsible for a contravention should be accountable for such a contravention. This is especially relevant to the security services industry because many people visiting our great state have little or no knowledge of how security services businesses should operate in Queensland and could easily mistake a security person for a police officer. Using a similar uniform and pretending to be a police officer may cause people approached by these fraudsters undue stress, anxiety and concern.

This bill addresses the undesirable and unscrupulous practices outlined above and provides protection for domestic and overseas visitors by regulating the conduct of security service providers and crowd controllers. The amendments to the act in this bill are considered to be a reasonable and appropriate way of achieving the objectives. The amendment is consistent with fundamental legislative principles, as the chief executive would be required to provide a written notice stating the decision to defer, the reasons for the decision, and that the applicant may appeal to the Magistrates Court within 28 days. The proposed legislation is generally supported and in some cases has received strong support from honest security service providers, the ethnic community and the tourist industry, all of whom have stakeholders who could be disadvantaged by people impersonating or being mistaken for police officers.

Amendments also expand the grounds for disciplinary action under the Security Providers Act 1993 to include a breach of the Industrial Relations Act 1999. The specified breaches relate to the

underpayment of award wages or an order of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission or Magistrates Court to pay wages owing. Most security service employees are part-time employees and it is appropriate to ensure that their wages are paid with due diligence.

These amendments will ensure that the quality of security services is not compromised at the expense of public safety. A number of stakeholders have suggested that the security industry should be subject to even further regulation. However, the government is mindful of the need to minimise red tape and will monitor the effect of the proposed legislation in the first instance. I support this bill.