



Speech by

## Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 10 November 2009

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### LIQUOR LICENSING

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (10.04 pm): This evening I would like to raise concerns related to the liquor licensing process in this state. From the outset, let me place on the record my abhorrence of excessive alcohol consumption, of the resulting socially unacceptable behaviour of some individuals—including the clear increase in incidents of glassing—and the tragic consequences of binge drinking.

There is no doubt that nominees or what are now known as approved managers have a role in ensuring the responsible service of alcohol. My fear though is that we are now tying these individuals and businesses up in so much red tape and slugging them with ever-increasing fees and charges to the extent that we are putting large parts of the hospitality industry at risk, particularly the cafe and restaurant market in small local communities. My fear is that we are penalising the wrong party.

Instead of slugging the overindulgent individual and taking them to the cleaners, we are hogtying economic development in the hospitality industry. Let me give the House some examples of this excessive red tape. A restaurant, say in a town like Maleny or Palmwoods, is hit with a liquor licence fee of \$516 per annum for a five-year licence. For some pubs and clubs, this amount can rise to five figures, more than \$10,000. The approved manager is now required to be on site or reasonably available during ordinary trading hours. 'Reasonably available' means the ability to be readily contacted by staff and the capacity to attend the premises within one hour of being contacted.

For small town restaurants, to allow the approved manager some respite, an owner often has to designate a second or even a third approved manager. But at what cost? As of 1 January this year, all approved managers must complete both the responsible management of a licensed venue training as well the responsible service of alcohol training programs. The responsible management of a licensed venue training program costs between \$400 and \$500 per person. Even though the liquor licence is for five years, approved managers must repeat this training every three years. Each individual must also pay an accreditation fee of \$375. And this is on top of the responsible service of alcohol training that every staff member, including the casual hands, must complete at a cost of between \$65 and \$95.

So let us add it all up. For a restaurant with three approved managers and 10 staff all up, the owner is looking at \$516 for a licence, \$1,500 in responsible management training, \$1,125 in accreditation fees and \$950 in responsible service training. That is a total of nearly \$4,100, and that does not even factor in the staff costs associated with attending the training, completing applications and other paperwork. No wonder hospitality small business owners in the electorate of Glass House are getting cynical. They are questioning whether the liquor licensing arm of the government has been told to fund itself.

There is no flexibility in the system—no recognition that a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate. It is clear that there is a policy-on-the-run approach. It is time that a moratorium was placed on the liquor licensing issue. Let us take a collective breath, assess how much is being raised in fees, determine if we have the balance right between the licensee and the individual, and formulate and monitor a new industry-wide approach.