



Speech by

**Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

Hansard Thursday, 25 November 2010

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## **FAIR TRADING (AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.00 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in support of the Fair Trading (Australian Consumer Law) Amendment Bill. In researching this bill and in placing consumer policy in its historical context I discovered one particular reference from the code of the Babylon ruler Hammurabi. I am surprised that the member for Gaven did not actually find this reference.

**Mr Finn:** You found it on Wikipedia, didn't you?

**Mr RYAN:** Well, it is not listed on Wikipedia so perhaps that is why the member for Gaven did not find it.

**Mr Lucas:** So, unlike the member for Gaven, you are not reading a university assignment?

**Mr RYAN:** No, I have put a little bit more thought in. Hammurabi's code was written almost 4,000 years ago and sets out a series of laws which regulates consumer transactions. For example, and importantly for some members of this House, the 108th law in Hammurabi's code protects tavern goers from paying too much for their drinks. The code said that if the mistress of a beer shop has not received corn as the price of beer or has demanded silver on an excessive scale and has made the measure of beer less than the measure of corn, that beer seller shall be prosecuted and drowned. I know some people would still say in such circumstances that we should continue to let the punishment fit the crime, but of course we have moved on since Hammurabi's days.

Today the Australian Consumer Law is about protecting consumer rights when buying goods and services. Members of this House would have heard me talk about my passion and commitment to the concept of the safety net, that wonderful principle of governments providing support and protection for vulnerable people in our community. Consumer protection law is one way that governments can protect vulnerable people from unfair and harsh consumer transactions. This bill further enhances consumer protection for Queensland consumers by enhancing consistency and certainty and by extending other important protections. I commend the minister, his staff and the department on their hard work in respect of this bill. I commend the bill to the House and I ask all members to support it.