




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

---

**LIQUOR AND GAMING (RED TAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.59 pm): In speaking to the Liquor and Gaming (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I acknowledge that this bill is about removing red tape. Being the member for two different electorates, the former electorate of Charters Towers, which had 32 communities, and now Dalrymple, which has 52 communities, I witnessed and saw for myself the difficulty that small groups, such as P&Cs, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, country shows and Lions clubs, had in relation to getting a permit to be able to sell liquor at a low-risk fundraising event. I believe this is good legislation.

A small place like Forsyth in the middle of nowhere that wants to sell a small amount of alcohol in their community at a low-risk event has been tied up with red tape and there are cost factors when trying to get a licence. Schools hold fetes to raise funds to send their kids to Canberra or trips away. That is important for those small communities. Lions clubs raise funds for the local ambulance station for a defibrillator or wheelchair access or disabled support to get out of a swimming pool. The Minister for Local Government mentioned going to country shows and seeing the difficulty they had participating in fundraising. They support the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It has a flow-on effect. It does benefit the community. This will be beneficial for rural and regional Queensland.

One area that needs to be addressed, which is improving but still needs to be finetuned, is the issue of security when there is liquor to be sold, especially at race meetings in rural and regional Queensland. Mount Garnet is an example where there is an upfront cost of \$9,000 for security. When a race is put on and there is a \$9,000 security cost at the start it can become a non-event. They are working hard to raise those funds to keep those events alive. I will be speaking to the Minister for Police to see if we can resolve this, especially for Mount Garnet as it is an iconic race meeting. It could come to an end as a result of the cost of security. The explanatory notes state—

Applications for low risk premises (restaurants, cafes and bottle shops) will be exempted, through legislative amendments in the Bill, from having to advertise for public objections if they are not applying to trade outside ordinary trading hours (after midnight for restaurants and cafes; after 10pm for bottle shops)

I feel that that is a good thing. I feel that this is a big issue. This will be addressed further down the track in regard to submissions. I do not want to be a person that is pushing for more grog to be sold in supermarkets. It has to be acknowledged, and there were quite a number of submissions put in, that the liquor market is a highly competitive market. The vast majority of bottle shops in Queensland are owned by Coles and Woolworths or subsidiaries of the supermarket duopoly. I feel that it is a big concern that those selling eggs, tomatoes and natural foods have entered into the liquor market. Red tape and regulations extensively disadvantage small grocers. Under the current act small grocers are excluded from selling liquor unless they own a licensed premises. If the small IGAs, Foodworks and SPAs want to sell alcohol they have to buy an hotel. It is sad that we are seeing massive supermarket giants, such as Woolworths and Coles, take over the chemist. They basically want to take over all small business. Now they are starting to take over the alcohol industry.

The minister knows where I am coming from here. I believe there needs to be some sort of level playing field by allowing them to possibly sell packaged beer and wine in a very controlled way. It would be a fairer distribution of this market and give smaller grocers an even, level playing field. Small independent grocers do not have the financial resources to invest in hotels for the sole purpose of alcohol sales. They do not have the financial resources to absorb losses like Woolworths and Coles. Under the current act the duopoly can offer online customers heavily discounted alcohol along with their bread, milk and general groceries. How are small grocery retailers expected to compete with this? The act enables them to advertise alcohol along with household grocery items. How is this fair on small independent traders? The reality is that Coles and Woolworths are dominating this market which is directly impacting the viability and profitability of small grocers who supply and service small rural communities. There needs to be some form of mechanism that will allow small grocers the opportunity to provide the same level of service that the large dominating supermarket duopoly currently have almost complete control of. We need to establish regulations that enable fair competition and a level playing field so that all industry participants can equitably participate in the packaged liquor sales market at appropriate licensing time. I do not want to suggest that these supermarkets sell alcohol.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. Not wanting to stop the member for Dalrymple, he is actually speaking about matters that have no relevance to the bill. For everyone's sake, as it is getting late, I suggest he get back to the bill and debate those issues at a more appropriate time when it is more relevant.

**Mr KNUTH:** I do believe it relates to the bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. The bill does not deal with liquor sales in supermarkets at all.

**Mr KNUTH:** That is true, but this relates to the Liquor Act and this is an opportunity to bring this up.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. Despite the fact the Liquor Act might be in the title, it does not mean everything about liquor is actually here for debate. We are debating 28 specific initiatives, not one of which the member is referring to. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would respectfully suggest you deal with the matter on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry):** In the long title of the bill it is for particular purposes. You are talking about matters irrelevant for the present purpose. If I could, for the remaining two minutes, direct you back to the purposes of the bill, it would be appreciated.

**Mr KNUTH:** Fetes, school fundraising, Lions club events, country shows and activities of not-for-profit organisations are all low-risk activities. I fully support this legislation. I believe this is a great initiative. Hopefully, we can further discuss the bigger picture with regard to liquor licensing. I support the bill and commend it to the House.