




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 18 March 2014

CONSTRUCTION AND TOURISM (RED TAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991, the Casino Control Act 1982, the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, the Keno Act 1996, the Lotteries Act 1997, the Reprints Act 1992 and the Wagering Act 1998 for particular purposes, and to provide for an act to repeal the Travel Agents Act 1988 and to make consequential and minor amendments to the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for related purposes. I now table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Construction and Tourism (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4666\]](#).

Tabled paper: Construction and Tourism (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4667\]](#).

I have presented this bill for an act to amend the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991, the Casino Control Act 1982, the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, the Keno Act 1996, the Lotteries Act 1997, the Wagering Act 1998 and the Reprints Act 1992 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Queensland Travel Agents Act 1988. I am pleased to introduce the Construction and Tourism (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 in parliament today.

At the 2012 state election the government made a commitment to grow a four-pillar economy based on tourism, construction, agriculture and resources. We also said that we would reduce red tape and regulation by 20 per cent in six years. The bill reflects our commitment in both of these important economic policy areas and illustrates our determination to grow the economy and create job security and prosperity for all Queenslanders.

Job security is enhanced by reforms that reduce the cost of doing business in this state whilst retaining important worker entitlements such as portable long service leave. The amount of leave or the availability of leave available to workers is not changing as a result of the amendments in this bill. The bill will streamline the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991 that governs the equitable and efficient system of portable long service leave in the building and construction industry. The bill implements the results of a review of the Building and Construction Industry Portable Long Service Leave Scheme completed as part of the government's strategy to simplify business regulation and reduce costs to Queenslanders. It acknowledges the changing face of the construction industry and the concerns raised by the Queensland Resources Council regarding the scheme's application and effect on coal seam gas, liquefied natural gas and mining operations which require the building of infrastructure in Queensland.

The bill and associated regulatory changes will provide savings and less red tape in the following ways: it will reduce the QLeave levy rate from 0.3 per cent to 0.25 per cent. Based on the 2013-14 estimated total construction value of \$47.2 billion, a reduction of 0.05 per cent in the levy will reduce the industry impost from \$141.6 million to \$118.0 million, or 17 per cent. From an individual construction company perspective, a large resource company building, for instance, a \$1 billion infrastructure project, will save \$500,000, a midsize firm building a \$100 million high-rise block will save \$50,000 and a smaller \$300,000 housing project will save about \$150. It is estimated that the removal of GST from the leviable cost of work will save the industry approximately \$10 million per annum. It will increase the threshold value of projects from \$80,000 to \$150,000, with an estimated \$2.5 million per annum saving to the industry—primarily the lower-end housing and renovation sector. It will also assist housing affordability in a minor way. This change to the threshold will be of most benefit to employing small and medium-sized businesses engaged in residential house construction or renovation, which is an estimated 13,000 businesses. The application of a tiered levy rate for projects over \$1 billion in value will create savings mainly in the resource sector of up to \$10 million, reducing as resource construction falls. The removal of feasibility studies and environmental impact study costs from the leviable indirect cost of work will reduce red tape and result in savings of approximately \$0.5 million per annum. Finally, clarifying levy grey areas and boundaries between resource sector operational work and construction work will greatly reduce red tape and result in an estimated \$2 million to \$3 million in annual savings for the industry.

This bill applies to all building and construction work in Queensland. By reducing red tape and the cost of doing business, it delivers reforms that provide certainty and transparency for businesses and the Queensland workforce. The bill and associated regulatory changes enable significant improvements to the administration of the scheme. These amendments are evidence of the government's commitment to reducing costs for the building and construction industry. It is important to note, however, that the costs incurred by Queenslanders for whom the building and construction work is done will also be significantly reduced.

This bill will remove unnecessary regulatory restrictions on not-for-profit community clubs that provide important services to their members and local communities. Community clubs have long been a great asset to our communities. They play a significant role in terms of entertainment, employment creation, social contribution and provision of recreational facilities to communities. However, the community club industry has struggled in recent times as a result of a number of key external drivers such as softened demand for leisure activities, increased competition from online gambling providers and also, I might add, the constant regulation and red tape that the former Labor government introduced into our community club sector. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Gaming Machine Act 1991 to support clubs to continue to provide these important services to the community. These amendments include the removal of the requirement for an additional club premises to be approved only if it is near the club's existing premises. The removal of this requirement will facilitate larger clubs to establish new club premises in greenfield areas and to assist smaller struggling clubs to prevent their closure.

The bill also removes the requirement for club gaming machine entitlements to be sold within specific regional boundaries. Removing this geographical restriction will allow clubs to trade their entitlements with any licensed club within Queensland according to supply and demand. The bill also makes a minor amendment to the Gaming Machine Act to allow different maximum numbers of gaming machines to be prescribed in a regulation. The government has increased the maximum number of gaming machines allowed under a club licence from 280 to 300. The amendments will allow a regulation to prescribe a maximum number of gaming machines based on the number of sites operating under a licence provided that there are no more than 300 machines at any one venue. However, it is important to note that the government is not changing the overall cap on the number of gaming machines allowed in Queensland for community clubs, which will remain at 24,705. For absolute certainty and for any commentary that will follow I want to repeat that it is important that the government is not changing the overall cap on the number of gaming machines allowed in Queensland for community clubs, which will remain at 24,705. The bill also includes minor amendments to the gaming acts to reduce red tape and increase the efficiency and clarity of the legislation.

The bill will also amend the Casino Control Act 1982 to amalgamate the Breakwater Island Casino Community Benefit Fund, the Reef Hotel Casino Community Benefit Fund and the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund into the Gambling and Community Benefit Fund to create a single streamlined grant program. The amendment is in accordance with the Queensland Commission of Audit recommendation to streamline and consolidate grant programs across government and also supports recent recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office to improve accessibility,

governance and consistency across these funding programs. The amount of grant funding available under the amalgamated program will be the total of the funds currently available across the three casino benefit funds and the Gambling and Community Benefit Fund. The maximum grant will be \$35,000, which reflects the current maximum grant available under the Gambling and Community Benefit Fund. Amalgamating these funding programs into a single program will make applying for a grant simpler for applicants and will also create greater equity in the distribution of available grant funds to community organisations across Queensland. The total amount of funding available for grants under the amalgamation will remain the same. These changes will make it much easier and simpler for community grant applications in Queensland. When a member of a great community organisation walks into a member of parliament's office and asks about grant processes, the member of parliament can now simply refer them to one supergrant process without any change to the amount available.

I thank all those who have served on the casino boards. I thank the operators of the casinos, community clubs and pubs across Queensland who contribute through gambling revenue to make sure that our community grants are about \$50 million a year. I know that all members of parliament are very much appreciative of the grant process. Our local community groups that cannot afford certain things will certainly benefit from having less regulation and red tape when they apply through one simple grant process. The government will ensure that the new board established under the bill is regionally representative of all Queenslanders, with rural and regional and Northern Queensland counterparts catered for on the board. We will ensure appropriate acknowledgement of the casinos in the allocation of grant monies. We will also ensure that turnaround times are reduced. Community groups can feel confident that they can fill out an application for a community grant knowing that it is going to be looked at by a board which is representative of all Queenslanders in a more timely fashion than has been the case.

The bill also repeals the Queensland Travel Agents Act 1988 to deregulate travel agents. More Australian travellers are making their own travel arrangements through the internet, rather than using travel agents. With these changes, consumer protections offered to travel consumers through travel agents acts and the current national compensation scheme are estimated to now cover only one-third of travel transactions and licensed travel agents tell us this situation puts them at a competitive disadvantage. In response to this changing travel market, I and my fellow ministers for consumer affairs have agreed to deregulate the national travel industry through the Travel Industry Transition Plan. We have agreed to repeal state and territory travel agents acts by 30 June 2014 and to close the national travel compensation scheme, the Travel Compensation Fund, by mid to late 2015. On 13 March 2014, the Victorian repeal bill was passed by the Legislative Council of the Victorian Parliament. A repeal bill has also been introduced into the New South Wales Parliament.

Repeal of the Travel Agents Act will contribute to the Queensland government's objective of reducing red tape for business. Queensland travel agents no longer will be required to be licensed with the Queensland government or contribute funds to the national Travel Compensation Fund. In deregulating travel agents, the Travel Industry Transition Plan also provides for a new voluntary industry accreditation scheme. The Australian Federation of Travel Agents is well underway in developing its voluntary accreditation scheme. The scheme will be available to travel agents and suppliers of travel services and is expected to commence on 1 July 2014. Consumers using an ATAS accredited travel business can expect that business to meet certain conduct standards, to have provided proof of their financial solvency, to hold public liability and professional indemnity insurance and to have a complaint handling process. A national media and education campaign is currently being developed to advise travel businesses and travel consumers of their options in the new deregulated environment. Travel consumers will be encouraged to use accredited travel businesses and businesses with insolvency insurance.

This bill demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring a sensible approach to regulation by removing unnecessary legislative impediments and red tape on industry and the community while maintaining important community safeguards. At the request of the Premier, the bill also includes an amendment to the Reprints Act 1992 to support the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel's eLegislation project to develop a new electronic legislative drafting and publishing system. A key objective of this project is to future-proof the Queensland statute book by converting the electronic files for current legislation from proprietary software to eXtensible Markup Language, or XML format. This is a way of storing data that is independent of any particular software or hardware.

The amendment to the Reprints Act 1992 allows the structure of a law, meaning how different provisions of legislation are set out, numbered and grouped with other provisions and headings, to be brought into line with current drafting practice. This will streamline and reduce the cost of the data

conversion process for the Queensland statute book by allowing the structure of Queensland's legislation to be standardised before conversion. The new provision does not allow any changes to be made that will change the effect of a law and is expected to be used to standardise the structure of approximately 25 acts. The new Reprints Act provisions are being included for the specific purpose of facilitating OQPC's eLegislation process and, for this reason, will expire on 31 December 2014 when they are no longer needed.

In conclusion, I thank all stakeholders, for instance, Clubs Queensland which held its awards ceremony the other night. On behalf of the government, I congratulate all winners from right around Queensland who won Clubs Queensland excellence awards. They contribute amazingly to the Queensland economy, employing thousands of young Queenslanders. Whether it is your local footy club, bowls club, golf club, surf club or RSL, they contribute very much to the economy. We want to do something to ease their burden of regulation and red tape, and that is what this bill is all about.

First Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.13 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.