




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.40 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Unhealthy eating is a leading cause of excess weight and chronic disease. Shockingly, more than half of Queensland's population is overweight, that is, 2.3 million or close to 65 per cent of Queensland adults are overweight. That is a terribly sobering thought. Obesity causes serious economic, physical and social damage. This is a serious issue and one that I am pleased to see the Palaszczuk government is addressing.

The Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 amends six Health portfolio acts to support the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring the health of all Queenslanders. The bill amends the Food Act 2000 and will require large food outlets to list the kilojoule content in foods that they sell. We know that takeaway food and eating out often means bigger portions and more calorie-dense foods that are high in fats and sugars, which is good for neither our health nor waistlines, nor is it good in the long term for our economy.

In 2014, 30 per cent of Queensland adults consumed takeaway food at least once a week and a large proportion of those Queenslanders were young people aged 18 to 24. Unfortunately, whilst fast-food options are often very tasty, they are not always the healthiest food choices. This puts people at greater risk of a range of health issues, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Assisting consumers to make better informed and healthier choices when purchasing fast food is essential to combatting these health problems. I have always had an interest in a good diet. My father did not enjoy good health and, as a consequence, my mother was extremely particular about our diet. Her lessons have stayed with me. I have always been concerned about the food that my family and I eat.

This bill will ensure that nutritional information will be available at the cash register for ready-to-eat food, which includes fast-food chains, snack food and drink chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets. These display requirements will apply only to licensed food businesses that have more than 20 outlets in Queensland or 50 outlets in Australia, ensuring that small businesses are not unduly impacted. For consistency and to prevent confusion, food outlets that are not captured by the scheme but voluntarily display nutritional information will be required to comply with the display requirements. Businesses must clearly display the average content in kilojoules for each standard food item. To give some context to the average energy content, businesses will be required to display a statement that the average daily intake is 8,700 kilojoules.

The bill gives food businesses plenty of time to ensure that they are meeting these requirements, with the provisions only applying 12 months after the bill comes into force. It is great to see that some businesses already voluntarily have this information displayed. Applying the scheme across Queensland will help to ensure consumers receive consistent messages about the nutrition of fast food. These changes will roll out over a 12-month transitional period and will allow time for the Queensland government's community education campaign to take effect. This campaign is designed to help

Queenslanders to better understand and correctly use nutritional information on menus. The menu labelling scheme will allow consumers to consider the complete picture and take into account their total energy requirements before they buy. They will take the guesswork out of ensuring that we enjoy a healthy diet.

This is another example of the Palaszczuk government delivering on an election commitment in the Health portfolio. I thank the minister for his dedication to the health of all Queenslanders. I commend the Health Legislation Amendment Bill to the House.