




Speech By
Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (3.20 pm): I rise this afternoon to also make a short contribution to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. We have heard previous speakers—and we will hear it again—reiterating some of those statistics around the concerning rate of obesity in our state: 2.3 million adult Queenslanders, which is around 65 per cent, are obese. It is a serious issue and I am pleased that this Palaszczuk government is making a commitment to address this particular disease.

Obesity causes serious economic, physical and social damage. Economically, obesity costs us through days lost at work, medical costs and loss of wellbeing. Social impacts include a lower quality of life, discrimination and lower wages in some cases. I am encouraged to see that evidence has suggested that our rate of obesity has slowed. However, we must continue to make changes to address this issue. The bill will establish a menu labelling scheme to assist consumers to make better informed and healthier choices when purchasing fast food. The amendments will require licensable food businesses to display for consumers the average energy content of each standard food item and a statement that the average adult daily energy intake is 8,700 kilojoules.

I can reflect back on the weekend. It was a busy weekend. As most of us in this House do, I went out and saw constituents. I was with the member for Everton at one location in his electorate at the Pine Hills baseball trophy day. We were both talking about the importance of sport and also diet in our lives as our youths grow up in that environment. I was also at the Samford bowls club and it was a pleasure to be there. On Saturday it was also great to be with the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety to open the first stage of the Samford Cycle Link from Ferry Grove to Samford, another example of the fine contribution this government is making to infrastructure growth in our state.

I would note that one of the submissions to the Health and Ambulance Services Committee's inquiry into this bill from the Health Foundation of Queensland noted that in recent Queensland surveys more than 90 per cent of the survey participants supported the introduction of a kilojoule menu labelling system in fast-food and snack chains. This will give Queenslanders the information they need to make those healthier fast-food choices. 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. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think you would know yourself that in many cases the fast-food outlets market their advertisements towards youth to hopefully pick up that end of the market and to encourage them to consume their foods. I know sometimes it is a lifestyle challenge. I myself on occasions go down to the local fast-food outlet and purchase some fast food occasionally. It is probably more convenient to make planned choices, shop around and make healthier choices around what this bill will provide: people making a choice based on the kilojoule numbers and the type of food they are purchasing.

I do note that over the weekend I heard in the media that KFC first opened in Australia in 1968 and in Queensland in 1969—just up the road from where I grew up in Chermide—at Kedron. How that has evolved over the years will now encourage people to be aware of their consumption and the quality

and quantity they are purchasing through those fast-food outlets. Unfortunately, fast-food options are not always healthy food choices, putting people at greater risk of a range of health issues including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The bill will require chains that sell ready-to-eat food to provide nutritional information at the point of sale. This includes fast-food chains, snack food and drink chains, bakery chains, cafe chains and supermarkets. Their display requirements will apply only to licensable food businesses that have more than 20 outlets in Queensland or 50 throughout Australia, ensuring that small businesses are not unduly impacted. The menu labelling scheme will allow consumers to consider the complete picture and take into account their own total energy requirements before they purchase their food. I commend the bill to the House.