




Speech By  
**David Janetzki**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

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### **TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (12.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017. The primary aim of the bill is to extend non-exempt shop trading hours from 7 am to 9 pm Monday to Friday and from 7 am to 6 pm on Saturday across regional Queensland. The government also wants to standardise trading hours for Sundays and public holidays across Queensland from 9 am to 6 pm. That means non-exempt stores like Woolworths and Coles will have the opportunity to open and trade longer than ever before—at least another seven hours per week.

Coles and Woolworths are entitled to maximise their returns to shareholders and their market power, whether that be through extra trading or through maximising their particular competitive advantage, but with nearly 80 per cent of the market I think it is appropriate that somebody stands up for small business in Queensland and today that will be the opposition. This is not simply a matter of a potential monopolistic activity; a greater challenge facing the industry generally is monopsony, which is a gathering together of too much buying power.

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Correct. Thank you, member for Whitsunday. The challenge is on all fronts, particularly when I consider hardware stores, corner stores and small supermarkets around regional Queensland. We have heard from the government that there is no evidence about the potential changes in trading hours, but we only need to look to the submissions to see the evidence. The IGA State Board noted that, following the deregulation of trading hours in December 2016, IGA supermarkets lost \$1 million per week in turnover. That loss of turnover reduced wages, which would ultimately lead to a reduction in employment across their network of nearly 130 jobs. Spar, which operates 72 stores in Queensland, reported in the same time a 25 per cent decrease in sales on Saturday alone of non-tobacco related products.

MGA Independent Retailers put the case on behalf of 760 Queensland independent supermarket owners and operators employing more than 21,000 staff. They undertook research by Factivity at the end of last year. That research showed that 85 per cent of those polled were satisfied with opening hours as they are, and they said that opening for an additional seven hours per week and opening on Sundays in more than 20 small regional communities will cost independent supermarkets business.

The Labor government will not know this, but community based and family owned supermarkets, corner stores and grocery stores are often the beating heart and soul of small country towns—and even regional cities like Toowoomba. I think of my own electorate and the contribution made by so many small businesses and family owned businesses in the supermarket game. I think of Betros Bros, which has a history dating back to 1938 and is currently owned and operated by Kerry, Bevan and Murray Betros. I think of their contribution across our community. I think of my own electorate and John Wilson, who has spent a lifetime in supermarkets and operates the Southtown Five Star. I think of the Kelly's Store on the corner of Alderley and Ramsay streets. They have operated their store for over 40 years. It is an icon of the city. I think of the Westridge Fruit Market, which has been operating in the Westridge

Shopping Centre in Kearneys Spring. The Boulus family operate this incredible fruit and vegetable store but they will come under threat because the additional opening hours for the major supermarkets of Woolworths and Coles will lead to decreased opportunities for them.

I think of young men and women wanting to get into the corner store and small supermarket business. Recently, the deputy opposition leader was in Toowoomba with me and we went to meet a young man called Adam Sack, who has operated a corner store on the corner of Greenwattle Street and Glenvale Road. There are young men and women who want to invest in supermarkets and corner stores. All they want is a leg-up but this regulation today is an imposition on their small businesses because it will cost them business and jobs and it will ultimately cost the consumer.

**Mr Emerson:** It is people trying to give it a go.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take that interjection from the member for Indooroopilly. When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I were wandering around Toowoomba meeting small business owners, that is what we heard. They know the challenges facing them, including increasing electricity prices and ever-increasing regulation and red tape.

**Mr Emerson:** The member for Toowoomba North heard the same thing.

**Mr JANETZKI:** He did. The member for Toowoomba North heard it as well. We often hear it from our corner stores and supermarkets. We cannot afford these businesses to close because consumers will then have less choice. We have 14,000 small businesses in the Toowoomba region and they are up against it.

How did we end up in this position? We have to go back to the very beginning and the Trading Hours Review Reference Group. That group was made up of four trade unions and four industry groups. CCIQ as an industry group did their very best to put the interests of small business to this review group. At the public hearings, I asked the chair of that group, Mr Mickel, whether he thought that particular group was representative of commerce and industry across Queensland. He believed it was, but I profoundly disagree because I do not think the voice of over 400,000 small businesses across Queensland was heard loudly enough.

Small corner stores, grocery stores and supermarkets in my electorate go to the very heart of regional and rural communities, but small businesses were not really listened to in this review group process. It was timely that we heard from the small business minister in the last sitting week. I had not heard the small business minister speak but it was timely that she spoke about small business because last week was in fact Small Business Week. We welcomed the federal small business minister, Michael McCormack, to Toowoomba, and I note that the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce did a cracking job putting on a forum with the federal small business minister. I pay tribute to my predecessor, John McVeigh, for getting him there because he heard the interest. After listening to the federal small business minister, I wanted to learn more about what the Labor government is doing with small business, particularly when the voice of small business has not been heard when considering this regulation. I went looking.

**Mr Millar:** What did you find?

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. I found a document called *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016-20* and there are a couple of things in here that I would like to draw out. We know that at the end of last year the government appointed a small business champion who was meant to be representing the interests of small business. I have not heard the small business champion out there championing the interests of small business in relation to this bill. Where is the small business champion on this bill?

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Yes, absolutely muzzled. Where is the small business champion? A couple of hundred grand has been put into that position, and I would have presumed that she would have been out advancing the interests of small business in the face of this regulation, but I digress. I want to get back to the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy* document. The first thing I want to draw out from this Labor government document is the promise that—

The Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy will deliver ... strengthened support for regional small businesses, recognising that they are vital to their communities ...

That is a fail. The government is failing the intent of its strategy document.

I go on to the second thing I want to talk about which is under the heading 'Our vision'. The government wants to see 'business owners working smarter not harder'. I have no idea how the government will fulfil that particular promise when family hardware store owners, who are already working 70-hour weeks across six days, now have to get out of bed at 5 am to compete for an ever-decreasing customer base against the scale, scope and size of our listed hardware store

companies. I have no idea how the government could ever meet that obligation. As far as I am concerned, the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy* is a worthless document after this legislation and should be tossed out.

I now want to turn to a significant problem in my electorate. It is heartening that the government has backflipped on the proposal to allow car dealerships to operate on a Sunday. The committee advised that it heard no support from the motor vehicle dealer industry.

**Mr Costigan:** Funny that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday. There was one person who was right behind these changes that would have seen family car dealers in my electorate opening on a Sunday, and that was the chairman, Mr Mickel.