




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.32 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017. I note that the committee could not agree to pass this bill. The government members of the Finance and Administration Committee recommended changes to the bill. As soon as this bill was brought before the House I received correspondence from two of the major motor dealers in my electorate: Bill Hull Car Centre and Ken Mills Toyota. Jacqui Trace of Bill Hull Car Centre wrote to me and said—

Deb, we are concerned about the recommendations from the trading hours review that will directly impact our business.

It goes on—

The change to trading hours will not increase business. The same number of vehicles will be spread over a 7-day period, having a direct impact on our operating costs, which will ultimately impact the consumer.

Ken Mills of Ken Mills Toyota wrote to me and said—

Most rural retailers would oppose the proposed Sunday trading. While it may work for tourism type business, it is our feeling that it would be detrimental to most business types.

The Labor government has no idea in this space. It brought flawed legislation before this House that would have significantly impacted the retailers in the motor vehicle, caravan, motorcycle and farm machinery sector. It took the LNP opposition to voice serious concerns about the potential negative outcomes for this industry to ensure the exclusion of motor and caravan dealers from the legislation. It took months of active campaigning by the Motor Trades Association and a large volume of submissions from business owners just like Jacqui Trace and Ken Mills to try to have their voices heard by this Labor government. I congratulate all these groups and small business owners on their work, but it should never have been necessary in the first place. Why waste everyone's time? Why would the Labor government put these businesses through the stress and worry? It simply does not make sense.

The legislation that sits before the House that the committee had an opportunity to look at will still negatively impact many other small businesses and independent retailers across rural and regional Queensland in particular. Let me talk about IGA Kingaroy and Yarraman owner John Hyslop and Kilcoy IGA owner Grant Prince, who explained to me that this bill will reduce employment in regional Queensland. This is a fact that they, the business owners themselves, have observed from the viewpoint of independent retailers following deregulation of trading hours in South-East Queensland. I have received correspondence and met with Roz White from White's IGA Maroochydore. She wrote to me expressing opposition to the bill. She explained that small independent retailers generate hundreds of millions of dollars into the Queensland economy, but the government has ignored evidence that deregulation leads to less employment.

Let us not forget the negative impact this bill will have on small hardware stores—stores like the great Aird's Hardware in the main street in Nanango owned by dedicated, passionate locals Steve and Robert Aird. Previously large hardware businesses have been restricted to operating from 9 am on a

Sunday, while smaller independent operators could open earlier if desired. Hardware Australia has pointed out that this legislation presumes that allowing small hardware businesses to open from 6 am will generate more sales. This is unproven and generally unfair. The cost to these small businesses would be additional wages and staff required to work the longer hours which ultimately could force small hardware stores to close on Sundays due to it simply being unviable. I also quote from a statement from the MGA Independent Retailers group that states—

Regional Queensland does not want a Brisbane-based solution forced upon them. They are much more concerned about maintaining real competition, real choice and keeping local jobs.

I understand that the minister has now circulated some 32 amendments to try to fix and tidy up her mess. She should have done that the first time and saved everyone a whole lot of time, money and heartache. It is another embarrassment from another failed minister of this Palaszczuk government who espoused the virtues of these reforms but could not get the committee's support for the bill. The minister claims that the amendments implement important reform measures to support up to an additional 1,000 full-time-equivalent jobs. One would have to ask if those amendments moved today by the minister were so great why are they only being rushed in as part of a last-minute attempt by the minister to save face?

I again note that the committee could not agree to pass this bill as it sat before them. Even government members could not agree to the changes to their own bill. I support the local motor dealers that I have spoken about—Jacqui Trace, a hardworking local businesswoman in the town of Kingaroy, and Ken Mills, a hardworking local businessman and employer of so many people in the townships of Mundubbera, Kingaroy and also the Sunny Coast. These are people who are voicing their concerns on behalf of rural and regional Queensland. It is embarrassing that this Labor government needs to be forced into the changes because of the hard work of the LNP opposition. I congratulate and thank all of my colleagues on this side of the House for fighting so hard for these small businesses who represent the backbone of rural and regional Queensland.