




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017. The Palaszczuk Labor government is a government for the people. We were elected in a crushing swing and have worked hard to maintain the support and the best interests of all Queenslanders. We have accomplished this through numerous social and humanitarian reforms but have equally accomplished this through economic reforms. We are a government with a primary goal to encourage jobs growth, the development of skills and ensuring Queensland offers a healthy, sustainable environment where skills and abilities can evolve into thriving and successful businesses. We are a government that gets the job done and gets results for Queensland.

Today we are debating an important bill—one which contains the most significant changes to Queensland's retail trading hours in more than two decades. In my electorate of Ipswich I talk to many small business owners and understand many of the struggles they go through in trying to establish and maintain successful and thriving businesses. Many of the issues small business owners face are due to red tape. Presently, there are 99 specific trading hours provisions that place a significant regulatory burden on not just businesses but workers and consumers. I am all for fairness and accountability for businesses, but 99 provisions are excessive, costly and create far more problems for businesses than they prevent. I thank the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Grace Grace, for taking the necessary steps to replace the 99 specific trading hours provisions for non-exempt shops with six legislated allowable trading hours provisions. This will mean that our constituents will not have to read and comprehend all 99 provisions contained in a staggering 40-plus pages of trading hours orders should they decide to open a business.

Reducing the number to six will mean a more accessible and fair business environment which will boost the creation of new businesses and encourage business development. I commend the Premier and the minister for giving important consideration to the inclusion of three important additions made by the committee which were tabled in its report: to include the Cairns CBD in the defined tourist area permitting trade to 10 pm Monday to Saturday and to 9 pm Sundays and most public holidays; to refer to the appropriate street addresses for Westfield Chermside and Westfield Garden City shopping centres to remove any doubt that the whole of the shopping complex is covered in the event of any expansion; and to exclude the application of new extended hours to motor vehicle or caravan retailers to maintain the existing trading hours. I know that local car dealerships in my electorate are very happy about that particular part of this amendment bill.

Ms Grace: Thank you for your lobbying.

Ms HOWARD: It was a pleasure. These three recommendations have all been accepted by the government which emphasises that we are a government that listens to the people. I take this opportunity to highlight an important feature of this bill regarding Sunday trading hours. This bill standardises Sunday trading hours for those communities that already have it. Any areas that do not already have Sunday trading are still able to apply to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission

to opt in to Sunday trading. No applications to further extend trading hours can be made to the QIRC for a five-year period. This five-year moratorium will remove uncertainty, allowing business retailers to plan ahead with confidence.

Non-government members have raised claims that these changes to trading hours would have a strong negative impact on smaller retail traders. While we are a government that sympathises with the concerns of Queenslanders and will never turn a deaf ear in their direction, there is no evidence to support these concerns. In fact, the John Mickel review found little evidence that trading hours restrictions have a negative impact on the viability of small retail traders and actually found evidence showing extended trading hours for large retailers have positive flow-on impacts for small retailers. The initial John Mickel review also found a positive increase in jobs and employment in areas where restrictions on trading hours have been loosened.

I commend the Premier and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations for listening to the concerns of workers that they would be required to work longer hours due to changes in trading hours. This bill will ensure that all non-exempt shops must close at 6 pm on Christmas Eve. This government is serious about making sure workers get the time they need after the busy Christmas trading period to rest and to enjoy Christmas with their family and friends. The Palaszczuk government is a government that stands up for business and workers. It is a government that will always ensure their interests are factored into our plans for Queensland. In debating this bill, I hope everyone will see that it is necessary for encouraging a competitive and thriving retail sector in Queensland—one that stands on equal footing with other states. I commend this bill to the House.