




Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (5.18 pm): I rise to speak on the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 2017. I would like to acknowledge the committee and the minister for all of the hard work that has been done to consult, listen to and act on the views of a variety of stakeholders, including consumers and small businesses. In Queensland, there are 99 different trading hours provisions collated in more than 40 pages of orders. This is hindering the ability of retailers to grow and meet changing consumer preferences. The changes proposed in this bill would have replaced these excessive stipulations with seven clear and consistent trading hours conditions. We are doing this because we want to empower and enable our state's businesses to best service the needs of modern Queensland. By updating this legislation, the Palaszczuk government is delivering on its commitment to create an environment in which Queensland is the best place for businesses to start, grow and employ.

We know it is important for regulation to be balanced and fair. This bill helps to deliver better working conditions to Queenslanders and creates greater flexibility for retailers. Better regulation for small business is crucial to the sector, and that is why the Palaszczuk government has been working hard to improve regulatory processes. We have been doing much of this work through our Better Regulation Taskforce. The Better Regulation Taskforce is providing expert advice to government on regulatory issues of most concern to small businesses and recommending actions and activities to streamline regulation.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering tangible outcomes for small businesses in Queensland unlike the pie-in-the-sky promises put forward by what has become a lazy LNP that have no basis in reality. Those opposite continue to make the claim that they support small business, but let's have a look at the facts. During their short time in office the LNP ripped the heart out of government support for Queensland's small business sector. They abolished the small business commissioner, depriving the Queensland small business sector of a voice at the national policy table. They cut funding to the hugely successful Mentoring for Growth program. They made significant cuts to online business services and slashed 19 per cent of the staff from the department responsible for supporting small business. That is before we even start talking about red-tape reduction.

Referring to the LNP's time in office, the Queensland Chamber of Commerce & Industry Red Tape Survey report from April 2015 stated—

The burden of red tape has intensified over the past two years—

obviously referring to the then LNP government—

and continues to adversely impact the performance of Queensland businesses.

That same survey found one in four businesses felt growth was hindered by red tape and were disappointed the LNP government had let them down. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government will continue strengthening the small business sector with policy that makes sense for working families, business owners and consumers. For example, under new reforms, independent retailers who operate

one shop can increase their allowable staff numbers from 20 to 30 without being subject to the additional restrictions of larger chains. If a business operates a number of shops, they can increase their allowable staff numbers from 60 to 100. This supports businesses to grow and increase employment. Other proposed reforms will allow us to better cater for visitors to tourist hubs such as Port Douglas and during major events like the Commonwealth Games.

We understand that constant change hinders small business more than it helps. That is why a five-year freeze on further trading hours extension applications for non-exempt shops will be made to deliver a period of permanency so that businesses can focus on growing and employing. We have heard the concerns of small businesses with respect to how these revised trading hours will impact their operations. I do note the review reference group cited the Australian Productivity Commission, which found consistently high small business participation rates of around 90 per cent in both regulated and deregulated states and territories. We appreciate that a number of Australian states have had deregulated retail trading hours since 1996. However, unlike Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, our government acknowledges that a regulated environment is the most appropriate approach to balance wider economic benefits with the need to support retailers in what is the most decentralised state in Australia. The Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, which I chair, was briefed on the review reference group's report. We will monitor the impact of reforms as they are implemented.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the estimated value of these proposed changes in this bill cannot be ignored: a \$200 million boost to the Queensland economy per year and the ability for the industry to support almost 1,000 additional jobs on an ongoing basis. We think Queensland retailers deserve to be able to evolve and operate in line with today's consumer expectations. The reforms outlined in this bill will stimulate growth in the economy and put more Queenslanders into jobs right across our state. I commend the bill to the House.