




Speech By  
**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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**LIQUOR AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.37 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Liquor and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. It really is a pleasure to follow the member for Kawana—I think. We heard interjections earlier that this is a ‘saving grace bill’ and all of those sorts of things. I just want to make it abundantly clear to the member for Brisbane Central that, in relation to the amendments before the House, the green—do you know what that is? The green is the explanatory notes. The explanatory notes state—

For amendments to be moved during consideration in detail by  
The Honourable Yvette D’Ath MP  
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and  
Minister for Training and Skills

The explanatory notes state—

The amendments to the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990* to be moved during consideration in detail establish Easter Sunday as an open trading day for all non-exempt (large) shops in south-east Queensland.

There is no doubt that this is an amendment in relation to a mistake. As we now know, it is known as the ‘saving grace bill’. Coming back to the bill itself, I make the point that the member for Kawana has well and truly covered all aspects of the bill, so I will talk more about the committee process.

Let me say, first of all, that we were advised late on the 14th that we were to table this report by the 24th. It was after hours so our secretariat had gone home. We had nine days to report and we really did work hard. I can assure all members of the House that members on this side of the House were enthusiastic participants in that process. We were keen to see this go through, but we were also very keen to make sure that people out there in the marketplace had an opportunity to give their views in relation to this backflip by the government.

We made sure that we did have open hearings. We made sure that we gave every participant an opportunity to voice their concerns. I thank the secretariat for the amazing work they did in putting this report together and in pulling together all of the evidence, and of course I thank my colleagues on the committee. I have to say that we were almost in full agreement on the report. We agreed that the bill should be passed. There was just one little thing—one main thing, I should say—that we could not quite get the members opposite over the line on, and that was to stick with 12 extended hours permits rather than reducing it to six. We could not quite get them over the line, but it turns out that there may be the need for an amendment in the later part of the debate on this. If that is the case, we might have all 12 extended trading hour permits available to the people in those—

**Miss Barton:** Don’t tell Grace.

**Mr CRANDON:** No, we will not tell Grace. The main stumbling block, as I said, was the reduction from 12 to six. I want to point out that we got this to press late on the 24th. It was after five o’clock on the 24th. Normally there would not be anything in the media when something is tabled that late. It was tabled I think at quarter past 5, by the time it got to the Table Office. The Table Office stayed back late

on that Friday afternoon to make sure that it was tabled properly. At about quarter past five, or sometime after that, the report was tabled by the Table Office. The media did report on it the next morning. Apart from the fact that they said words to the effect that we should pass the bill, they said more about the statement of reservation from members on this side than they did in relation to the body of the report.

It is worth noting that some of the comments that they made were along the lines of, 'People cannot really agree on what the evidence supplied was.' It is worth talking about one particular piece of the statement of reservation where it refers to Professor Najman. The professor, as quoted in our statement of reservation, states—

What we find in our research is that changing the structural parameters changes the behaviour. If you increase the cost of alcohol, you reduce the consumption. If you reduce the number of venues, you reduce the consumption. If you reduce the number of hours of opening, you reduce the consumption. Irrespective of what people think, feel, believe or want, it follows. It happens. We have reason to suspect that that is what will happen here.

In the professor's contribution back in 2014 and since 2014 until now I am wondering whether it was a scientific experiment by the professor, because he relied so much on so much evidence. Before I go into that evidence, let me quote the member for Pine Rivers in following on from what the professor said. The member for Pine Rivers, perhaps trying to get him to change his mind or to clarify things, said—

Couldn't it be that some of those findings that you refer to that reduce consumption in venues are coming through your data because you are not actually capturing consumption through other places like consumption in the home, for example?

**Ms Boyd:** Please tell me what I was thinking!

**Mr CRANDON:** I take your interjection, member for Pine Rivers: you can speak about it when you stand to talk about this. When you get up to talk about this, you will be able to speak about it. Let me get back to the professor. The professor, in answer to a question from the member for Pine Rivers, stated—

The answer is no—unambiguously no. The reason for that is that, firstly, we are relying on—I do not know; I could find for you, and I did find for the government—20 studies around the world in different cultural contexts and different circumstances, all with the same result. I could not find one study which was contrary to that result.

This exchange lays bare the backflip of the government, as a government MP was calling into question the views of a witness who had previously been held up as one of the experts on the way the government's lockout laws were designed. The opposition, as has already been pointed out by the member for Kawana, has been absolutely consistent in maintaining its position on this. The opposition has consistently maintained that the government's policy direction in the area was flawed and, interestingly, Professor Najman has now backflipped. In fact, if you read through the transcript, he actually backflips on some of his own material that he provided to our committee in writing. I refer members to the witness statements. He backflipped and said that the one o'clock thing is not all that important—I am paraphrasing—and he does not want to get locked in on that. He talks about the length of time people are drinking and so forth.

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** Well, he did. Back in the day he wanted people to be locked out, but he did not receive any phone calls from anybody to ask him whether or not—

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** Absolutely you have to feel sorry for him because he did not get any phone calls from anyone. This came out of the blue to the professor, if you read the transcript. He was not aware that it was going to happen. It has happened and he had to try to save face. He has put some very good scientific material together over an extended period of time. As he says, he provided for the government 20 studies from around the world and they were uncontroversial. 'Unambiguously no' was the answer to the question from the member for Pine Rivers. What we have is a bill to reverse a mistake by this government. Members opposite were told again and again. Every time they talked to people in the industry they were told the same thing: 'It won't work; we can do it a better way.' Yet they persevered. They pushed on. They drafted the laws in this way and now they find themselves in a situation where they have to do a backflip.

We have an issue with the backflip because of the same question rule and whether or not some of these things will actually get up because they may not have the full support of the House. Time will tell. I will finish my contribution by repeating what the view is from Professor Najman. He has backed away from the lockouts. He considers that other elements of the legislation simply have not worked. Thank goodness this government has backed away from all of that so-called evidence and they have seen the common sense of unwinding the laws that were so ill-thought-through in the first place.