




Speech By
John-Paul Langbroek
MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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**POLICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (IDENTITY AND BIOMETRIC CAPABILITY)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (2.40 pm): I rise to speak specifically about changes to the Liquor Act and its application during the Commonwealth Games which is addressed in the Police and Other Legislation (Identity and Biometric Capability) Amendment Bill 2018. As a proud Gold Coast local and the shadow minister for the Commonwealth Games, I have always been excited about the myriad of opportunities that the games will present to our city. Together with our community, I am looking forward to showing off our vibrant city to other Commonwealth countries and welcoming interstate and overseas visitors. We are home, as members will know, to some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. We have amazing local businesses, diverse communities and a reputation for being famous for fun but, of course, the greatest thing about the Gold Coast and Queensland is its people.

There is no doubt that the Gold Coast is truly unique which is why, along with the Gold Coast community and businesses, I am perplexed by the Labor government's insistence to apply Glasgow's Commonwealth Games liquor policy to the Gold Coast. Whether it is licensing hours or instructions to volunteers about how we should be greeting visitors, we do not want a copy and paste version of the Glasgow games when it comes to policies for our games. The Gold Coast is vastly different to Glasgow, yet Labor continues to fall back on to the excuse that if it worked in Glasgow it must be the best plan for the coast.

Usually I am supportive of legislation that has precedent from interstate or even overseas jurisdictions, but in this instance it is ridiculous to expect one rule that worked for Glasgow to be the best rule for the Gold Coast. This is just lazy legislation. Even Billy Connolly, the Big Yin, would not say that Glasgow is anything like the Gold Coast. In fact, Billy Connolly actually said about Glasgow, 'The great thing about Glasgow is that if there's a nuclear attack it will look exactly the same afterwards.' Admittedly, that was before the last Commonwealth Games where Glasgow was made over, but when I lived in England and visited Scotland you did not go to Glasgow, you visited Edinburgh. Glasgow now has turned itself into a great events city because of the changes of the Commonwealth Games, but it is still not the Gold Coast. This is something about which Gold Coasters are very perplexed, that these licensing laws have been applied as they were in Glasgow.

Our games are our unique games and should be showcasing Queensland and Australia with policies and plans designed for our unique city. We had more liberal trading hours for the Commonwealth Games in 1982 when I was at university in Brisbane and for Expo in 1988 when I just returned from the UK. In the 21st century, Labor has taken us back to the 20th century when it comes to licensing hours for our Commonwealth Games. This is just a missed opportunity for our city. Once again, the Gold Coast has been ripped off by a Labor government that just does not get our city. During the games our city will be buzzing—restaurants will be open for 24 hours, supermarkets will be open for 24 hours, the light rail will be operating for 24 hours and train services will be operating for 24 hours, but our pubs and clubs get one measly extra hour to trade. To add insult to injury, the extended hours for the Commonwealth Games trading period is deducted from the standard six-day allocation given to licensees.

I also note that the bill only extends trading hours in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts where there are 232 liquor licences. I acknowledge that they both are in the Surfers Paradise electorate but, as the member for Currumbin mentioned to me, I think there are nearly 70 licensees in Coolangatta not able to take advantage of this extension and, of course, all the other areas—Pimpama, Ormeau, Nerang, Mudgeeraba, Burleigh. As the Queensland Hotels Association rightly pointed out, considering Commonwealth Games venues and increased visitor accommodations span the length of the Gold Coast including locations such as Coolangatta, Currumbin, Robina, Nerang, Southport, Carrara, Runaway Bay and Coomera, the extended trading hours should be applied more broadly than just the two safe night precincts of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach. The Gold Coast is a linear city and visitors will be staying from Coolangatta to Coomera.

Labor has made it clear that public transport will be the best way to get around during the games, but what will our visitors in Currumbin, Coomera, Pimpama, Ormeau, Nerang, Mudgeeraba, Burleigh or Broadwater do? They cannot get on the light rail to Surfers or Broadbeach. We certainly do not want them partying in suburban areas where there is no targeted police presence. It is disappointing that there has not been a more comprehensive plan to ensure our city is a fun and safe place during the games. Again, I reiterate that this is a missed opportunity. Labor has been in power for almost four years, yet this plan seems like it was put together at the last minute with not a lot of thought.

In fact, that is the point that I made—that over the last year the issues concerning the Attorney-General and the extended licensing hours have been quite clear. The Attorney-General flatly refused to consider any extension of trading hours, yet the small business minister, as I think I mentioned yesterday, said that restaurants and cafes will be able to open as supermarkets will be. That is where I made the point about confusion between ministers. Labor has just taken a carbon copy of Glasgow's plan, because it was too lazy to come up with a plan that would show off the Gold Coast whilst balancing the need to keep our patrons safe. Upon reading the explanatory notes, it is clear that consultation could have been a lot more comprehensive. It seemed to me that some really valid suggestions made by industry stakeholders were shut down. These included, and I quote from the statement of reservation—

That the extended hours for the Commonwealth Games trading period not be deducted from the standard usual 6 day allocation given to licensees; to expand extended trading hours to encompass all licensed venues in the entire Gold Coast local government area; and that the Safe Night precincts (SNPs) across the state where other Commonwealth Games events occur be afforded the same extended hours as the Gold Coast SNPs.

I expected more from a minister who said in his introductory speech—

The Palaszczuk government recognises that the Commonwealth Games presents a significant opportunity for restaurants, pubs, clubs, bars and night clubs to showcase their exceptional hospitality to visitors from around the world. The government also recognises that due to the massive influx to the Gold Coast in particular, demand for these services will be high.

I point out that the Commonwealth Games beginning on 4 April will be almost an immediate roll-on from the Easter weekend. We will have significant visitors in our city and in our state from Easter, the weekend before the opening of the Commonwealth Games, who will be affected as well by the restrictions on Good Friday trading and the general rules about public holiday trading that have led to difficulties for small business operators. It would have been good to have some concessions potentially at least for this year, but that was also something not considered by the government. I expected the minister to understand how important these games are for our city and for him to legislate accordingly. Like the M1, once again Labor has left it too late to make any changes that would benefit the Commonwealth Games.

Given that this bill contains provisions for counterterrorism and organised crime policing operations, we will not oppose the bill today. Whilst I wholeheartedly support the legislation that makes our city safer, it is really disappointing that Labor was too lazy to come up with a better plan to ensure that businesses and patrons get the most out of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.