




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2018

LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.43 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Liquor Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018 [\[590\]](#).

Tabled paper: Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [\[591\]](#).

The bill I present to the House was presented in the previous parliament. It had the support of the committee. Licence fees for small pubs are based on volume of litreage sold in recognition of smaller hotels. It was relative to the size of the enterprise. However, today we have inherited a charge, the pub licence fee, that is the same across-the-board. Last time I checked it was about \$3,700.

This issue first came to my attention in a handwritten letter with scratchy writing from a small pub owner in a remote area that said his accountant had told him he had made \$38,000 net profit last year and that it was not really worth him owning the pub and keeping it open for the community. He is paying over \$3,500, the same as the Breakfast Creek Hotel, for his pub licence fee and he is not sure that is fair. To put it in perspective, that pub is the only private business in that town. If the local MP wants to go to town and meet with people the pub is the only meeting place. If people want to go and talk about things or have a community meeting they go to the pub. If you are a tourist travelling through the area and you want to get directions on the lonely roads you pull into the pub. It is important we do everything possible to help these remote pubs. This is a way that we can help them.

I have had various discussions over the years with previous attorneys-general about how it can be done. There are some difficulties in doing it equitably. No solution is perfect, I will admit, but the best way that we have found was to apply the classification of 'very remote Australia' under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard, as acknowledged in the explanatory notes. Using that classification, there are 110 venues around Queensland, which could represent a cost to the government of around \$300,000 in forgone revenue. I would not say it is a huge cost to taxpayers. It is a cost, I acknowledge that, but one might say that does not sound like too much. The recommended reduction is from \$3,500 down to \$350. I have had a positive response to the bill. People think the cost reduction would make a difference to their operations. The sentiment from the government would also make a big difference to these people. It would be a very good thing for this parliament to pass the bill.

The bill has had support from the Queensland Hotels Association; Clubs Queensland—with some qualifications; the Quilpie Shire Council; and the Mount Isa City Council. In the last parliament about 14 pubs made submissions. I can assure the House that a large volume of correspondence came through to my office saying they hope we can get this bill through. I have had a number of conversations with angry publicans saying, 'You didn't bloody deliver on that.' Pardon my French. I retract that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): I ask you to withdraw.

Mr KATTER: I withdraw. There is a real appetite for this amendment. I have had meaningful discussions with the government and the committee. It is a good initiative that the parliament could implement to help small pubs in remote areas. It is not only about the pub or the town, but also about Outback tourism and trying to preserve the community fabric in those areas that are under stress. I ask for the support of the House on this bill.

First Reading

Mr KATTER (Traeger—KAP) (12.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.