




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill. Hotels and clubs are often the post office, the weather recorder, the contact point for the RFDS and, as the previous member said, the tourist information one-stop shop. They are the hub of so many communities in my electorate. I am pleased to hear that members from both sides of the House are visiting pubs in my electorate. I say to them to please keep it up as they need your support.

The intent of this legislation is to amend the Liquor Act to financially assist the commercial hotel owners in rural Queensland. The concessional fee will mean that the pubs and clubs in very remote areas will be required to pay only 10 per cent of the licence fee, which currently costs a minimum of \$3,757 per year. As the bill stands, it draws a line from just to the east of Mitchell and Dirranbandi. Those pubs to the west will receive the concession. Under this bill, those to the east of that line will not receive the concession. The pubs in Mitchell will get the concession, but just 147 kilometres down the Warrego Highway the pub at Yuleba will not receive the concession. Both communities are small. The hotels there both have a limited number of patrons. The areas are seriously drought affected and have rising operational costs, such as the cost of electricity. The only difference in circumstances affecting the pubs in Mitchell or Yuleba, Cunnamulla or Surat is a line on the map from the ABS categorisation. The ABS index is not fixed. For example, in 2011, the index included an area around Injune in my electorate but the updated index in 2016 did not include Injune. The bill in its original form is estimated to capture 110 hotels and pubs. If the bill is to have a positive impact on all pubs and clubs that are doing it tough owing to the drought, its scope must be broadened.

The hotels and community clubs, which also include sporting clubs and RSLs, are vital in so many communities. The operators of these venues are great family run small businesses. They bring communities together. When communities are experiencing tough times caused by the drought and the population drift, these pubs and clubs are pivotal. The LNP and I support not only the drought affected farmers and graziers but also the drought affected small businesses and rural communities across Queensland that have no end date for this relentless drought. I urge members to support the bill and also the amendments that the LNP has foreshadowed to this legislation.