Speech By

Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LAST (Burdekin—LNP) (6.44 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on this bill. I support the bill and the amendments as proposed by my colleague, the member for Toowoomba South. When talking about many of these rural pubs and isolated hotels across Queensland and the role that they play in their respective communities, I pick up what the member for Broadwater was saying: they are much, much more than a waterhole for these tiny towns and rural communities—in many cases they are the heart of the community. They are the meeting place in those communities. I have been to hotels where they hold wakes following a funeral. If one looks at the recent disaster that has unfolded, in particular in North-West Queensland, all the vision on the TV was of those affected graziers meeting at the local pub. That became the place where they all mustered. That became the place for visiting ministers and shadow ministers et cetera to go to when they went to those communities to meet and talk with those graziers and affected residents. For that reason it becomes vitally important that we do everything we can to keep these facilities operational and functioning in these little tiny towns.

When I was living in Cape York in a little place called Laura, during the wet season the pub would have been lucky to sell a beer a day because no-one could get in and out of the place. The pub would go for three or four months where their trade was significantly reduced. Reduction in the fees makes perfect sense when you look at some of these tiny little places like Laura which for three months of the year has no income. I support the bill and I support more broadly the role that these hotels and these tiny rural pubs play in our more remote areas of Queensland. Everything that we can do to support these businesses, particularly in times of drought when times are tough, when the money is not flowing through the community, we should be doing.