




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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LIQUOR (RURAL HOTELS CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.22 pm): I rise to join others in supporting the Liquor (Rural Hotels Concession) Amendment Bill and want to acknowledge the member for Traeger's efforts in bringing this before this parliament and before a previous parliament in a slightly different form. I want to thank the Attorney-General for the way in which she has considered this matter and the way in which this is a great example of how the parliament can come together and see a proposal that does not necessarily come from the government. Unlike the situation, say, in a previous parliament where we had a minority government, a majority government can listen to sensible proposals and look at how they can be improved to deliver outcomes and benefits for the people of Queensland, and I think this is a great example of that occurring.

To that point, like so many other people in this parliament, I have had the chance to visit a great many wonderful hotels that will be impacted upon by this legislation. I do not want to turn this into a long list of the pubs that I have had a drink in—

An honourable member: A pub crawl.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I think we heard a couple of speeches that were effectively pub crawls, but let us come to the point of how vitally important these institutions are to communities right across Queensland and in particular communities in these areas that are classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as very remote. We have heard from a number of contributors in tonight's debate how vital and important these hotels—and indeed I make brief reference to something that I will not make mention of again—and clubs in these communities are in that they provide assistance to the communities. They are the sponsors, they are the meeting places, they are the collecting places for a great many activities in these communities and without these institutions there would be a lessening of community in these remote locations.

I want to give an example in the context of my role as Minister for Racing of how important racing is in country communities. There would be very few—in fact, there are none; I have checked this—clubs that are operated in such a way that they might be caught by something that I also will not make reference to, but they certainly get a lot of sponsorship from the local hotels in those communities. That is a very important part of the lifeblood of these communities in terms of not just the ongoing and day-to-day operations of hotels and other community organisations and community clubs that serve liquor in these communities but also the way in which they help those occasional community events like the race days in these communities. I will mention one pub that I particularly want to highlight. I think it was about 5 July last year when I was on the road in my role as minister for local government. I was travelling on the Mitchell Highway between Cunnamulla and Charleville—

Ms Leahy: The Gladstone.

Mr HINCHLIFFE:—and I called in at the Gladstone Hotel at Wyandra. I note the interjection from the local member. It was great to have a chance to visit the Gladstone and enjoy its hospitality. On that occasion I was driving so it was a double sars for me, but I am sure there will be other opportunities to

get back to Wyandra and make sure that we support that vital institution in that local community. I look forward to doing that in the future and I look forward to the way in which this measure can help community hotels in remote communities right across the state.

I make mention of that particularly because I do think it would be great if we could have a method of applying liquor licences that accounted for the volumes or the profit margins of these hotels, but unfortunately it seems that the Australian Constitution, the High Court tells us, does not allow us to do that. That is why we have to come up with more creative methods to resolve those problems and I commend, as I said at the outset, the member for Traeger and the Attorney-General for helping guide this outcome to bring about a good result.

In my final remarks to the House in support of the bill as it is proposed to be amended by the Attorney-General I want to say that other amendments that might be before the House are a real concern. If we had this situation in place back in 2002, it would mean that all of the hotels in Brisbane, which was drought declared, would be covered by those amendments. I encourage people to support the bill as supported by the Attorney-General.