



Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (6.27 pm): I am—

Ms Richards: Shocked—shocked!

Mr O'ROURKE: Absolutely shocked! I actually do not think those opposite have read the report and definitely have not read the statement of reservation. When we look at the investment by the Palaszczuk government into the support of our small businesses, we know that small businesses are following us in Labor. We do way more than the LNP has ever done.

I rise to speak in support of the Trading (Allowable Hours) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As a member of the Education, Employment and Training Committee, we reviewed the trading hours across the state. We received 28 submissions from retail and peak business bodies, unions and retailers. The committee understood the differences in every location and we went out there to actually listen to those communities. We held hearings across the state in Brisbane, Cairns, Mossman, Mount Isa and Townsville, with 47 witnesses giving evidence at seven public hearings, and going to these locations and speaking to people who lived and worked in the area gave us a real understanding of the difference in locations given the local impacts.

For example, when we were in Mossman we heard from Tara Bennett, the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Port Douglas Daintree, in part, where she wanted to add on to some of the points that had already been covered by the mayor and the chamber of commerce. When the mayor opened, he spoke about the 600,000 visitors they had prior to COVID. Of that, 280,000 visitors were day visitors, which means they have one opportunity for them to come in and spend some money in the region. Also, bearing in mind that Port Douglas is world famous for its Sunday markets, they have the greatest influx of day visitors on Sundays. Not only are they attending the markets, they are shopping up and down the main street. If not, they are taking a family trip up to the Mossman Gorge. Coles and Woolworths play a critical role in delivering the necessary services for visitors.

In recent years, particularly this year, the drive market has gone gangbusters throughout Queensland. The Port Douglas region is one of the last stopping-off points for people heading up to the cape. They need those services open on a Sunday or on a public holiday because they are doing their \$300 or \$400 shop and it is probably one of the last big places they can shop for meat and vegetables until they get to Coen. Ms Bennett also spoke on the self-catering nature of Port Douglas. There are a lot of strata title properties and, as such, people are coming in thinking that they will go out to the restaurants and cafes, but they are expecting to be able to cater for themselves for probably 1½ meals each day.

In the domestic visitor market, many arrive on Saturdays as they have just finished their work for the week. They may arrive late so they are looking to do their bulk shop on the Sunday. It was not necessarily about increasing visitation with what they are seeing; it was about meeting business expectations and also maximising their opportunity to spend visitor dollars in the region. Ms Bennett

explained they are not built as a high-volume model; they are a high-yield destination, so they need to be able to maximise the opportunity for people to spend when they are there because that is the style of visitor that they have been attracting for decades now. She also spoke about the importance of the job opportunities that it provides to the local youth to make their own income and to get a start, particularly with Coles and Woolworths, and to learn through their programs. This is a really great opportunity for the youth of our region who do not have access to as many opportunities as are available in larger populations.

This visit to Mossman really demonstrated the importance of committee work and listening to the regions. There were also public briefings by the Office of Industrial Relations in the Department of Education. From the information that was provided through this consultation process we made nine recommendations. In part, the committee recommends the act be amended to refine the process for consideration of 'special event' applications by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. It also recommended, where there is a special event approved by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, that the commission has the power to make an order supporting staff voluntary work requirements. It recommended that the categories for non-exempt shops core trading hours be reduced to four: South-East Queensland area, which remained unchanged; tourism area amended to include Mossman and Port Douglas tourism areas; regional areas; and other areas. There was strong support from submitters for no changes to trading hours for hardware stores and those selling motor vehicles or caravans. Also, there was no change to the definition for independent retail shop. We also recommended that the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 be extended for an additional 12 months to 31 August 2023.

Across Queensland in 2021 there were approximately 266,000 retail employees, or 10.3 per cent of total employment. The retail industry is the second largest employer after health care. We need to ensure we balance the needs of retailers and that of their employees and I believe this bill addresses this. I would like to put on the record my thanks to all retail workers during the COVID period for providing food and other items for our communities. They have done an absolutely amazing job and I congratulate them on what they did during very difficult times. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members and our secretariat. It was great to travel around Queensland and understand what is happening in the regions and the impacts of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.