



Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022

**TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

**Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.35 pm): I rise to make my own contribution on the Trading (Allowable Hours) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, both in my capacity as the member for Southern Downs and as the deputy chair of the Education, Employment and Training Committee. I would like to thank the member for Redlands for her words. We did have a very good trip around Queensland investigating the operations of the existing act. As the member for Rockhampton just said, it was a great chance for us to get to know each other.

With your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to say something I did not get a chance to say when I spoke earlier. I wanted to thank the member for Redlands for the way in which she chaired our estimates committee. I do not know whether saying so is the kiss of death. I do not intend it in that sense. It was done well and I thank her for her stewardship.

Getting back to the bill, I note that the member for Redlands is amazed that we have not telegraphed to the government in our statement of reservation what we would do. As the member for Buderim has said, with great gusto, we do things on an individualistic basis. We believe in proper process. When the opposition members of the committee come together to decide whether we will make a statement of reservation—

**Ms Richards:** I'm glad that you like the bill!

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from the member for Redlands. I would ask her to consider listening to a bit more of what I have to say yet because her conclusion may be different after that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Comments will come through the chair, please.

**Mr LISTER:** Yes, sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. We came together to agree on a statement of reservation and the broader opposition have decided to do something more concrete about the concerns that we have expressed. I see nothing about the statement of reservation that we put in either the committee report on the investigation that the committee did late last year into the operations of the act nor in the statement of reservation which we tendered on this particular bill.

The minister said in her second reading speech that the arrangements prior to the 2017 act were quite complex and unwieldy. That was undoubtedly true. To a large extent the bill has provided certainty, particularly with the five-year moratorium on the extension of trading hours for small businesses like the many in my own electorate.

As the member for Redlands has said, there were a great diversity of views expressed whilst we were on the road and also during the hearing process here for both the investigation we did and the bill itself, but I would like to focus now, wearing my hat as the member for Southern Downs, on the small business aspects. To me and my communities, the small businesses who have most at stake in this particular bill are businesses such as the IGAs, the FoodWorks, the SPAR supermarket and the 5 Star

Supermarket run by Chris and Gail Henry in Goondiwindi. As the member has said, and reading our statement of reservation into the parliamentary record, we get that small business is the powerhouse of employment and economic activity in this state.

To the regional businesses that are affected by this bill, I say this: I understand that our part of regional Queensland, the Southern Downs, has a unique set of circumstances and it is not always the right thing to allow the big players to have Sunday trading. One of the most compelling arguments that I came across in this process was from a good friend of mine, the owner of Spano's IGAs in Warwick and Stanthorpe—and they exist in other locations as well. Frank Spano also happens to be the chair of the Queensland state IGA board. To make myself rightly understood by the government, he has not paid me anything to say that I am his friend or to his read his contribution into the record. He said—

In the supermarket industry, employment is expressed as a percentage of turnover. IGA supermarkets typically employ staff at the rate of between 10-12%. The chains don't divulge their rate of employment, but industry intelligence estimates the major chains employ at the rate of less than 6.25% of turnover (Aldi is reputed to employ at the rate of less than 5% of turnover). Some of Coles' annual returns whilst not expressing an employment metric, do state total employment and turnover for the group, which is consistent with a rate of sub 6.25% of turnover. Our industry intelligence is gained in large part by the employment of ex-chain staff in IGA supermarkets, which is a common practice. If there be any doubt that the chains are not reducing overall employment levels in store, the IGA Board invites the Committee to inspect any newly opened Woolworths which have half self-serve checkouts, and rarely manned served checkouts.

In the context of a region like the Southern Downs, an IGA store such as those operated by Frank Spano will still employ an apprentice butcher and will still employ an apprentice baker. Those stores pour large amounts of money back into their communities. In the case of the Stanthorpe Agricultural Show Society, the IGA has been the main sponsor on a number of occasions. The case is quite clear that those businesses look after their communities and that they are in touch with their communities.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I am not taking interjections from the member for Logan, who I understand is on a warning. He may wish to restrain himself.

I am talking about the serious business of small businesses in my electorate. They have a stake in this and they want to have a voice. That is why I am fully supportive of the opposition's move to extend the moratorium beyond the one year that is proposed in the bill to a full five years. That will give certainty to many small businesses such as IGAs, 5 Star supermarkets, SPARs and FoodWorks, which fear being disadvantaged by the encroachment of the big chains.

I spoke to a prominent elected citizen in my electorate. I am not able to repeat what they said about the large chains for fear of transgressing standing orders. Suffice to say that their advice to me was to stand up for small business because the big players have dominated not only the retail side but also the purchasing side in terms of buying vegetable and fruit produce from small mum-and-dad farmers in my electorate of Southern Downs. It is important to give that certainty. Given that we have had COVID and difficult times with bushfires, floods and drought in my electorate, that would be very much appreciated, particularly in Goondiwindi where we do not have Sunday trading already.

I turn to the local produce angle. The member for Kawana mentioned that businesses such as IGAs and FoodWorks purchase their produce locally, which is great. For instance, in Stanthorpe we have an excellent product that is produced by a local grower. The Savio orchards produce Upple, which is an apple in a bottle. It is a fantastic product. It is difficult to produce in quantities needed to go to market, which is a big step. As an initial step, the Stanthorpe IGA stocks it. When you cannot get fruit and vegies from other sources, you can bet that the local supermarket will have them because they have arrangements with the local suppliers. Those sorts of things make a real difference in our communities.

The amendments that the LNP opposition have put forward go to the heart of protecting vulnerable small businesses that do not have the ability to amortise freight costs across a giant organisation. They do not have the ability to engage in predatory pricing against their competitors, putting their prices up again once they have seen off those competitors. They do not have the ability to invest in automatic checkout machines and things like that, which take away jobs and give the big stores an unfair advantage.

I do concede that my view on this is not shared by everyone. I remember the member for Redlands said that in some areas some independent supermarkets have done very well in recent times. They have been able to adapt and grow the pie. In those contexts deregulation is a good thing, but I believe it is not in my neck of the woods. I fully support the amendments to the bill.