




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2022

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.19 pm): Perhaps the member for Gympie had his head buried in the sand during COVID, because there was a significant amount of support for small businesses. The Labor Palaszczuk government not only stepped up but also delivered. Many businesses in my electorate were the beneficiaries of that. It is interesting that the member for Gympie talked about that. Should we also remind him that their government abolished the Small Business Commissioner when they were in government? Flip-flop—what is your position on that? Are you standing up for it or are you not standing up for it? You were not standing up for it back in the day.

The member for Gympie talks about his flood-affected businesses. Perhaps he might pick up the phone to the 'Prime Minister for New South Wales' and ask him to make sure he delivers the equivalent amount of flood money to Queensland as he is paying to New South Wales. I encourage him to do that because, to date, we have not heard anything from that side with regard to making sure that Queenslanders get their fair share.

In line with that, we should also do the same with regard to the budget. Queensland stepped up during COVID—not just the small businesses but the consumers in Queensland who have backed our small businesses, spent money and supported them to keep them going by contributing to income tax and GST. We have been contributing quite significantly to the coffers of the federal government. I want to make sure that we in Queensland get our fair share. I have not heard anything from those opposite saying that they will ask to guarantee that happens.

In Queensland, small business represents over 97 per cent of businesses statewide and employs 44 per cent of private sector workers—that is, almost one million Queenslanders working in small businesses. In my electorate alone, I have 6½ thousand small businesses. If we look behind those very impressive statistics, we know that there is so much more to it. These small businesses are the heart and hubs of our communities. They are our families, our friends and our neighbours. They are often our first job and are always ready to donate a prize for the local fete, trivia night or community event.

I am incredibly proud of all the small businesses in my electorate. I have some outstanding ones. As a result of that, I very proudly run the Bayside Business of the Month, which is selected by the community. They nominate a range of people. I work with the local chambers, the Manly Harbour Village Chamber and Wynnum Commerce Inc. and with our local businesses. Last month, our very fabulous Port Stop Cafe was the recipient of my Bayside Business of the Month, because they sell the best pies in Queensland. If members are ever down my way—

Government members interjected.

Ms PEASE: It is a big call. They are fantastic. Richie is the chef. It is open from 3 am to 3 pm. There is plenty of time to get there. His pies, particularly his leek, chicken and mushroom pies, are to die for. If members are down my way, let me know as I will give them the address.

Ms Grace: No, you are coming with us!

Ms PEASE: Absolutely. I will be popping out there on Friday, because he also makes fresh ones that you can take home and heat up for dinner, which I do. As I said, small businesses are the heart and soul of my community, as they are for everyone's community: from Steve at Tru-Blu Trophies to software developers, homeware shops, cafes, retail, high-end restaurants—we now have some fabulous high-end restaurants—butchers, bakers, mechanics, builders, plumbers and electricians. The list is endless.

Early this month, I attended the BWIB, which is the Bayside Women in Business International Women's Day event. I was delighted to spend the morning with 70 local businesses to hear from Elena Gosse. What a powerhouse is Elena. She is not only a caring mother, daughter and wife; but also a Russian immigrant and now CEO of AIS Water. Currently, she employs over 60 people and she delivers innovative water treatment options for swimming pools. Most importantly, she is also the champion of the Queensland Women's Legal Service and is a great advocate for supporting women escaping from domestic and family violence.

The Office of Small Business and the Small Business Commissioner also attended the event. They were there handing out advice and supporting other local small businesses. We on this side of the House know how important small business is. I have talked about the fact that they create jobs and keep our community strong. Small business is big business. Queensland small businesses have shown remarkable resilience throughout the pandemic and have come through due to their ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

The Palaszczuk government has supported small businesses through the pandemic with the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, as I have spoken about earlier, putting small businesses at the very heart of the recovery program. This plan was underpinned by \$14.5 billion in recovery, member for Gympie. I am not sure whether the member for Gympie's electorate was aware of those initiatives.

The government has committed more than \$2.5 billion in business support since March 2020, and hundreds of small businesses are benefiting from these initiatives. We have also set an SME procurement target of 25 per cent, meaning \$4 billion into the hands of Queensland small businesses. This bill will ensure that the Office of Small Business Commissioner can continue to support this hugely important sector. Outstandingly, I know that the Small Business Commissioner's office has helped many of my small businesses during the pandemic, assisting them with problems with their rent, problems they were having with their lease et cetera.

The commissioner's vision is to enable and empower small businesses to be productive and offers a collaborative advocacy that enhances operating conditions. It provides fast and fair assistance and informs small businesses and the public to make better decisions.

My mum ran a small business. She employed and empowered, might I add, many women. I too have run small businesses. I know firsthand the amount of work that goes into running a small business. I thank and commend each and every one of my small businesses for everything that they do. I make a personal call out to Shanice from Manly Golden Crust Bakery who contacted me just the other day because she wants to find someone to assist in donating her end of bread to a community organisation. That is just one. That happens with all small businesses. In turn, I am ensuring that I support all of my small businesses, just as the Labor Palaszczuk government supports small businesses.

I also acknowledge all members of the committee who worked on this bill, because it is really important that we acknowledge all members—not just one side of the House—as they all work hard on it. They all bring something to the table during committee hearings. I also acknowledge the committee secretariat and thank them for their great work. I also thank the minister, who does an outstanding job and is very committed to local small business. I know firsthand that she has come out and seen many of my local small businesses. It is really lovely to have her out. I will take her to the Port Stop Cafe.

Ms Farmer interjected.

Ms PEASE: You will have to. It is sensational. I commend the bill to the House.