




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.45 pm): I would like to add to the debate on the Trading (Allowable Hours) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to start by congratulating all of the local traders in the Mackay electorate. There are some really great, innovative young people getting into business, which shows the confidence they have in the future of our economy.

This bill is important for fine-tuning the current operating hours that impact our important retailers, businesses, workers and consumers. The Palaszczuk government realised that retail operating hours needed to be updated and modernised. The first tranche of reform was legislated in 2017 and today this bill adds to those reforms. Business is constantly calling for cuts to red tape and regulation, and that is what the Palaszczuk government is doing. Successive governments have put trading hours in the too hard basket for too long but the Palaszczuk government continues to tackle issues head on. Working with stakeholders and crossbenchers, we have passed amendments that reduced 99 different trading hour zones across the state down to just 12. This is really important for business.

Overall, the current committee's review of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act found that it operates effectively to regulate trading hours arrangements and that the 2017 reforms have provided consistent and stable trading agreements that benefit the retail sector as well as small businesses, employees and consumers. The committee made nine recommendations, all of which the government accepted. The bill now gives effect to these recommendations.

At the centre of the bill are four new simplified and streamlined core trading hours areas for larger non-exempt shops which are largely modelled on existing trading hours. The new type 1 trading areas have the most expansive trading hours: 6 am to 10 pm Monday to Friday; 7 am to 10 pm Saturdays; and 7 am to 9 pm Sundays and public holidays except for closed days such as Christmas Day and Easter Friday. Type 1 covers non-exempt shops in locations which already enjoy longer trading hours such as Cairns, New Farm in Brisbane, the Gold Coast tourist area and Pacific Fair Shopping Centre.

Type 2 trading areas continue the existing trading hours arrangements for the remainder of South-East Queensland: 7 am to 9 pm Monday to Saturday; and 9 am to 6 pm Sundays and public holidays. Type 3 trading areas cover mainly large cities and centres in regional Queensland and continue their current trading hours arrangements, including: 8 am to 9 pm Monday to Friday; 8 am to 6 pm Saturday and Sunday; and public holiday trading from 9 am to 6 pm. An exception will be the Townsville tourist area, which will retain its own unique 7 am start Monday to Friday.

Type 4 trading areas combine the former 'seaside resort' and 'any other area' into a single category. This bill makes only marginal amendments to permitted trading hours by allowing retail trading in areas currently falling into the 'any other area' category on public holidays other than closed days. Between the Holidays Act 1983 and the Commonwealth legislation, only 12 days are designated as public holidays.

In addition, the bill extends the current moratorium on applications for trading hours orders by a further 12 months. This is welcome, ensuring a period of time in which the arrangements set in place by the amendments may not be altered. The government therefore considers that the employment impact from the bill, positive or negative, is likely to be insignificant in the short term and extremely limited in the long term.

When the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission is considering an application for trading hours, the location and boundary of the area under the application and the needs of the industries in the area, including the tourism industry, are included. This is an important aspect to consider as communities change when the types of work and lifestyles evolve. In my community over the past two decades we have seen a lot of change. Being a mining support hub, we have many families that have to work rosters with 12-hour shifts. They do not work a Monday-to-Friday week. They often do a seven-on seven-off roster, or any combination of days. The old days of working a traditional five-day week, nine to five, no longer apply in regions like mine. Changes to retail are welcome in areas like mine. In looking at the application, consideration needs to be given to the effect on non-exempt shops. It needs to consider businesses of all sizes and the effect on employees and employment. With the lifestyle changes, I am sure there are a lot of communities around Queensland that have their own stories to tell.

Communities will want to have a say on any changes that will affect their culture and lifestyle. The local government is usually a body that can articulate the on-the-ground culture and needs of locals. The QIRC can also consider applications for special events that are of significance to local, state or national status. They will also take into account the frequency of the event and whether it fits into religious, sporting or cultural significance.

We all remember different times when there have been significant events in Brisbane. I think back to the Commonwealth Games in 1982 when I was young enough to stay up really late. I enjoyed the extra hours because of that event. I am looking forward to seeing the extra hours for all of the significant events that are coming up. The QIRC will make sure there are no adverse effects from these changes. This bill is measured in its approach to the changes that are being made.

I congratulate the minister for making permanent the changes to the P&Cs and allowing them to continue with their online meetings. As I have said, my community is not a nine-to-five community anymore—it is for some families but not for all—so it is really important that they can go online. As a former teacher, I know that schools operate better when families are able to participate in the culture of their school and in what actually happens. It means they are invested in their children's education and their children know that education is valued. This is a win-win for everybody in our communities. I commend the bill to the House.