




Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.57 am): I rise to speak in support of the Trading (Allowable Hours) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which will support thousands of Queensland small businesses and their employees and volunteers along with school P&Cs across our great state. When we talk about good jobs, better services and protecting and enhancing our great Queensland lifestyle, this bill embodies all three of those elements.

The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission has had the power to make trading hours orders since 1964, and that power has continued since the introduction of the current act in 1990. The QIRC's power to make orders has been an integral part of ensuring Queensland's retail sector has modernised over the ensuing decades. For example, we had the introduction of Sunday trading. Whilst it has been responsive in keeping up with the modernisation of the small business framework here in Queensland and the expectations of the community, it has also led to some complexities over that time and over those decades and a degree of a lack of uniformity due to the range of multiple orders that have been issued over that time.

The QIRC's power to make those orders, both of its own volition and in response to properly made applications to it, definitely remains important and fundamental to addressing and responding to the changing needs of the community and to that of the retail sector with more flexible mechanisms than that of a legislative amendment. For example, the QIRC can exercise its power where the population demographics of a smaller town changes over time and grows, small business grows and it becomes a larger regional hub or, indeed, a tourist area.

We are certainly seeing more and more tourism growth here in Queensland. Queensland absolutely is the place to be. We have seen a huge increase in domestic tourism. I see the minister for tourism is in the House at the moment. I acknowledge the work that has been done which has seen a huge increase in domestic tourism in Queensland over the period of the pandemic. Since vaccination rates are up and we have been able to safely open our borders, we are seeing an increasing amount of international tourism returning to our shores and that is a wonderful thing.

The bill limits the QIRC's former ability to make more generalised trading hours orders and, consistent with the committee's inquiry recommendations, the QIRC will no longer be able to make orders which vary the core trading hours of trading areas set out in the legislation. Overall, importantly, it provides a more modern, uniform and streamlined approach for our local small businesses in our Bundamba community like our iconic Charlton's Fishing at Redbank, Uncle John's Bakehouse at Redbank Plains, Citiswivich Community Discount Pharmacy at Bundamba or the Dinmore Fruit Barn—where often I drop in to get fresh fruit and vegetables, and I highly recommend it to anybody who has the pleasure of coming to the Bundamba community—and, of course, our local Goodna Newsagency.

Our local small businesses in Bundamba, like small businesses throughout Queensland, have shown extreme resilience in response to the pandemic, but we have also had additional terrible challenges to meet with the floods in February of this year. After having to weather and respond to the

pandemic, our local community was impacted by the floods. I want to make special mention of a local Redbank Plains business called Goodness Grazes, which stopped their operation for two weeks immediately after the flood and came down to Goodna, to ground zero, to the most impacted areas of Goodna, and set up a temporary marquee where they cooked for two weeks early in the morning until late at night. They put their business on hold so they could help flood victims and volunteers in the two weeks after the flood event. It was absolutely incredible and completely emblematic of the kind of local community spirit and local business community that we have in Bundamba.

I would now like to turn to some of the provisions in the bill that relate to workers in the retail sector and industrial protections. As previous speakers have, I want to place on record my thanks and acknowledgement of the outstanding work that our frontline retail heroes did during the pandemic. When we needed food during lockdowns, for example, we were able to go out and get the items that we needed from these frontline heroes who were out there at their own risk to help the rest of the community stay safe. This bill supports our workers by strengthening voluntary work protections for employees and removing exemptions that applied if an employee is subject to an industrial agreement. As most retail employees are covered by an award, the bill implements the committee's recommendation to ensure that these offences consistently apply irrespective.

The bill amends the trading hours act to ensure that employees cannot be required to work in circumstances where a shop's trading hours are extended unless they have freely elected in writing to work during these extended hours. I think that is a real protection for our retail workers. The bill also prescribes a new offence to ensure that the small number of unscrupulous employers cannot coerce, harass, threaten or intimidate employees into working extended hours.

With the few remaining minutes that I have I will turn to the provisions in the bill that relate to our school P&Cs. They do wonderful work. I think every member in the House will acknowledge that. This bill supports our local schools by making some amendments to make permanent the temporary arrangements that were put in place during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Our teaching staff and our school communities had to react and provide education under the most difficult circumstances through the pandemic and they did that admirably.

The amendments in this bill will mean that our hardworking local P&Cs, like those from Redbank Plains State High School, Goodna State School and Ripley Valley State Secondary College, can conduct their meetings via online platforms like Teams and Zoom. That was a sensible temporary arrangement that was brought in as a result of the pandemic that should be made permanent. Importantly, these amendments support our busy parents and volunteers by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their meetings and help those impacted by external factors like travel time, family commitments or, indeed, the impacts of natural disasters, which our local community knows all too well. As I said, this bill is all about providing more good jobs, great services and protecting and enhancing our Queensland lifestyle.