




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

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SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.26 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021. As we have heard, the intent of this bill is to make permanent the functions of our Small Business Commissioner—functions that have already supported so many small businesses during the last couple of really tough years as we have struggled through COVID-19 restrictions and as we continue to struggle through the COVID-19 pandemic.

I thank my friend Di Farmer, the Minister for Small Business, for coming out recently to hear the stories of small businesses across my electorate of Kurwongbah—the stories of adversity and the stories of resilience—at my small business networking event on 2 March. I want to thank the Burpengary Community Club for hosting us that day and for keeping up with our coffee orders. The food was fantastic. I was really pleased that we were able to donate what was left to the SES workers who gave their hearts and souls responding to the extreme weather events that hit us just as COVID restrictions were easing.

Sometimes the hits just keep coming—hits like for Southern Cross Tennis which were lucky to be able to send a representative after flooding cut off literally all of their roads north and for Dave at Aussie Home Loans at Burpengary where the entire shopping centre was closed for a day and no doubt the clean-up effort was longer. I also want to acknowledge the businesses on the other side of Station Road at Burpengary where Coles and a bunch of other businesses such as Bellygood Chinese and the Coffee Club had no choice but to close during the floods.

Copper & Cane Distilling at Old Petrie Town were represented, with Guy, the owner, putting on a brave face after COVID put gin tasting well in the background for a while and the flooding meant that market days, which are his best advertising and walk-in opportunities, were no more. However, Guy from Copper & Cane, Adam Gibbs, who lost White Brick Brewing in the Bancroft area during COVID—and that was a big loss, believe me, if you have ever tried White Brick—but not for long as he is restarting as Hip Hop Brewing, and the other Jimmy Sullivan, who is our famous local Chilli Coffee man, are partnering up to make some chilli beers and chilli spirits. I am looking forward to seeing that eventuate.

I am proud of small business events like these and the ones my neighbours the member for Bancroft and the member for Morayfield hold that bring about great ventures like this. I will give a small plug for Chilli Coffee. There is some in the Lucinda Bar. If anyone wants to get adventurous and try one, they will make you one there.

There was also Lisa from Counting Stars who was trying to launch her new yoga business but had to cancel her official launch because of the floods. I encourage any of my north side colleagues in need of some active relaxation to google Lisa's services at Counting Stars at Burpengary. I have not tried it myself—just saying.

We also had an unexpected guest at our event courtesy of the Labor candidate for Longman, Rebecca Fanning, and I thank Rebecca for our special guest. Rebecca is reaching out to small businesses across the federal electorate of Longman and listening to how the federal government can assist in our economic recovery. The special guest was Tanya Plibersek, the federal shadow minister

for education and training who is responsible for the financial commitments we need to match our government's commitment to TAFE—including the free TAFE courses we are helping to fund to train up the people we need in a whole bunch of skills shortages areas.

I know the representatives from local businesses who attended our event are hopeful for the future, and I thank them so much for engaging with us. As a government, we have a responsibility to help where we can. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we helped over 50 businesses across the Kurwongbah electorate with hundreds of thousands of dollars to adapt their operations to this new uncertain era. In a localised effort, recognising the impact of ongoing roadworks as well as COVID on businesses based on the old Petrie roundabout, I was happy to donate \$1,000 worth of coffee vouchers for the Kadison and Lealta coffee shop which were then passed on to worthy recipients in the community, including Meals on Wheels, et cetera. That coffee shop had trucks and fencing outside their coffee shop for a number of weeks, and it is pretty hard to buy a coffee through a fence.

Kudos also goes to Le Service Course, which managed to keep operating through the trying times. Adam would have been well within his rights to seek the services of our Small Business Commissioner during the past months. I was happy to help out by purchasing a bike and services to the value of \$1,000. The bikes I ride have motors, so I ran a social media competition to give away a Trek mountain bike. I am happy to say it went to a good home, and Le Service Course has picked up a few new customers in the process.

It probably goes without saying—because I know everyone in this place supports small business—that, as we continue to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, if you are healthy, please go to your local shop, please interact with your grocery suppliers and please get your car or bike serviced. I know this legislation gives us that extra power to help small business to negotiate those leases and to make employing locals that bit easier. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.