



Speech By
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TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.12 pm): Today I rise to contribute to the debate on the Trading (Allowable Hours) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which is a bill for an act to streamline Queensland's existing trading hours arrangements. The bill also clarifies the scope of decision-making powers for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and extends two current trading hours transitional arrangement moratoriums until 31 August next year to provide certainty and stability for the retail industry.

Finally, the bill includes minor amendments to two education acts to extend the use of communication technology for attendance at meetings, such as Queensland College of Teachers' investigations and P&C associations. I know that over the past couple of years we have all become a lot more familiar with communication technology such as Zoom, Webex and Teams. I acknowledge the important role it can play to increase participation in a whole range of sectors such as health and education, particularly in regional areas. I appreciate Zoom myself. It was the only way I was able to attend three P&C meetings in one night, even in an electorate the size of mine.

Many of us on this side of the chamber will already know a bit about Queensland trading hours, having fought to make sure they are fair for workers. For anyone not familiar with it, I will start with a bit of background on our system in the Sunshine State. Firstly, we have two broad categories of business when it comes to trading hours: exempt shops and non-exempt shops. Exempt shops have unrestricted trading hours and examples include bakeries, butchers, chemists, fruit and vegetables—I got them wrong; it should be butchers and bakers—hairdressers, news agencies, nurseries for plants, service stations, sporting goods, tobacconists and toy shops. Those shops do not have to open all hours every day just because they can. I have never seen a 24-hour plant nursery or toy shop, but maybe there are; I do not know. There is a subclass of exempt shops—independent retail shops—where trading restrictions apply for Good Friday, Christmas Day and Anzac Day. However, there is a limit to the number of workers on shift that shops in this category can have to qualify.

Non-exempt shops include large retailers such as supermarkets, department stores and hardware shops as well as car and caravan dealers. Non-exempt shops are divided into four categories or areas to determine their trading hours: the South-East Queensland area, a defined tourist area, a seaside resort area and a schedule 1AB area for places that had public holiday and Sunday trading prior to the changes we legislated in 2017. Each area has its own core trading hours, which can be found online at www.business.qld.gov.au, for anyone keen to have a look. Within those areas, non-exempt hardware shops have their own schedule, as do car and caravan dealers. All non-exempt shops are closed on Good Friday, Anzac Day and Labour Day—Labour Day is the first Monday in May, for the benefit of anyone who is not aware—and Christmas Day.

In recognition that one size does not always fit all, the QIRC also has the power to make special event declarations to allow non-exempt shops in a stated area to trade outside their usual allowable hours. To ensure consistency across the state, this bill sets out factors that the Industrial Relations

Commission must consider in making a declaration, namely: whether the event is unique or infrequent and of local, state or national significance, including any potential contribution to Queensland's national or international reputation; whether the need exists for longer trading hours for non-exempt shops; geographical factors; and attendance numbers predicted for the event.

As an example, and I know this will excite many, the Kingaroy BaconFest is on this weekend. Non-exempt shops will be allowed to trade longer hours to cater for significant visitor demand—

Mrs Frecklington: I hope you're coming out.

Mr KING: I will get to that—under a special event declaration for this unique and locally significant event. I am sure everyone will have a great time and that BaconFest will do Queensland proud. Sadly, member for Nanango—through the Speaker—I cannot attend BaconFest. I will be at the Leyburn Sprints, representing the minister, which is not too far away.

Importantly, this bill also strengthens the rights of workers to not have to work extended hours unless they voluntarily choose to do so in the event of a special event declaration. To make sure the message about workers' rights is clear, the bill introduces an offence for employers who seek to coerce or bully employees into working extra days or longer hours. I note that the opposition members of the parliamentary committee for education, employment and training which inquired into this bill have expressed support for these protections in their statement of reservation—which is basically a statement of support—citing family and caring responsibilities as one of the reasons that extra work hours may be undesirable or unworkable for employees.

I would remark briefly that it would have been good to have their support when we were fighting other legislation such as WorkChoices on the national stage back in the 1990s. Unfair work choices legislation impacted horribly on many workers who could not balance employer demands and threats of dismissal with their family responsibilities. As a matter of fact, the 'Your rights at work' campaign opposing WorkChoices was one of the catalysts that led me to run for election to this parliament.

It would be remiss of me to speak on a bill that touches on workers' rights without recognising the tremendous achievements of the mighty union movement over the years. Those achievements include workplace health and safety, the eight-hour day, the minimum wage, equal pay, superannuation and fair compensation for working on public holidays. I know a lot of families are looking forward to the newly elected Albanese government's changes to conditions in the aged-care sector and cheaper child care. Those are all achievements that Labor stood up for alongside the union movement. I am very supportive of worker protections and I think everyone here knows that.

I am also supportive of the amendments that rename the categories or areas of non-exempt shops that I mentioned before to become type 1, 2, 3 and 4 trading areas. I am sure that the inclusion of the Mossman and Port Douglas tourist areas, along with other similar tourist areas in the new type 1 category with longer core trading hours, will make the member for Cook happy as well as many visitors to that region.

I note that the parliamentary committee for education, employment and training, chaired by my colleague the member for Redlands—who I have to say is probably the second best chair in this place, although I do not want to upset anyone—conducted extensive public consultation and heard from many stakeholders representing both workers and businesses during the inquiry into this bill. I note the general consensus that the 2017 amendments to Queensland's trading hours have been working well and this bill enhances and clarifies those changes. This bill provides further stability for small business, employees and consumers as we continue to recover from a very difficult couple of years. I commend the bill to the House.