




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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**LIQUOR AND GAMING (RED TAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.10 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Liquor and Gaming (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I would like to join with all the speakers in commending the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for his innovative and cut-through approach towards red tape regarding part of the industry and for coming up with amendments that are very much appropriate and suitable to protect those small operators in our communities that need assistance to keep them going in a very difficult climate.

As I travelled throughout the state when in opposition, all I ever heard were complaints from community groups about the red tape and the rigmarole they had to pass through in order to get small functions going that were to raise funds for the community. It was just amazing to me how any government could have put in place all those fees, hurdles, regulations et cetera to obliterate the small organisations, particularly in a lot of the country towns, and prevent them from getting together as communities—and country towns are the best place for community because everybody knows each other. By their very nature they do a wonderful job in punching above their weight and supporting themselves through the many community functions from schools right through to little tiny race clubs, picnic race clubs, amateur rodeos and farm fests. All of these organisations will benefit greatly from the Attorney-General's changes to the legislation.

I congratulate the Attorney-General on leading the way for the Campbell Newman LNP government in reducing red tape. This is only the first instalment; we will see many more provisions come from the Attorney-General, who has been the busiest minister in this House in terms of legislation. He has almost worn out the Premier's seat. As the Premier has mentioned to me, it is always warm from the Attorney-General sitting in it. In our first term it is very important that we get all of these legislative matters in place and organised so we can prosper during the terms ahead that we hope to enjoy as the LNP government with the good agreement of the great community of Queensland.

This is moving away from the nanny state, which is an absolute imperative in all facets; this is just one part in liquor licensing. Previously, in answer to any problem that was raised through media circles, there had to be a new legislative regime that you could not jump over and that affects all of the smaller groups and smaller people in the community. The big companies can handle legislation. They have big profits and it is not a problem for them. However, the smaller community groups are the ones that are seriously affected by the amount of red tape and legislation that was introduced by the Labor Party over almost 20 years in their nanny-state mentality.

However, there are a couple of matters I would like to raise in relation to reducing red tape in terms of liquor licensing. One in particular is exemplified in my area, the lovely area of Mermaid Beach. I have to be very careful in my community perspective of protecting the residential amenities in some areas where people are opening up restaurants per se and turning them, quite obviously and with little difficulty, into bars. Unfortunately, the people who are using these 'restaurants' as bars and watering

holes in a residential community sometimes make it unpleasant to deal with the matters that evolve when some people—not everybody—sometimes drink too much liquor and have an effect on the community as they leave, or indulge in, bar areas. I am talking about some particularly small areas, and the member for Burleigh and I had meetings in a wonderful little area of Mermaid Beach and Burleigh that we share together. We share Nobby's Beach.

**Mr Cripps:** There wouldn't be much room!

**Mr STEVENS:** I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. I am sorry, but there is certainly not room for us to invite the member for Hinchinbrook down as well; the member for Burleigh and the member for Mermaid Beach will be occupying Nobby's Beach!

There is a new establishment opening at Nobby's Beach in my electorate that the Gold Coast City Council has approved as a cafe/restaurant. It is on the beachfront. It is very much in a residential area. The Gold Coast City Council has licensed it from 10 am to 10 pm to restrict the bar trade, and that is the important part. As Mr Deputy Speaker mentioned, no-one has any problems with him and his wife having a bottle of wine or a glass or two—not as well as, just a glass or two or a bottle of wine—at these lovely little cafes and experiencing the ambiance. I can see the moon rising and a wonderful night ahead.

**Mr Bleijie:** Sing us a song!

**Mr STEVENS:** I will shortly. I do requests. We have to ensure that they do not turn into the sort of thing that makes it unpleasant for the residential amenity in terms of there being only bars. I think we should look at enforcing food being served as part of those restaurant type approvals. Restaurants are for eating, not just for drinking. That is the issue and I would like to see that any further review of liquor licensing and red-tape reduction will not impact upon that. That is the important part. I am quite sure the Attorney-General shares those views as well.

Something that has been brought to my attention—not through the Attorney-General—is also a corollary of liquor licensing, reduction of red tape and the ease of converting establishments into places that sell liquor. Previously, the Labor government relaxed the requirement for toilet amenities in terms of approvals for restaurants. Through the planning schemes the local councils adopted the state government directives through the SPA, the state planning agreement or whatever it was. It has led to a shortage of toilet facilities in large clusters of restaurants which, as I alluded to earlier, particularly in an area like Broadbeach, are doing enormous bar trade.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie:** Don't take interjections.

**Mr STEVENS:** No, I will not take the interjection about bushes out the front. That is part and parcel of the problem: when people have to go, they have to go. If there are insufficient numbers of toilets in these very heavily utilised areas, the bar trade is flowing and lots of wine and liquor is being consumed, the obvious response to that there is a high demand for toilets. Whilst the queues at the ladies' are not as long as we would normally expect them to be, the men's toilets are always in heavy demand. I think that should be looked at from a planning point of view as a corollary of liquor licensing issues. I would hope that, as part of our future review of all of the matters that the Labor Party got wrong, we revisit the issue of the provision of amenities in these dining areas rather than relying on single amenities servicing many of them.

I am very pleased to support the minister in his reduction of red tape, removing the requirement for liquor and gaming applications to be gazetted, and the other issues that will circumvent unfair imposts on smaller community groups in our area. I also support the bill and commend the bill to the House.