



Speech By
Hon. Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (4.54 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Liquor and Gaming (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, introduced into the House by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the honourable member for Kawana, on 19 March this year. This bill was appropriately referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, which reported back to the House on 14 May.

Since coming into government in March last year, this LNP government has introduced a raft of legislation in line with its commitments to the people of Queensland prior to the election. This bill is yet another example of a government determined to reduce red tape and regulation. As we have heard from a number of honourable members already, we want to get out of the way and out of the pockets of small businesses and let them get on with what they do best: creating jobs and delivering products and services.

The main objectives of the bill are to amend the legislative framework regulating the liquor and gaming industries to reduce the burden on those industries and ensure that the legislature's original policy intent is upheld and that the law is clear and effective. There are also a number of amendments to various fair trading, court and work health and safety legislation to streamline the government's administrative and financial processes. In my short contribution I intend to focus on the changes relating to the liquor and gaming provisions.

Whilst in opposition my colleagues and I were relentless in our criticism of the Labor government for the mountains of red tape that it continually inflicted on Queenslanders. Unfortunately, despite playing such a crucial role in the provision of services for our community and attracting tourism to our great state, those in the liquor and gaming industry were some of the worst affected. It must be noted that, before these initiatives were put to parliament, the Newman government undertook extensive consultation with the industry to find out exactly how to assist them and allow them to get on with business. It is also important to acknowledge that the industry peak bodies, Clubs Queensland and Queensland Hotels Association, support the bill as they see it as a meaningful reduction in red tape for the industry.

As highlighted in the explanatory notes, these changes represent the first of multiple phases of change to address the regulatory inefficiency plaguing these industries. One of the most common aspects of this bill is the exemption of community groups from the requirement to obtain a permit to sell liquor at low-risk events, such as school fetes or Rotary or Lions functions and the like. These fundraising events are simply that—events to help fundraise—and the government should be assisting them in their endeavours, not slugging them with additional fees and regulations. In the

Currumbin electorate, local service clubs, P&Cs, Neighbourhood Watches and community groups that host small fundraising events are always out and about in the community holding different functions, and this change gives them the freedom to explore other options without outlaying scarce funds and large amounts of time. In more positive news for these groups, they will also be able to include in raffles alcohol under the value of \$100 without the need to apply for a permit. This gives them greater tools at their disposal to really maximise their fundraising initiatives in the community. This bill also allows for the introduction of some safeguards to ensure that the responsible service of alcohol is maintained at all times. This will see the sale of liquor limited to eight hours, and any irresponsible sale of alcohol will result in this exemption not applying and that group being required to apply for a permit.

In further evidence that we are serious about assisting small businesses in this state, the requirement for liquor and gaming applications to be advertised in the newspaper and *Government Gazette* will be abolished. This will still be advertised out the front of the premises and online. This change alone will save an applicant around \$1,500 and a significant amount of time, which, as we all know, is invaluable to small business owners.

This bill also provides for a reduction in requirements for low-risk restaurants and cafes. This includes the requirement for them to complete risk assessed management plans and advertise for public objections when applying for a licence. As the Attorney-General highlighted in his introductory speech, these places are not generally the source of alcohol related problems and these changes will see more money stay in those businesses and less time spent filling out onerous paperwork that provides no tangible benefits to the business itself or to the local community.

Other aspects of the bill are: the removal of renewal requirements for clubs and hotels with gaming machine licences; less complex processes for casino operators; and the introduction of ticket-in ticket-out technology, amongst myriad other changes, all focused on easing the regulatory burden. These measures will save industry approximately \$200,000 a year. Queensland's 412,000-plus small businesses have been suffocating under Labor's legacy of 92,000 pages of red tape and regulation. This bill goes some distance in reducing this regulatory burden.

I recently visited Dayboro, Ocean View and Nanango with the honourable members for Pine Rivers and Kallangur and it was made perfectly clear to me the ridiculously high level of compliance that many small restaurants and cafes have to contend with to keep their liquor licence. It is commendable that these members are consulting so closely and so frequently with the small businesses in their electorates. This bill will provide significant relief to these small businesses.

In summary, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Attorney-General for proposing legislation that allows small businesses and community organisations to operate more efficiently while not adversely affecting the critically important safeguards in place to monitor the consumption and potential risks of liquor and gaming that occurs in society. This bill complements the Newman government's commitment to reduce red tape and regulation by 20 per cent by 2018. I very happily commend this bill to the House.