



Speech By  
**Hon. Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, introduced into this place by the Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and member for Kawana on 15 October of this year. The objectives of this bill are numerous. However, I wish to address amendments that will result in further reductions to the regulatory burden on the liquor and gaming industries.

In March 2012 the Newman government was elected on a clear platform of reducing red tape and regulation and growing our four-pillar economy. At the inaugural DestinationQ forum in Cairns in June 2012—the first Queensland government tourism forum since the mid-eighties, I might add—the issue of liquor licensing for tourism operators was a recurring theme. Subsequently, the Newman government appointed a red-tape-reduction expert panel to review liquor licensing and gaming regulation in order to reduce the burden on licence holders and businesses. The expert panel has consulted extensively since its creation in September 2012 and has now provided a range of recommendations to reduce the regulatory burden to support the tourism and hospitality industries, some of which are contained in this bill.

I congratulate the Attorney-General for foreshadowing the changes in this bill at this year's DestinationQ forum on the Gold Coast. I am sure he will remember that these changes were welcomed with great applause by a large number of delegates. As the Attorney-General outlined in his second reading speech—

This bill's primary purpose is to reduce red tape to ensure that the state's liquor and gaming industries can operate more freely and be competitive both nationally and internationally.

The aim of this bill is to remove impediments to low-risk areas of licensed premises and gambling operations and address those areas that have been overregulated for many years. This is in stark contrast to those members opposite, who smothered Queensland businesses in over 92,000 pages of red tape and regulation at a cost to businesses of \$7 billion per year through taxes, fees and other charges. The Newman government, on the other hand, with their pro small business policy, pledged to change the red tape culture by delivering a can-do business environment. That is why we are cutting red tape and regulation by 20 per cent by 2018. Small business and tourism are intrinsically linked, with nine out of 10 tourism businesses being small businesses. That means red-tape reduction for small business is also red-tape reduction for the tourism industry. Large and small businesses in the hospitality and restaurant industry such as cafes, clubs, hotels and resorts and, more broadly, tour operators will benefit from this bill.

The liquor and gaming industries play a crucial role in servicing tourism throughout the state and a number of provisions in the bill will directly support this fine pillar of Queensland's economy. For example, it will allow tourism operators to supply small amounts of liquor to their clients as part of a

tour without a licence or permit. Under current arrangements, a person must not sell liquor unless the sale is made under the authority of an appropriate licence or permit. Importantly, particular parties such as limousine drivers are exempt from this requirement provided the amount of liquor supplied is limited and is a subsidiary element of their business. Although tour operators provide a similar style of service to limousine drivers, albeit over a longer distance and period of time, they are not currently exempt. I am aware that the expert panel considered a number of submissions from tourism operators and groups about this matter. To address this inequity, the bill includes an exemption provision for tour operators, allowing them to offer a more inclusive and attractive hospitality package to their clients by selling and/or supplying up to two standard drinks to adult clients during a charter or tour without the need to obtain a liquor licence.

The bill also removes the requirement that approved managers of maritime vessels as well as restaurants, cafes and small clubs must be present on site. Currently, there is a requirement that at least one approved manager be available or present at a licensed venue while a venue is open for business. The approved manager's role is to ensure that the sale of liquor in the licensed premises complies with requirements of the Liquor Act 1992 and the authority of the licence. As members would appreciate, this requirement can be onerous for small, low-risk premises, particularly when key staff are on holidays or have taken ill. The bill will amend the Liquor Act 1992 to exclude from the approved manager requirements the provision that restaurants, cafes and small clubs with 2,000 members or fewer that do not operate past midnight. In their submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, the Queensland Tourism Industry Council called for these changes along with the removal of the requirement for tourism operators to have a permit to sell small amounts of alcohol. I would like to thank QTIC for their representation of the industry in putting forward a submission to the committee.

Coolangatta Surf Club in my electorate of Currumbin made a submission to the committee on this bill, stating their full support for these amendments. As a relatively small club, they were particularly pleased with the proposed removal of certain red-tape requirements, including the need for an approved manager of small clubs that do not trade beyond midnight to be on site. They also commended the government's move to allow clubs to make payment of the annual liquor licence fees by instalment. These small steps can have really significant impacts on these local community clubs. The Coolangatta Surf Club's submission is just one example that demonstrates the practical assistance that this legislation will provide to small businesses right around Queensland.

As mentioned briefly in the Coolangatta submission, this bill does alter the payment system for liquor licences by expanding payments of licence fees by instalments. There are approximately 6,730 licensees in Queensland who pay these licence fees. Under the Liquor Act 1992 a licensee can seek to pay the annual liquor licence fee under a schedule of instalments if the commissioner is satisfied the licensee is unable to pay as a result of being adversely affected by a natural disaster or personal hardship. Financial hardship is currently not recognised as personal hardship. Unlike Labor, the Newman government acknowledges the enormous contribution that small businesses make to our economy. This bill recognises businesses may from time to time, through no fault of their own, experience temporary financial setbacks. The ability of these businesses to pay their licence fees in instalments during the tough times will be of great assistance to them and will help prevent unnecessary closures of small businesses.

Along with the changes in this bill, a total of 44 red-tape-reduction initiatives have been implemented for the liquor and gaming industry since this government was elected. That is something to be very proud of. This includes streamlining the application process by abolishing the former liquor and gaming commission, which only met once a month to consider variations or applications, and implementing a single commissioner model that can hear and determine matters on a daily basis. The suite of measures outlined in this bill demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to a common-sense approach to regulation. It ensures that regulation is only applied where necessary. Low-risk liquor and gaming enterprises that are dotted right throughout the electorates of everybody in this House can be free to develop without unnecessary government interference. This is just one small part of what this can-do government is doing to grow jobs and build a prosperous Queensland into the future. I wholeheartedly support the bill.