



GLEN ELMES
Member for Noosa

Hansard, 4 August 2009

Extended Trading Hours, Villa Noosa Hotel

Mr ELMES (Noosa--LNP) (9.05 pm): MGW Hotels Pty Ltd, which is 75 per cent owned by Woolworths, has made application to the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing to extend trading hours in 80 of its 104 hotels throughout Queensland. If successful, this application will see some hotels, including the Villa Noosa Hotel in my electorate, extend their liquor trading to 5 am. What is even more distressing is that the application is an act of double jeopardy, because it is simply the first stage of a campaign to extend gambling to the same hours.

In my opinion, this is unprincipled. I believe that the majority of Queenslanders would agree that our communities do not want or need extended drinking and gambling hours. The social cost is just too great. In my electorate of Noosa, there has been an outcry of objection to this application, and the reason for this is the escalating law and order problem our community experiences at the hands of drunken hotel patrons.

Cars and property are damaged, there is damage to gardens both public and private, theft, violence, fights, home invasions, excessive noise in the early hours of the morning, drunks asleep on footpaths and in parks--the list goes on.

Antisocial behaviour is caused by the consumption of alcohol which is on tap until the early hours of the morning. Every single day, media throughout Queensland carries similar stories. Queensland should be building strong, healthy communities that are not tainted by law and order issues caused by extended liquor trading hours and not struggling with the social cost of problem gambling. If this government is really serious about reforming liquor and gambling laws, it would amend legislation to prohibit applications such as this and limit liquor and gambling hours in suburban hotels to midnight.

There is no justification for a suburban hotel to trade until 5 am. I will go a step further: there is no justification for a suburban hotel to trade until 3 am. In the case of the Villa Noosa Hotel, I for one would prefer to see its licence amended to ensure that it closes its doors at midnight.

I call on Woolworths through MGW Hotels to publicly recognise that, as a company, it has a social responsibility to the entire community.

What is the use of portraying a happy, helpful and healthy image via supermarkets and then subjecting those same customers to the sort of antisocial behaviour I have outlined?

I encourage everyone affected by one of these applications to lodge a formal objection and to make sure that they let Liquor Licensing know that they want their objections heard.
