



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

**Competition and Consumer
Amendment Bill 2013**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Thursday, 6 June 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 6 June 2013
Page 5726
Questioner
Speaker Broadbent, Russell, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (16:06): We all have small businesses in our electorate. My electorate is a regional electorate. There is a concern. I have recently been to hotels in regional Victoria where they all had a surcharge on Sunday. You walk past to the next one and on Sunday there is a surcharge there too. I do not think any of these people would know they are breaking the law. They are just trying to survive on a Sunday.

This bill goes a long way to sort that out. I think it was an unintended consequence. In our approach to every piece of legislation we need to look at unintended consequences. Having said that, I still have a problem with the difficulties regional restaurants and tourism operators have with Sunday and public holiday penalty rates.

Last Sunday morning I was watching what was happening in the breakfast restaurant Bronwyn and I were in and it was very clear that the family was working. There might have been one staff member there when there is normally five. It is a very busy place. They do a great job. I will not name them because they are not in my electorate. Clearly, the whole family was working on Sunday because it is just too expensive for them to pay staff on Sunday mornings. It is interesting that when the family is there the babies are there because there is nobody left to babysit so they have to bring their kids into the restaurant, which made it more pleasurable for me to see these beautiful young children of the owners of the restaurant in the morning in that place. But I think if they had their way they would rather they were not there on Sunday morning. They would rather that they were able to employ their staff on a Sunday morning. Because of the politics of the day, really, nobody is saying anything about these issues, except they affect real people on a daily basis wherever I go.

I had a delegation come to my office. That does not happen very often. A delegation of restaurateurs and tourism operators came to me to ask, 'Do you understand, Russell?' Having been in small business nearly all of my life except for the last few years, I said, 'Yes, I do understand the cost of wages. I am a person who laid awake at night wondering how I was going to pay them on a Thursday sometimes. There have been tight times over the years. I understand how these people were feeling. They were saying, 'We're working flat out. We want this to succeed. We give people work on the weekends, but we only open in the country areas on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and, if it is a long weekend, Monday.'

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 16:10 to 16:32

Mr BROADBENT: As I was saying before the division, since the year 1934, small business and medium-sized business have been good to my family through generations of pub owners, grocers, mercers, drapers, hardware merchants, general store owners and others. For all those generations, small business has been good to our family, and I am a product of those generations. Having said that, over the time that we are in this House we all have an obligation, everyone of us, to look to small businesses. Why? Because, at the business's largest point, I had 40 people in my employ and those 40 people were family to me, and I wanted to do the best for my family and the best for their families I could possibly do.

In conclusion, we have a responsibility to make sure every small business entrepreneur can do the best they can with the opportunities that they are given. Small business has been good to me; I want to be good to small business; and I want this government, and any future government, to be good to small business.