

LIQUOR LAWS — REFORMS

516. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting and growing local hospitality businesses, reducing unnecessary burdens on industry and creating more jobs through what are the biggest reforms to liquor laws in a decade. Can the minister outline to the house what these reforms will mean for WA's hospitality industry when they come into effect this weekend?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question. It is true that the first phase of the most significant amendments to the Liquor Control Act since the McGowan small bar legislation was introduced will come into force this weekend. It is a momentous time for the hospitality sector and the tourism industry in Western Australia. Phase one of the changes will see a range of big initiatives, a number of which I will cover today, but we have covered many more in the Parliament and many people here will be familiar with them.

Firstly, restaurants with a capacity of fewer than 120 people will no longer have to seek a permit to be able to serve liquor without a meal. That is a significant change; it has been sought by the industry for a long time. It will cut red tape and enable small bars and cafes to access the after-work crowd who want a couple of drinks on their way home. It is a good thing.

Secondly, the reforms will allow all producers to sell and supply liquor for consumption on and off licensed premises, whether they produce beer, wine or spirits. For the first time, the very high quality range of micro distilleries in Western Australia will be afforded the same opportunities as breweries and wineries have been in the past and will be able to pursue their interests. It will allow intrastate and interstate licensees to attend licensed premises to provide free samples and take orders on the day at food and wine shows. This is an interesting one that should have been fixed a long time ago. It was brought to my attention for the first time at the Dowerin Field Day when we were in opposition and would be there in more numbers than National Party members, listening to people on the ground saying what they needed in the regions and what they cared about. It struck me as extraordinary that people who produced wine were not able to go to the Dowerin Field Day, serve their wares, give people advice and make sales on the day. That will be fixed from this weekend.

Thirdly, we will allow pop-up applications that are advertised to be subject to formal objections. This is a response to the challenges that have been confronting bricks and mortar outlets for some time to enable them a fairer playing field on which, subject to certain criteria, pop-ups of a size and duration that warrant it will be compelled to advertise and be subject to a public interest assessment. That is a fair and good thing for the industry.

Fourthly, we will allow barring notices to be issued by police to people in the vicinity of venues, which will help protect our established businesses. In the past, barring notices were given only to people who misbehaved inside the premises. If people misbehaving were in a queue or on a verge outside a premises, they were not subject to barring notices and therefore did not receive that deterrent. That is all good. A number of other changes will come in the future as part of this. We will allow extended trading permits from the current duration of five years to 10 years. That will reduce red tape, extend the opportunity for people to operate once their initial application has been approved and reduce the burden on small businesses associated with that licensing process. That has been long sought after by the industry. I am very pleased to be able to deliver it.

There is one more thing that I think the member for Kingsley will be interested in, as would be a lot of people in this place. Until this change, residents of retirement villages were deemed immature and incapable of being trusted to invite people into their bars or clubs on the retirement village grounds to share a drink and a meal with their visitors. We are fixing that. We are treating our elders, the seniors of Western Australia, with respect, as they should have been for a long time. We are changing that rule.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for South Perth, that is a bonus for you!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I mentioned all these measures and more in a speech last night at Crown Casino where I attended the Restaurant and Catering Industry Association of Australia awards, member for Kingsley, in the company of several other members of Parliament, including the shadow Minister for Racing and Gaming, the member for South Perth.

It was an interesting evening, as the news evolved through social media during the course of the dinner. I reflect on one thing: in the context of all these changes being well received by the audience, it was interesting that the one thing that was not well received was my greeting to the member for South Perth, which has become almost standard now—have you fired up the barbeque for the weekend, John? He did laugh. I do not think he is going to. He had not yet, but he may do next weekend.

