



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Liquor Amendment (2006 FIFA World Cup Hotel Trading) Bill

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Tuesday 23 May 2006.

Second Reading

Mr GRANT McBRIDE (The Entrance—Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister for the Central Coast)
[10.25 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup will be held from 10 June until 10 July 2006 in Germany. This event will generate unprecedented interest in football given Australia's participation in the final tournament for the first time since 1974. It is expected that many Australians, including those who may only have a passing interest in football at other times, will be keen to watch the telecast of matches from Germany. There will be strong interest in outcome of most World Cup matches because of the multicultural nature of Australian society, and the many different nationalities of residents and visitors.

Unfortunately, the time difference between Germany and Australia will result in match telecasts beginning late at night or in the early morning hours. Telecasts for World Cup stage 1 group matches to be held from 10 to 24 June 2006 will begin at 11.00 p.m., midnight, 2.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m. New South Wales time. Telecasts for stage 2 matches to be held from 25 to 28 June 2006 will begin at 1.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m. local time. The telecast of quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals matches to be held from 1 to 10 July 2006 will begin at 1.00 a.m., 4.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m. local time. Many people will choose to watch those telecasts in licensed venues, principally hotels and registered clubs. They want to share the experience; they want to share in the atmosphere with friends. Hotels also have facilities such as large screen displays, which may not be available in their own homes. Under the Liquor Act, standard hotel trading is limited to midnight closing on Monday to Saturday, and 10.00 p.m. closing on Sundays.

A number of hotels already have extended trading past midnight Monday to Saturday approved under the Act. These hotels are located in metropolitan and regional areas and their trading hours vary from a range of closing times through to 24-hour operations. With these limits in mind, the Government has considered the issue of hotel trading during the 2006 FIFA World Cup. There are concerns that some matches, particularly those commencing at 11.00 p.m., will be part-way through when many hotels are required to close for the evening at midnight. Closing hotels part-way through matches will create difficulties for licensees in asking patrons to leave and in dispersing them from the immediate surrounds of the hotel. To reduce the likelihood of these issues, the Government supports a limited general extension of hotel trading hours for those matches beginning at 11.00 p.m. only. This will allow patrons to view the entirety of these matches.

The bill achieves this by amending the Liquor Act so that hotels can automatically trade until 1.00 a.m. on the following day for each day from 10 to 19 June 2006. The Government understands that these are the only days on which match telecasts begin at 11.00 p.m. This is a modest but reasonable extension to accommodate matches which will have already begun during standard trading hours for most hotels. The bill allows the sale of liquor for consumption on the licensed premises only during the extended period, and does not permit take away sales. Further, the extension will not overrule any previously imposed trading restrictions or other conditions that apply to an individual hotel licence.

This includes restrictions resulting from a complaint about disturbance to the neighbourhood. The noise and disturbance complaint provisions of the liquor laws will be unaffected. Hotels will continue to be subject to the liquor laws requiring the responsible service of alcohol and the responsible operation of licensed premises, otherwise disciplinary action can be taken. Also, the bill does not specifically overrule planning approvals administered by local councils. As I have already noted, some hotels already have extended trading approved under the existing liquor laws. This proposal will not restrict the trading rights of those hotels. The Government does not support a general extension of hotel trading to accommodate other World Cup matches beginning at or after midnight. Those matches will not be completed until after 2.00 a.m. New South Wales time; in fact, some will not be completed until after 7.00 a.m. The amendments in this bill apply to hotels only.

While registered clubs are also a popular venue to view sporting telecasts, clubs generally have no restrictions on their trading hours and are therefore able to trade during and after these events. The Government does not consider it necessary or desirable that an extension of trading hours be made available to licensed restaurants or other licensed venues. Those venues are generally not used by the public for viewing sporting events. Finally, there is a precedent for this bill. The Liquor Act was amended in 2002 to extend hotel trading for the final of the 2002 FIFA World Cup held in Japan. I commend the bill to the House.

