

LIQUOR LICENSING — SMALL BAR APPLICATIONS

316. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I am sure the minister will not be patting himself on the back after I ask him this question. I refer to the extremely successful liquor licensing reforms of the former Labor government, which included the new small bar licences.

- (1) Why has the minister put in place new regulations and red tape that are strangling small bar applicants' efforts to get approval?
- (2) Will the minister concede that by removing the capacity for small bar applicants to get council approval concurrently with their application to his department that the process is slowed by three to six months and costs applicants far more?
- (3) Will the minister use his authority to intervene and remove this additional red-tape burden; and, if not, why not?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for his question. It is a fair question. The introduction of small bars has been a great success. I support small bars. The number of staff per client means that people can drink responsibly and in a good atmosphere. The bars promote a good culture for people going out to enjoy themselves. When small bars were introduced, the Director of Liquor Licensing removed the need for council planning approval to be provided up-front to encourage their introduction and to get them up and operating. Planning approval is needed for all licences, not only for small bars. An exemption was given to get them up and running. That exemption ran for the first couple of years. I will have to check the exact time. That situation has reverted to the normal situation. We have not introduced anything new.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You have brought in National Party red tape!

Mr T.K. WALDRON: No! It is in line with all liquor licensing. It is very important when working in the alcohol licensing area to work closely with local governments. Issues have been raised by members opposite about facilities in small bars and the problems that they can cause. Local governments have an important role to play. The increase in the number of small bars is going at an excellent rate. We do not want to flood the city with small bars; we want them to increase at a manageable rate. We are creating a new culture which, I think, is excellent.