

## **TRANSCRIPT**

**Radio interview – Hon Andre Nobbs MLA; Hon Chris Magri MLA  
Radio Norfolk – Darlene Buffett  
16 October 2009**

### **Future of the Liquor Bond**

CHRIS MAGRI: Just two things that I want to tell the community about. One was in relation to the Liquor Bond – Andre thought it would be valuable if we just gave an overview about what's happening in relation to the Liquor Bond. There seems to be a little bit of confusion in the community about exactly what's happening there. I'll just give a really quick overview of how the Liquor Amendment Bill ended up in the Assembly and where we intend to go from here. The initial reasons for the Liquor Amendment Bill arriving in parliament were quite varied, but the main reason there was the same as absolutely everything that we do in the Administration - it's healthy just to have a review of each of these things and assess whether it's valuable to the community that we continue to do it and it is in the community's best interest that we continue to do these things.

Now, we've been totally upfront and honest with what we're doing. We've involved the staff and the community at every stage. There has been absolutely no decision made to sell the Liquor Bond. And what we are doing now is going through that process to assess whether it's in the community's best interest to continue what we are doing, not to continue what we are doing or to streamline what we are doing. And the only way we can do that is with an extremely comprehensive review – which we are about halfway through.

One of the things that might have raised suspicion in the community that it might be a forgone conclusion that the Liquor Bond is to be sold, is the introduction of the Liquor Amendment Bill. Now all that this Bill does is to allow for the possibility of two licences to be created, where somebody other than the Administration put in to wholesale alcohol. And that allows for an expression of interest to be done to see if there is any local interest in buying it and what sort of money those people would be able to pay. Then what we do is put all of that information into the big pot to say "that's not enough, that's not enough, we think that the current system is more valuable to the community or we think that maybe we should look further down this path."

If we did go down the path of actually selling it, then I agree with a lot of what's been said in the community – we need to go out with more robust community consultation - but no decision has been made whatsoever. The debate will continue on Wednesday. Geoff Gardner will be introducing a motion in his name to provide more detail about the due diligence process that we're undertaking. He's going to do a special motion where he refers the Bill to the Impact of Bills

and Subordinate Legislation Committee and he's done his own terms of reference on what he would like that Committee to report on and specific timeframes. So if there is anybody in the community who thinks that we are doing something by stealth or a decision has been made, it's absolutely not correct. The Liquor Bond is not for sale at this stage.

ANDRE NOBBS: This is a review process of what the better outcomes might be. I should point out that this isn't something that's just popped up recently, it's something that we formulated as part of the Strategic Plan for this Assembly, that we would evaluate core business, we would evaluate the efficiency of our delivery of services and programmes and we would also carry out asset assessment. It's an entirely responsible mechanism to use and it's also timely and appropriate to look at all these things, because on the broader picture we're also looking at programme budgeting for the public service and performance contracts.

There are a whole range of things that are now starting to come into line with a more contemporary process and it's optimum time to have this discussion as well. There has been a lot of feedback from the community, probably on both sides of the fence – both positive and negative. You get some phone calls that say "it's about time that you sold it" and other phone calls "please don't sell it – we're worried about the lack of regulation", or they're worried about how their kids may be affected if there's a change in distribution, or they're worried about revenue - and all very worthwhile inputs and I understand that there is a petition also that is in some form of circulation.

CHRIS MAGRI: When we first mentioned it in parliament – actually prior to mentioning anything in parliament – we came to the radio station and suggested that this was the path we were going to take and we were assessing the Liquor Bond. I called for anybody with an interest in the future of the Liquor Bond to contact me or any of my colleagues. I was a little bit concerned that in the first week or two we weren't getting much feedback. Well I can tell you now we've got a lot of feedback in the last month or so. A lot of passion – there's people who are quite passionate in both ways about the future of the Liquor Bond.

I was privileged enough to go to a meeting of the Social Awareness Committee, which is quite a representative group of individuals including the Director of the Hospital, the Sergeant of Police, the different ministers of the various faiths around the community, the Customs Collector – there's a whole pile of what you would call quite representative members of the community. They sat me down for probably 30 to 40 minutes and explained a whole pile of things that are advantageous in us continuing what we are doing. These are the things that are going to be really valuable in the assessment process.

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