



Speech by

Hon. R. GIBBS

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Hansard 23 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Racing Industry Debt

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: I am happy to announce that the Beattie Labor Government will today provide a \$10m cash injection to the Queensland racing industry and pay off racing industry debt of approximately \$37m following last week's sale of the Queensland TAB. The \$10m one-off capital injection is on top of the \$6m we paid to the industry from the finalisation of the Racing Development Fund on 1 July this year. The three codes of the industry will all benefit with the Queensland Principal Club receiving \$7.6m, the Queensland Harness Racing Board, \$1.45m and the greyhound racing industry, \$950,000. This money should help the three codes in putting the industry on a more commercial footing.

Following the sale of the TAB, the three codes will find themselves dealing with the commercial realities of having to compete for the public's leisure dollar. The other consequence of the TAB sale is the end of the massive debt that was bequeathed to the Queensland racing industry by former National Party Governments. When I first became Racing Minister with the election of the Goss Labor Government in 1989, the extent of pork-barrelling by successive National Party Governments became clear. In 1986, the Bjelke-Petersen Government borrowed \$72m from the Westpac Bank on behalf of the racing industry. The money was used to refinance hard-core debt racked up by racing organisations and to provide further financing for development. The Racing Development Fund was burdened with the onerous task of repaying the debt.

In 1991, with thanks to the former Goss Government Treasurer, Keith De Lacy, the debt was refinanced through the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which allowed the Racing Development Corporation greater flexibility to provide assistance to the racing industry. This allowed for investments like Super QRIS, which has proven to be a great boost to Queensland racing.

By the time the Borbidge Government came to office, the debt had been reduced to \$30m. However, the coalition Government again allowed debt to grow. I am happy to be the Racing Minister who will see off this shameful legacy to the Queensland racing industry.
