



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 27 October 1999

**GAMBLING INDUSTRY**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (11 p.m.): Some months ago, I spoke in this place about my concerns regarding the spread of poker machines and the issue of gambling addiction. At the time, I thanked the Government—following my strong representations—for not allowing poker machines into Indooroopilly Shoppingtown, for which there was an application. However, members can imagine my alarm and horror to discover that poker machines are now spreading like wildfire. Meanwhile, the review on gaming in Queensland, that is, Queensland's inquiry into gambling by Mr Briskey, the member for Cleveland, has ground to a halt.

Gambling addiction, of course, is a disease. It is a disease that destroys families. It is a disease that destroys people. It is a disease that creates misery and hopelessness. It is a disease that has withdrawal symptoms. It is a disease that is especially related to the poker machine gambling industry. It is a disease that leads to poverty, crime and drug addiction. It is a disease that means that children go to school with no food, people are losing their homes and their dignity, and children are missing out on education altogether.

The number of bankruptcies in Queensland in the 12 months from June 1997 to June 1998 increased by 16.67%. That large increase in bankruptcies has occurred particularly in the area of non-business bankruptcies. I notice that there has been a growing number of non-business bankruptcies, with 80.1% of all bankruptcies being non-business bankruptcies, compared to 19.9% being business bankruptcies. I am sure that, like me, many members would have thought it might have been the other way around. In the year to June 1997, there were 5,404 bankruptcies. By the end of the year to June 1998, that figure had risen to 6,305.

This gambling addiction—this disease—also causes loss of jobs, loss of business and, of course, family breakdowns. It is apparent in this State that, when one applies for and obtains a general liquor licence to run a restaurant or tavern together with a bottle shop—similar to a hotel licence—as a matter of course one gets a licence for poker machines. The problem is that once one gets these, one can have them in shopping centres and shopping complexes, particularly in the major centres around the State. Of course, we know that poker machines started off in clubs and some hotels, but not in major shopping complexes.

Recently, a tavern in Gympie Road, Aspley was allocated 32 poker machines. I have a letter here from one of the nearby residents who complained about the outbreak of crime that had occurred since poker machines have gone into that particular tavern. The letter writer indicated that, in the previous two weeks, there had been a gross increase in crime problems in the streets surrounding that area. Not only is this occurring in Aspley but also at the Broadbeach shopping centre, in Edward Street in the city and in the Myer Centre in Elizabeth Street there appears to be a general rush for approvals for poker machines throughout shopping complexes, particularly in the city and other parts of the south-east corner of the State.

In recent times, we have seen how gambling has led to the death of an elderly woman, who was strangled by her grandson and stuffed in a tool box, of all things. That was brought about by gambling addiction—not a pleasant occurrence at all.

I think it is fair to say that because many shopping centres have creches or child-minding facilities attached to them, parents can now leave their children at those facilities and, instead of going and doing the grocery shopping, they end up playing the poker machines in those shopping complexes. Many of those individuals cannot go shopping now, because of their addictive problems, and they have to be kept away from shopping complexes. I have had people phone me about this growing problem within the community.

Nerang is the latest to be hit by this problem. A new tavern and a creche or child-minding facility have been located in the Nerang Fair Shopping Centre. This means that there will be a large number of poker machines in that shopping centre. I notice that, according to the Treasurer's Annual Statement, which was tabled today in the Parliament, gambling machine tax receipts have gone up a whopping 28.3%, or \$52.4m. I can easily see why Governments are interested in this and want to get revenue from gambling, particularly from poker machines.

Time expired.

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