



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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BURRANDOWAN RACE DAY

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.08 p.m.): It is ironic that the Burrandowan area situated in the Kingaroy shire has, through no fault of its own, been stripped of an 81-year-old tradition while at the same time the Kingaroy shire begins to celebrate its 100-year heritage. This is a major shire associated with Queensland's history. Last year the Premier spent a lot of money on helping to promote the outback and its heritage in Queensland. Yet here we have the future of the Burrandowan race day, its only race day, threatened with extinction—the major community event within three hours drive of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

I mention Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast because of the large number of people from those areas who travel to enjoy the event. It is unique. I spoke to people from right across Queensland, from New South Wales and even from Stockholm. There were at least 12 tourist coach companies ferrying people to the track and there were reportedly more than 3,000 visitors. None understood why this cultural experience was to be sacrificed. I have a few postcards with me for the Premier. They are the first of many to show their concern.

Although the government, through the minister, passes the buck to the Queensland Racing Board, the truth is that it could intervene to ensure that this vast community is not deprived of this once-a-year event. The \$24,000 in prize money and this community's race day have been denied to them. Major urban race tracks will benefit.

It is ironic that the Minister for Racing is also the Minister for Tourism. Rural areas continue to suffer not only from natural disasters but also from government policy. These areas are constantly being told by government to embrace the tourism dollar to supplement their ever decreasing rural income. When they do, the same government not only fails to support them but also backs those prepared to decimate them.

It is no good just blaming the Racing Board. This minister and the government must accept responsibility for destroying the jobs that this event generated and the economic benefit to the district when more than 3,000 people arrive. On the one hand we have a government urging Queenslanders to holiday in their own state and on the other hand we have a government that is pulling the rug out from under an event like the Burrandowan races, which equates to the Birdsville Races.

Their insurance rose from \$3,000 to \$8,000 but they survived this. They will not survive without the \$24,000 in prize money and the allocation of a race day. Burrandowan needs a commitment from the government that it will back it and review the situation. I acknowledge the minister's remarks earlier today when she stated that the Burrandowan races need only apply for a racing day and to the community benefit fund for financial assistance. There is no guarantee, and that is what we are asking for.

It is pity that no-one from either the Premier's office or the minister's office has attended the Burrandowan races in the past. If they had, I am sure that they would have changed their minds. Too many decisions are made without proper knowledge. I fear for many other cultural events. I urge the government to think about what is being lost for the sake of such a paltry amount. It would take the reduction of a couple of races—not even a race day—on the city circuit to secure Burrandowan's future. The minister has indicated her willingness to work with the committee and the Racing Board has indicated the same, so why haven't both of those parties worked together to secure this longstanding race?

The second issue I want to raise in the House relates to overtaking lanes and the associated speeding fines. On my way to parliament last night I checked out the lengths of the very few overtaking lanes between Kingaroy and the motorway at Caboolture. I have to confess that I and every other person who overtook a vehicle in the overtaking lanes would be fined under the planned targeting by speed cameras, or at the worst we would have been involved in a collision if we had adhered to the rule of not exceeding 100 kilometres an hour. There was not one overtaking lane long enough to overtake a vehicle travelling at 90 kilometres an hour, and I would assume that this same ruling applies to current road markings.

During the entire trip from Kingaroy to the Caboolture motorway there were road markings indicating that we were free to overtake a slower vehicle legally, but that was not possible without exceeding the speed limit. In fact, some of the designated passing lanes were so short that the vehicle in front would have to have been travelling at an incredibly low speed or stopped. The overtaking markings indicated by my odometer ranged from the shortest—it did not even tick over the odometer—of less than 0.1 of a kilometre to the longest of just over 1.7 kilometres. I cannot believe that the minister or the Treasurer would back this dangerous and irresponsible revenue raising concept. It begs the question: just how far in the red will the budget really be this year and is this the reason that the concept of targeting overtaking lanes is even being considered?

We hear of road rage every day, but this outrageous concept will only inflame people to engage in this antisocial behaviour and drive even faster. Overtaking lanes are built to encourage the smooth flow of traffic and are predominantly in very good condition. If we are realistic, they are capable of allowing traffic to travel at 110 kilometres an hour. Instead of the minister increasing driver frustration by this action, where applicable the speed limit on overtaking lanes should be raised to 110 kilometres an hour. The Nanango electorate has overtaking lanes being constructed at the moment. These overtaking lanes are not long enough to allow people to adhere to 100 kilometres an hour. The University of Queensland's analysis published in the *Courier-Mail* found that overtaking a vehicle travelling at 95 kilometres an hour without breaking the law would take a total distance of 2.1 kilometres. Only on major multilane highways does that type of overtaking lane length really exist. Surely commonsense must prevail.

Time expired.