



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL, MLA

STATE MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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GAMING MACHINE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (9.00 p.m.): I welcome enjoining the honourable member for Maryborough in a debate on gambling. It will be interesting to hear where he lines up on country racing and those sorts of issues. There is such a thing as individual responsibility. We do not need government to do everything. Two per cent was all he could come up with. Some 50 per cent of marriages end in failure. Are we going to ban marriage?

This is a welcome piece of legislation. It establishes the cap for hotels. The cap for hotels is important for my electorate, because it is one of the few that has a club with the maximum number of poker machines, and we are in a growth area. To raise the cap for hotels but to keep it for clubs would have disadvantaged the people in the club industry in my electorate. I welcome the fact that transferability will be permitted in growth areas. Sensibly, machines can be relocated from hotels that have closed down or areas that may no longer need them to high-growth areas. One of those high-growth areas is in the electorate of Burleigh, where there is a proposal for a hotel with poker machines. Hopefully, under this proposal that proponent may be able to secure those extra machines.

I welcome the fact also that the Queensland Gaming Commission retains oversight. I commend David Ford and his staff for what they do. On the whole, I find the Gaming Commission is very balanced; I have won one case that I took before it and lost the other. I am pleased it will have oversight of this legislation.

There are hassles with some of the clubs in my electorate, for example, the Greenbank Sport and Recreation Club, which is on the edge of my electorate. It has a small number of machines—an insufficient number to meet the funding requirements under local government and new council regulations, and some of the regulations that we have introduced as a government on antismoking measures. They are not in a position to upgrade their facilities. However, as a sporting club they get that small revenue stream. It is not enough to expand, but not enough, either, for it to qualify for the other grants that we give out for sporting clubs. However, I commend the work that they are doing in Greenbank. It is a fast-growing area. I try to provide the representation to the area that it should have; it is in the corner of the electorate of Lockyer. Those people cry out for decent representation and, because I am a man of infinite charity, I provide that to them.

The other group I commend to the Treasurer is a group called the Logan Liquor Industry Action Group, set up with the encouragement and support of my colleague the member for Springwood. It is a group set up in Logan to help clubs and hotels with the variety of issues that those establishments face these days, whether it be security, local government acts or any new liquor acts that we have, and also issues to do with the gambling industry.

Tonight, because this is a bill to do with gaming in hotels, I wish to express my appreciation on behalf of the schools and the community groups in my electorate that have been helped by the generosity of families involved in the hotel industry. I do not want to nominate those individuals because, in some instances, they have asked that their help be kept confidential. But it would be unfair if I did not point out to the House the generosity that they have shown in terms of the school fetes, the raffles and also a very worthwhile school community project that we are doing and which will be financed by some of the families involved in the hotel industry. Soon after I became a member, they approached me to see whether they could offer assistance to families who might have hit on hard times. I commend them for their generosity and for their spirit of community involvement.

I want also to recognise the work being done by the community benefit fund. I wish to tell the Treasurer how much I value and how much the community groups in my electorate and the electorates of Springwood and Woodridge value the work of Di Campbell and her staff from the community benefit fund. I understand that she ran an excellent seminar in the electorate of Albert. Following on from that, we had a similar group meeting in Logan City. We invited people from throughout Logan and North Beaudesert and they ran a seminar on how to help groups in my electorate apply for funding. As a result of that, we have had some wonderful schemes in schools that never would have otherwise raised the money.

In my electorate, fetes are very lucky to break even these days. After a heck of a lot of work, months of preparation and more hard work on the day, they might walk away with \$8,000. They are not in a financial position to raise the money. A good grant from the community benefit fund has been able to help schools such as the Burrowes school and the Crestmead school to get an all-purpose sports facility. The Burrowes school was able to help finance a wonderful community school. Recently, the Treasurer was able to announce that the Greenbank school P&C would get lighting for a swimming pool through that program. That might not sound like a big deal in other areas. However, for the many families that had no infrastructure there, that \$29,000 meant everything. They wanted to thank the government and in particular the officers of the community benefit fund for helping them. Another school in my electorate had been trying for ages to get a small area from which to sell school uniforms. They did not have a hope of raising the money, but through this fund they were able to get it.

In conclusion, with this imaginative scheme a group called the Logan City Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, by working with our Community Jobs Plan, BoysTown Link Up, Arts Queensland and the community benefit fund in a joint submission, was able to provide a wonderful meeting room complex for community members from the many different migrant backgrounds we have in Logan City. People from something like 163 different ethnic backgrounds make their homes in Logan City—the largest in Australia. By joining all of the state government grants together, this group was able to fund this wonderful facility. It was able to do this at a time when it has been asked, as some other groups in Queensland have been asked, to fund the refugee resettlement program. We are picking that up in Logan City, and very proudly. Even though there are a stack of problems there, it has found it in its heart to do this. It knows that whilst charity begins at home it does not have to end at home.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I commend this proposal to you. I hope the Treasurer will pass on the thanks of the members from Logan City to the people who run the community benefit fund for their understanding and the way they help us with our submissions.