



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Tuesday, 8 March 2005

RACING AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.14 pm): I am pleased to rise in the House today, as the Liberal spokesman for racing, to speak on the Racing Amendment Bill. I am also pleased to say that the Liberal Party congratulates the Australian Labor Party on finally doing something about the state of Queensland racing, in particular the racing at our country tracks. I have fond memories of being at Centacare days at Esk and Beaudesert, and I know that my wife had a memorable weekend at the Roma picnic races while I was slaving over hot mouths in the UK many years ago.

For a long time now the art of country racing has been dying. We have heard many times from members on my right about the contribution that country racing makes to communities. We have also heard of the dire situation that some of these clubs are in and the need for this to be fixed. I tend to agree with these sentiments. Country racing has had a big cloud over it for too long, not knowing where the future lies for this Australian institution. This bill may provide some certainty over that.

While the Liberal Party supports the bill in general, there are a number of provisions in the bill which will be watched by the Liberal Party as they are implemented. The bill ensures that country racing clubs in various regions have representation and, further, that these areas are designed such that the areas represent clubs with similar interests. This is a very good idea. Too often country racing is grouped under one category. Perhaps both sides of the House have been guilty of looking for a quick-fix solution for all non-TAB race clubs in Queensland, without recognising that there are different needs for different clubs. This recognition in the bill is important.

Whilst recognition is important, it is also important that the intention of this move is maintained throughout the bill. For this reason, there are a number of provisions that should be looked at to ensure that they maintain this intention. Firstly, when looking at the selection panel mentioned in clause 9, proposed subsection 64A, which chooses people for a committee, we see that of the three members of the panel, one of the members does not have to be from the country racing association area specified. Of the three members, two must be from the country racing association and the other can be a trainer, bookmaker or jockey who need not be in the geographical region of the country racing association.

Further, there needs to be a unanimous decision for the appointment of a person to represent that country racing authority on the Country Racing Committee. This means that someone who does not have to work or live in the geographical region of the authority can veto any candidate who may seek appointment.

Mr Schwarten: They must be selected locally, though.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take that interjection. Thank you. I do not feel that it is fair if the bill seeks to maintain the intention that different areas have different needs when this provision allows an out-of-towner to have a final say on an appointment to the committee.

Mr Schwarten: I have answered that.

Mr LANGBROEK: I share the concerns of the honourable member for Darling Downs and I note that he has some proposed amendments to this clause when it is considered in detail.

Secondly, while I feel that this intention is attempted to be maintained by the provision excluding members of committees at TABQ clubs becoming members of the Country Racing Committee, the manner in which the bill prescribes this could be dangerous for cohesion in Queensland Racing. The Liberal Party will not continue their support of this bill if, de facto, there is a division created between the nine TABQ clubs and country racing clubs. The Liberal Party will not support a bill that, de facto, creates a rift between the two sectors of the industry. I believe that both sectors have a great deal to offer the other about new ways of running clubs and furthering the horse racing industry in Queensland. We cannot afford to factionalise Queensland's fourth largest industry. While the bill does not create a visible or intentional gap, there is the ammunition there for it to occur. I urge the minister to watch this carefully and I remind him that the Liberal Party will be watching this carefully. With those two minor submissions, I commend the bill to the House.