



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2006

RACING (RACE FIELDS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.24 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today to introduce a bill to protect the Queensland racing industry from unauthorised betting exchanges. The racing industry is an important part of Queensland not just because of its economic benefits but also because of the entertainment it provides for so many Queenslanders. But this success is under threat from unauthorised betting exchanges that generate significant revenue from Queensland Racing but which make no financial contribution to the industry or to state revenue in return. Unauthorised betting exchanges transactions are invisible to racing regulators and some exchanges, such as the company Betfair, allow punters to back an animal to lose a race. These exchanges could allow cheating to become a reality in our racing industry and undermine not only Queensland Racing but the entire Australian racing industry.

The Racing (Race Fields) Amendment Bill 2006 seeks to amend the Racing Act 2002 by creating a new offence prohibiting the unauthorised publication of race fields. It is designed to protect the racing industry against unauthorised betting exchanges based interstate or overseas. Queensland Racing has made it clear that it does not want betting exchanges, not due to fear of competition against the TAB but to ensure the integrity of the industry as a whole. This amendment is similar to the approach taken by the Victorian and New South Wales parliaments and is being considered by the Western Australian government.

I will also emphasise that the bill does not prohibit the state to allow new licensed operators in the future or prohibit the publication of race fields by newspapers or other industry stakeholders. In conclusion, this bill will protect the integrity of the Queensland racing industry and the revenues of both the government and, most importantly, the racing industry itself. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Schwarten, adjourned.