



Speech by

Hon. Andrew Fraser

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Hansard Tuesday, 11 March 2008

RACING AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (12.50 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Racing Amendment Bill 2008 is the final step in moving the Queensland racing industry into the 21st century and giving the industry ownership of its destiny. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Racing Act 2002 to give effect to the transition of the harness and greyhound control bodies from statutory bodies to companies limited by guarantee. This transition is the final phase in the reform of the racing industry in Queensland that started with the privatisation of the TAB. It implements the provisions of the Racing Act that require the transition of control bodies from statutory authorities to corporations by 1 July 2008.

Queensland Racing Limited, a company limited by guarantee, became the control body for thoroughbred racing on 1 July 2006. When the Racing Act was passed in October 2002, it was recognised that the racing industry must modernise if it was to remain competitive in the privatised wagering environment. This modernisation included a more corporate and commercial focus which is best achieved through a company structure. The move to a corporate structure also allows greater industry ownership of their future while retaining an independent, skills based board.

This change reflects the maturation of the harness and greyhound codes that for the first time will be involved in electing their control body boards through their stakeholder groups. In October 2007, companies formed by the respective statutory bodies applied for approval under the Racing Act as the control bodies for the harness and greyhound codes of racing. Following a detailed assessment process, as required by the Racing Act, Queensland Harness Racing Limited and Greyhounds Queensland Limited were approved as the control bodies for the harness and greyhound codes respectively, subject to conditions.

Extensive consultation was carried out as is required by the Racing Act and the public submissions received indicate that there were no objections to the approval of Queensland Harness Racing Limited and Greyhounds Queensland Limited as the control bodies for the harness and greyhound codes of racing respectively in Queensland. The response by industry participants, including race clubs at industry consultation meetings, was positive, with strong support for the applications for control body approvals by Queensland Harness Racing Limited and Greyhounds Queensland Limited.

It is proposed to amend the Racing Act to enable the transfer of the employees, assets, liabilities and other responsibilities of the Queensland Harness Racing Board and Greyhound Racing Authority to the new control bodies. From 1 July 2008, Queensland Harness Racing Limited and Greyhounds Queensland Limited will be the control bodies for greyhound and harness racing in Queensland, with the principal object of exercising the powers and performing the functions of a control body under the Racing Act.

The current members of the Greyhound Racing Authority will serve as the inaugural board of the company for a period of two years following which they will progressively be required to stand for re-

election. Current Queensland Harness Racing Board Chair, Bob Lette, and member, Janice Dawson, will be joined on the inaugural board of Queensland Harness Racing Limited by Kevin Seymour and Dave Knudsen. The inaugural Harness Racing Board is appointed for two years and will also progressively be required to stand for re-election.

In closing, this bill provides the harness and greyhound codes with the same opportunity as the thoroughbred code to take ownership of their future in the dynamic and constantly changing privatised wagering environment. The three racing codes are better placed to meet the challenges of the wagering environment as corporate entities while the framework of the Racing Act ensures accountability for the industry's integrity. The bill also proposes minor amendments to the act in relation to the administrative requirements for bookmakers and to increase transparency in the ownership of licensed animals by executive officers of control bodies. I commend the bill to the House.