



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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ADJOURNMENT

Country Racing

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.22 pm): I wish to talk about the funding model for country racing and the financial difficulties that face the racing industry. I have been informed that once all revenue streams have been taken into account the actual operating loss of Racing Queensland is some \$11 million, and of that thoroughbred racing accounts for a meagre \$4 million. It is imperative that the \$7 million loss which harness racing is responsible for is recouped from within that sector of the community. It would be grossly unfair to make thoroughbred racing participants foot the bill for the mismanagement of parties outside of their influence.

To fully appreciate what \$4 million represents within Racing Queensland, it is important to note that the prize money for the 2015 Stradbroke Handicap was \$2 million, the Magic Millions race day on the Gold Coast is set to receive \$35 million over the next seven years from Racing Queensland, and renovations to the Eagle Farm racetrack have come at a cost of \$22 million. If Racing Queensland wound back the generosity of some racing entities in South-East Queensland at the expense of country racing, it would go a long way to returning the thoroughbred racing sector of the industry back into the black.

At present, country racing participants have to pay \$173 in starters' fees while competing for only \$4,500 of winning prize money. In comparison, their city counterparts pay only \$225 when their first placed prize money is \$45,000. There is a definite disparity which is highly evident. Country races are a completely different animal from those in metropolitan areas. I think a perfect illustration of that disparity is that in South-East Queensland the Magic Millions race day carries \$10.2 million in prize money which is the amount it costs to fund all of country racing in Queensland for a whole year.

To look for savings in these losses from country racing in Queensland would impact very heavily on a social event that per head of population is much better supported in country areas than it is in city areas. It means a lot more to people in a country area to have those things exist. They are running on a shoestring budget. I have many friends who are trainers, jockeys and owners of horses in western areas, and a lot of them are just doing it for love. If they have to bear the brunt of these losses and are made to carry some of this burden, there is a serious risk of collapse of this industry in the west which is on wobbly wheels as it is at the moment. A lot of these communities will be hit very hard, and we can ill afford to lose such an important part of our social infrastructure at this time.