




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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RACING INTEGRITY BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (9.47 pm): It is extraordinary to hear the police minister talk about legacy when we think about Labor's legacy of failed public administration—the payroll debacle, the fake Tahitian prince episode, the Jayant Patel saga and Labor's own Triple P program. I rise tonight to make a contribution to the Racing Integrity Bill 2015. I oppose this legislation due to the fact that this bill has had no genuine stakeholder input.

Mr Costigan: You got that right.

Dr ROWAN: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. If the Racing Integrity Bill 2015 is passed and adopted here in Queensland, industry participants will have a governance structure and legislative framework which is ill-advised, with policy matters and other vital decisions relating to the integrity of the industry being made by individuals with inadequate knowledge. Ministers of the Palaszczuk Labor government have been warned many times by individuals and organisations within Queensland's racing industry of the dire consequences of failing to listen and consult.

It is also important to note that the Queensland parliament's Agriculture and Environment Committee could not agree that the bill be passed. The Agriculture and Environment Committee made a total of eight recommendations, as well as seeking three points of clarification. The Racing Integrity Bill 2015 will substantially alter the way in which Queensland's racing industry is administered and in doing so will deliver a poorer outcome for all concerned. The Racing Integrity Bill proposes to completely separate the commercial and integrity arms of Queensland's racing industry. This would put Queensland at variance with most of the significant racing and sporting administration models in Australasia.

The estimated cost of this proposal is said to be between \$16 million to \$20 million per year, and the great concern is that the industry will bear the brunt of these costs—costs, quite clearly, that the industry cannot bear. The Agriculture and Environment Committee received 148 submissions. Again, one point that nearly all of those submissions made was that there has been a failure to provide sufficient consultation to the many affected racing enthusiasts, industry participants and relevant stakeholders in Queensland. The Toowoomba Turf Club chairman, Mr Bob Frappell, claims, 'The powers in the state government's proposed Racing Integrity Bill are so excessive that they make Queensland's controversial antibiotic laws look like a set of school rules.' That is his quote.

It is the general belief throughout the industry that the government has reacted haphazardly to the greyhound live-baiting scandal to the detriment of the thoroughbred and harness racing industries. Like a lot of people in our community, including many fellow parliamentarians, I was appalled by the images of animal cruelty which we all saw via various media outlets. Such animal cruelty is an outrageous blight on a humane and caring society. However, an important point to make and mention at this point is that the live-baiting issue has been a national problem, yet other Australian states have not penalised the other racing codes.

The commission of inquiry and its report occurred at a time when the live-baiting practices of the greyhound industry were at the forefront of the minds of both the general public as well as the racing industry in general. Any review of racing should take into consideration the needs of the thoroughbred industry and not rely only upon the greyhound racing industry. LNP members on this side of the House are strongly opposed to the proposed structure of the all-codes board. To say that a board which will be dealing with millions of dollars will only need three of the seven members to have any racing experience is beyond belief. It is hard to understand—because the racing industry is so specialised—that there could be no need for board members to have knowledge of the costs and problems that are associated within the industry and therefore potentially lack any strategic plans to advance the industry forward. Board members most certainly do need to have, I believe, racing industry experience combined with a strong business and marketing knowledge business base.

The state government has stated that a substantial blow-out in the vicinity of \$28 million has occurred in the management of this industry, and it is due to this figure that they are cutting both prize money and race meetings to help plug the gap. However, on the other hand, the Palaszczuk Labor government wants the industry to fund the integrity commission.

The racing minister and member for Brisbane Central, Grace Grace, has steadfastly refused to clarify the costs related to Labor's proposals. Likely costs for government of implementing the Racing Integrity Bill 2015 including relevant staffing must be provided. As a former medical superintendent with the right of private practice, and having worked in a number of rural communities in Queensland in places like Mungindi and Oakey and having attended country race meets at places like Roma and other communities, I know just how important those types of events are to the community not only from a social perspective in that it brings people together and people have a very enjoyable day. It also brings many people from out of town who contribute to the local economy and support many small businesses in town, whether that be the local newsagent, the local publican or the local bakery.

Mr Costigan: Motels.

Dr ROWAN: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. All of those things are vitally important for those communities from an economic perspective and for the sustainable social fabric of those Queensland communities. I conclude as I commenced: I oppose this bill primarily because of the total lack of information on the costings and the complete lack of appropriate and genuine consultation with the racing industry.

I am sure it will please the other side of the House to know that I am a constitutional monarchist. Today is Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday. Given that she very much enjoys racing, I would like to finish by acknowledging the Queen's dignified reign as well as her loyal and dedicated service to many worthy causes not only in the United Kingdom but also in many countries around the world. I wish her and her family an enjoyable day as they celebrate this milestone. I acknowledge the contributions that she has made around the world through many endeavours, including as the head of the Commonwealth.