




Speech By  
**Jarrold Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 November 2016

### **MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.13 pm): In speaking to the Major Sports Facilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, I want to speak to two elements of the bill—that is, the amendments to the Gaming Machine Act 1992 and the Keno Act 1994—as they relate to the portfolio responsibilities that I have with respect to liquor licensing and casinos in Queensland. When in government, the LNP very much supported community club land throughout Queensland. We set up the red-tape-reduction panel in the liquor licensing industry. We had responsible gambling representatives, the Queensland Hotels Association, Clubs Queensland, other licensees and other people experienced in the field of running licensed organisations.

Our community clubs contribute amazingly to our wonderful communities throughout Queensland. In government, the LNP wanted to ensure that we supported our community clubs every step of the way. That is why we introduced a lot of the reforms, if not most of the reforms, that were asked for by Clubs Queensland and the Queensland Hotels Association after extensive consultation with the community of Queensland. Those amendments were backed by the industry and they were common sense.

I remember particularly dealing with amendments to the Liquor Act with respect to community liquor permits. We made sure that about 15,000 to 20,000 community groups across Queensland did not have to apply for community liquor permits anymore, saving them \$55 and nine pages of regulation and red tape. I remember that amendments were made to legislation relating to school fetes and show societies so that events could be held without nine pages of regulation having to be filled out if the schools or the show societies wanted to sell alcohol at those particular events. The LNP has always been a strong supporter of club land—our community clubs—and those in the hotel industry who employ many thousands of Queenslanders.

The amendments to the Gaming Machine Act adjust the tax methodology to the benefit of community clubs that operate more than one premise in order to balance the existing control approach to club expansions. When the LNP was in government it looked at this issue when it was formulating its three to four red-tape-reduction bills. At that stage, these amendments did not end up in legislation, but they were certainly matters that the LNP was considering. As I travelled around the state as the minister responsible for the liquor industry, I went to many community clubs that wanted to expand, but could not. I also met with a lot of small community clubs that were on the verge of closing down if they were not given the opportunity from larger clubs to amalgamate. I remember the Caloundra RSL took over the Caloundra Power Boat Club.

At that time, we allowed some amendments to the Gaming Machine Act to fix one of the issues that clubs had with respect to taking over smaller clubs or creating additional clubs without increasing the maximum number of gaming machines that we had in Queensland. That figure stayed the same. We achieved that for club land.

As I said, the LNP in government achieved many other reforms. I remember travelling to areas of Queensland where I heard from smaller clubs that they really needed the support of the larger clubs. The larger clubs, through Clubs Queensland, had put to us this change in the tax methodology. That is why the LNP will be supporting that particular amendment today.

As I said, Clubs Queensland is a membership based, not-for-profit organisation. From 2009 it was reported that community club land gave \$223 million in cash contributions to the Queensland community, provided 4.83 million volunteer hours across Queensland and employed 27,000 people. We will always do what we can to support this industry in the state.

We all have community clubs in our electorates. In my electorate there is the Kawana Waters Surf Life Saving Club, which also houses the Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch. There is also the Kawana bowls club and just down the road in the electorate of the member for Caloundra there is the Caloundra RSL. I pay tribute to the management team and the volunteers of the Kawana Waters Surf Life Saving Club, the Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch, the Kawana bowls club and the Caloundra RSL. They contribute an enormous number of volunteer hours to our communities to make sure that the beaches are kept safe, that our veterans are looked after, that there are social outlets for people, such as playing bowls at the Kawana bowls club, and that they raise money for communities and charities. I thank all the volunteers of all of those clubs for the amazing work they do and the enormous number of hours they put into volunteering on the Sunshine Coast.

I also want to talk about the Caboolture Sports Club, which is a great club. It is expanding to the North Lakes Sports Club—

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** They had a good MP who, unfortunately, lost his seat at the election in 2015. He will be back and one day that area will have another good MP. I think the current member also lost an election and had a little vacation for a period. He went wandering for a little while and he is back.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. He went on a bit of a sabbatical. The North Lakes Sports Club is coming out of the ground. I watch the progress of construction in videos that Matt Rafton has taken around the site and puts up on his Facebook page. It has been great to see the North Lakes Sports Club come out of the ground. This amendment will benefit clubs such as the Caboolture Sports Club and the North Lakes Sports Club with those greenfield sites. There are other opportunities around Queensland as well. Although I support the Caboolture Sports Club very much, recently they wheeled out Darryl Braithwaite to sing his big hit *Horses*.

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Everyone is entertained differently. If it had been an Elvis impersonator, member for Morayfield, I would have been there in a heartbeat. Unfortunately, I missed that one. Congratulations to those community clubs not only in my electorate but right around Queensland. As I said when I was the minister responsible for liquor licensing travelling around Queensland, there was amazing work happening.

The amendments to the Keno Act introduce the Keno pooling arrangement, which I do not have a problem with. Tabcorp is the current owner of Keno in Queensland. Tabcorp has announced through the media that it is trying to merge with Tatts Group which is based in Queensland. Tatts Group has the exclusive wagering licence in Queensland, which funds the racing industry, and the exclusive lotteries licence following the Beattie government's sale of Golden Casket in 2007. Whilst in government from 2012 to 2015 the LNP ensured that Tatts Group moved its head office to Queensland. We are calling on the government to do what it can to ensure that 2,000 jobs at Tatts Group remain in Queensland, as well as support the 1,100 lottery agents, many of them small business owners and newsagents, by keeping their corporate headquarters in Brisbane. If the Tabcorp merger with Tatts goes ahead the opposition will be very concerned if Tabcorp decide to move its head office out of Queensland. We are unsure of the jobs that will potentially be lost from that merger.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, has recently written to Mr David Attenborough, chief executive officer of Tabcorp, on 20 October. We understand the government is now in discussions with the organisations to talk about jobs. It is good to see it is following the LNP's lead. Ten days later we hear the government is thinking about jobs and thinking what the merger will do. We do not want to involve ourselves with the private sector. The private sector will do what it needs to for its shareholders, we completely appreciate and understand that, but we do express our concern that if the merger happens with Tabcorp and Tatts that Tatts will no longer have a

head office in Queensland, it will be moved out of the state and so too will many thousands of jobs. We do not want that to happen. It is incumbent on the current government, if the merger is approved and goes ahead, to ensure there are conditions specific to that approval that retains those jobs in Queensland.

The LNP has been leading the charge on this. I table a copy of a letter that the Leader of the Opposition has written to Mr David Attenborough dated 20 October 2016 which expresses our concerns with respect to the merger. As I said, we do not want to involve ourselves. The private sector will do what it needs to do for its shareholders, but we do express those concerns. It is incumbent on the government to ensure that jobs remain in Queensland. I thank our community club land for the many man hours they put in and the hundreds of thousands of dollars they raise for our communities right around Queensland.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 20 October 2016, from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tim Nicholls MP, to the Chief Executive Officer, Tabcorp, Mr David Attenborough, regarding proposed merger of Tatts Group and Tabcorp [\[1955\]](#).