




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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### **RACING INTEGRITY BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.54 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak on the Racing Integrity Bill 2015. We will be opposing the bill because of a lack of information on costings and a complete lack of consultation with the industry. Let me repeat that: a complete lack of consultation with the industry. I have been dealing with this issue involving the racing industry for the last 12 months. Country racing means a lot to regional Queensland. Not only is it a great form of a social opportunity for people from Western Queensland to come together to catch up with old mates, family and friends; it also provides an opportunity for jobs, because many people in regional Queensland and Western Queensland are jockeys, strappers and trainers. This industry provides additional income for them, which they need. They also love being involved in an industry such as country racing that brings together friends and family from far and wide across regional Queensland.

There has been a lot of confusion and certainly a lot of angst in country racing over the last 12 months in terms of its future and whether we will continue to see these race days which are so important—so important—to regional Queensland continue. One only has to look at Longreach. We had the 125-year anniversary of the Longreach Jockey Club last September—a massive day. That was not only a combination of being at a big day celebrating 125 years of the Longreach Jockey Club and the racing industry in Longreach but also an opportunity for people outside of Western Queensland such as Brisbane to come up and help us not only celebrate the day but put much needed income into that community. Well over 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 people turned up to the Longreach racecourse that day. There was generous support—absolutely generous support—from Alliance Airlines, UBET and all of those people associated with racing from South-East Queensland who came to Longreach and played a critical role in putting much needed cash into that town. As most members in this House know, I continue to talk about drought and the need to have money in these towns, and that is what racing does. That is what racing does to communities such as Longreach all the way to the Bluff Amateurs. Of course, Bluff is a special place in my electorate just 20 kilometres east of Blackwater and they are also very proud of their racing there. Not only does that provide an opportunity for us to get together and have a beer and for those who want to have a punt; it is certainly an opportunity for us to catch up with many people across our region, and the racing industry plays a critical role in that.

The racing industry is important for Western Queensland, as I said before, with regard to jobs. It is critical because the passion of thoroughbred horseracing and the passion of racing is in our DNA in Western Queensland. I honestly think that we need to ensure that we have a racing industry that survives for a very long time. The one-day events and those events in Longreach and Emerald are very important. My concern is we have a 2½-year commitment at the moment, but we need a longer commitment because we have people who invest in these industries, invest in these horses and invest in the infrastructure. Most importantly, the people involved in racing in Western Queensland are volunteers. They are people off the land, they are people who own the newsagency, they are people who have lived in those towns for a very long time and this is their pastime and racing is of critical importance.

I also want to give recognition to everybody who gets involved in racing across Queensland. Plenty of trainers, bookmakers and strappers come up to me all of the time and say, 'What is our future?' They have had a very nervous time over the last 12 months in terms of knowing what is going to happen to the racing industry out there. Storkie, who is a good mate of mine, is an absolute champion for the Emerald racing industry in the Central Highlands. Whether he is behind the bar or taking the photographs on the finish line—

**Mr Cripps:** Holding it up.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes, holding the bar up. We all hold the bar up out there. He has such passion for the racing industry. I call on the Labor government to support country racing, to support racing as a whole and to ensure that we have more opportunities than 2½ years—that we can plan out five years, 10 years—to ensure that we keep an industry which is important to the economic wellbeing of Western Queensland not only by employing people such as strappers, jockeys, bookmakers and trainers but also to provide opportunities for us to fundraise for the Royal Flying Doctor and for the Western Queensland drought appeal. For the many netball, touch football and Rugby League clubs, that is what racing does out there and it is important that it continues to be that way.

My main concern at the moment is that we need a commitment of more than 2½ years. We need four years or we need 10 years, but we need to have that confidence out there so that people know that what they are doing is going to stay, because it is an expensive sport for people who are involved in this. When they invest in horses—when they invest in those thoroughbreds—it plays a critical role.