




Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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### **RACING INTEGRITY BILL**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (8.21 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the Racing Integrity Bill 2015. My family has had a long association with the thoroughbred racing industry, with my grandfather being an owner trainer in the Oakey and Toowoomba districts and one of my uncles, John Coonan, a bookmaker for many years regularly attending race meetings in Toowoomba and the local area. My uncle Des Weir owned and raced horses trained by the late great Jim Atkins. As a child I would attend the local race meetings sharing in the highs and lows that come with racing. I learnt to have a great appreciation for the racing industry, something that I still have to this day, unlike the Labor Party opposite. When the Palaszczuk government was elected the racing industry was filled with a sense of dread as the last time they held office they cut 240 country race meetings. Those fears were well founded.

The *Four Corners* program gave this Labor government the excuse to once again launch an attack on the racing industry. The program highlighted acts of cruelty in the form of live baiting in the greyhound racing industry within Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The actions of those involved needed to be addressed and stamped out. I think all in this House would agree. New South Wales and Victoria have taken measures to address the practices of cruelty in the greyhound industry. The Queensland Labor government, on the other hand, saw the opportunity to take a hatchet to the racing industry as a whole across all racing codes. There was a gross overreaction in Queensland not seen in the southern states, with the sacking of the entire board and a commission of inquiry established. This reaction was a particular concern in the seat of Condamine, which is home to one of the largest thoroughbred breeding industries in the state with well-known studs that are recognised and respected right down the eastern seaboard.

At the recent Gold Coast yearling sales, yearlings from the Condamine electorate grossed \$2.5 million. These studs are significant employers of local people from farriers to jockeys to veterinarian services to feed suppliers to strappers not to mention the approximate 70 trainers who operate in the Condamine electorate. The flow-on benefits to the wider community are also important with accommodation and food service providers, local business owners and fuel stations profiting from the racing industry.

Thoroughbred racing industry participants were extremely disappointed at the lack of consultation during the formation of this bill. This point was raised with the member for Currumbin and shadow racing minister, Jann Stuckey, during a roundtable discussion in Toowoomba. Given that the thoroughbred racing industry makes up approximately 80 per cent of the entire racing industry and no integrity issues were uncovered during the inquiry, the bill has been a massive disappointment to those involved in the industry. Considering the importance of thoroughbred racing to the Queensland economy, it would have been logical to include some input from representatives of the industry in discussions. Sadly, no meaningful consultation took place.

Condamine is home to racecourses at Oakey, Clifton, Bell and Dalby. The annual Dalby Picnic Races will be held next weekend, with over 3,000 expected to attend from all over Queensland. This event is over 100 years old and the Dalby Plough Inn Cup will be holding its 157th meeting later this year. The racing industry is a vital part of the economy in the electorate of Condamine. Racing in Condamine cannot afford to lose any of the current race dates or racing participants. However, the uncertainty that this Labor government has foisted upon the industry has once again made the country racing industry very worried.

Condamine has a long and proud history in the racing industry. There is a bronze statue in the centre of the Oakey township of the mighty Bernborough, who began his illustrious racing career in Oakey before becoming a racing legend forever etched in the racing history books. The racing community of Condamine and Queensland need certainty around their industry and this bill does nothing to appease people's fears. I will be opposing this bill.