




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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### **RACING INTEGRITY BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.43 pm): I have great news for the racing industry apprentices on the other side of this House, particularly for the newly minted minister, who has been gladhanding around all the tracks across Queensland as best she can—smiling, telling me and other people how much she knows about betting, backing Honey Toast and Prince of Penzance because of the sisterhood and all of these other matters. The great news is that not one thoroughbred has been implicated in the live-baiting fiasco. They have not chased one little black pig, one possum or one chook.

The bottom line is: this bill before the House is the result of the greyhound industry and its disgusting behaviour in relation to live baiting, which all members in this House would say is totally unacceptable. What did the Labor Party do? With a very small minority—I think a couple of thousand participants in the greyhound industry—they took a sledgehammer to smash a walnut in terms of bashing up on the thoroughbred industry. As the minister may or may not know, the thoroughbred industry makes up about 80 per cent of the racing industry in Queensland. It boasts some 30,000 participants. In years gone by it has been served by such luminary racing ministers as Gibbs, Schwarten, Lawlor and Rose. I had forgotten that brilliant light of the racing industry that was Merri Rose! I am particularly aware that the member for Rockhampton was pleased to leave the industry, because there are more politics in the racing industry than will ever be seen in this House. I can assure the minister that, in spite of them smiling and so on, they draw their knives to make sure the minister keeps going in the right direction.

What we have here is a government determined to bash up on the thoroughbred industry for a small bit of bad behaviour by the greyhound industry. This legislation seeks to create for the racing industry a board comprising seven members, four of whom have no idea about racing—this is brilliant stuff—and one each from the other codes, that is, two minor codes and the thoroughbred code. Tonight I speak from the thoroughbred industry's perspective because I do have a reasonable knowledge and a long, 50-year involvement in the industry. The clever Labor Party people seek to put in place a board of which 14 per cent are knowledgeable in the thoroughbred industry. That is really a genius move by the minister. A code that makes up 80 per cent of the racing industry gets 14 per cent of the representation. It sounds like a great old Labor Party stack to me in terms of setting a future direction.

It was the greyhound racing industry that caused this major problem such that we had to sack all the boards of thoroughbreds and start again. There was a cost to industry of a squillion dollars by putting in place this consultant who was going to be paid \$20,000 a week or whatever. There was a guy who was in charge—the steward of the greyhound industry—to stop this live-baiting fiasco. He was supposed to make sure greyhounds were run in a proper manner, not offensive to the greater public. I acknowledge that the member for Rockhampton has just come into the chamber; it is lovely to see him. The steward in charge of greyhounds—the steward is the 'policeman', for the benefit of the apprentices on the other side of the House—was supposed to hold the greyhound industry to account in terms of its behaviour. That 'policeman' was a fellow called Jamie Dart. Because the greyhound industry was so

disgusting and so warped, we promoted him to be the head of integrity for all of the codes. There is logic there, but the minister will have to explain it to me in her speech in reply to the debate. In other words, the guy who was in charge of protecting the greyhound industry from that disgusting behaviour was promoted to oversee all codes—thoroughbreds, trotting and greyhounds—because of his successful work in policing the greyhound industry! This is the government that we are supposed to believe likes the thoroughbred industry.

What is even worse, they are moving along in this particular bill to say, 'We are sending all these tests over to the department of agriculture. We will keep it separate from the racing industry.' The minister would know how difficult it is to get any results out of another government department on time, without cost and so on. The worst thing in government is dealing between government departments. No-one who has been a minister would deny that.

**Ms Grace:** It is coming back, Ray.

**Mr STEVENS:** That is not what is in the explanatory notes. That will be moved again. I am glad the minister has taken my advice on that matter. She must have pre-empted what I was going to say.

Besides that, the minister has decided that it does not matter what it costs: the wonderful Treasurer will fund the whole thing and it will not cost the racing industry a dime. That is not going to last because governments—and it has been proven over many years—have a mentality that says that the racing industry is a rich man's sport and it should support itself. Unfortunately, that is the bad Labor view that it has taken for many years when it is a sport, a passion and a hobby for many Queenslanders. I can assure you that we actually lose money on supporting our sport! The government is happy to put millions and millions into the Broncos in stadiums, millions into netball and millions into all other matters surrounding sport.

This is a sport followed by many participants directly getting paid—and we acknowledge that it might be around the 30,000 figure—but there are literally hundreds of thousands of everyday punters and everyday people out there following the racing industry and they are sick and tired of the Labor Party coming in and either mucking it up itself or paying a guy like Bob Bentley to muck it up for it. With regard to racing integrity, step 1 on the Bob Bentley trail was that we got him back again, and those opposite said that politically it was wonderful for them. I thank the good Labor Party for that, but I can assure them that wherever I go—and I have been to the trots, dogs and racing—they absolutely hated the former chairman of Queensland Racing that Mr Schwarten flicked everything over to in Mr Bob Bentley, and that was a major part of the vote that transferred to the LNP in winning the 2012 election. Mr Bentley obviously moved off, but they have replaced him with a couple of ministers who believe that they might know something about racing. I do not know what the previous minister felt he knew about racing, but I am sure he was glad to see a new minister get hold of the chalice.

The fact is that this government ignores all the time that this is the lifeblood for country and regional communities. It is their social interaction. In some cases it is the only time they meet up. At Oak Park for instance, they take their two weeks holidays and that is their outing for the year. I can assure members that what we will get with only that 14 per cent representation will be demands on the thoroughbred industry that will put country racing out of business and back again in the dark old Bentley days. Under the LNP we were going forward and country racing was booming. When the minister goes around those country areas, she just has to ask people how they feel about country racing. I can tell the minister the people to talk to because I know them all well. They might smile at the minister and tell her whatever she knows, but it was going very well. Country people were enjoying it, regional people were enjoying it and there was a philosophy that racing in Queensland could again compete nationally against a cashed-up Victoria and a cashed-up New South Wales and we were going in the right direction.

What is this government doing? It is putting the brakes on that and smashing it to pieces with the biggest sledgehammer it could find and putting in place all of these odd-bod stupid committees contained in this ridiculous legislation we have to vote on here tonight and saying, 'We don't like racing people.' I will tell members how much those opposite do not even like racing, and Terry Mackenroth could give them some great advice: this year the Melbourne Cup—and Terry Mackenroth tried it once—is a parliamentary sitting date. That is how ignorant those opposite are—that is, that all members cannot share Melbourne Cup day with their communities because we will be in the House because those opposite do not care about racing.