




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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RACING INTEGRITY BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.07 pm): I rise to speak on the Racing Integrity Bill. I believe racing integrity is very important. It is asserted that the Racing Integrity Bill 2015 will do the following: form the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, safeguard the welfare of animals, improve public confidence in the racing industry, improve compliance monitoring, provide an ability to carry out disciplinary actions against licensees, provide proactive management and identification of issues, and educate the industry.

I cannot really speak about the industry in the cities as much as country racing. I really believe they are completely different. In the past, many clubs had so many cuts and had been punished so much that basically there is nowhere else to cut now. The implications of this bill for country racing are completely different to the city. The country racing clubs will not get what they hoped they would actually get out of the legislation. The sad part about it is that they are looking for a board but not a board that does not understand rural and regional Queensland.

The presentations by the minister and government members show that they are talking the talk. When I talk to the people out there in the bush, they are telling me that there is not one person who supports this and that they are very concerned. It is very difficult in some sense to hear what they are saying out there. Even though it sounds good and appears to have good intentions, the reality for the people in the bush is that the country racing industry feels that this is damnation to them.

There is no doubt about it; as rural and regional Queensland representatives, we would have to take this position. In the past we saw what Bentley did. I remember when Charters Towers lost three meetings. Pentland lost one. Mingela was closed down. Jericho lost its meeting. Capella lost its meetings and, as I said before, got camels. I can see that under this bill they could lose camels, and likewise, Richmond. Georgetown lost three meetings. It is getting harder and harder. Trainers are travelling further and further. There are fewer jockeys. I probably cannot put the words together at this moment, but we need something there that brings about confidence in the country racing industry, the racing industry and the thoroughbred racing industry. It is concerning that the live-baiting inquiry has dragged the thoroughbred industry into it.

These race meetings are the lifeblood of the community. Yes, there is an intention in this bill to go out there and do some good things and bring about integrity of the industry. However, the government needs to look at rural and regional Queensland. For instance, when Bentley introduced the requirement for these country race clubs to have an inside barrier, they would have been looking at \$30,000 to \$35,000. Where are they going to find \$35,000? It was virtually impossible. This was someone who had nothing to do with country race meetings and was making decisions on country racing. This is our concern: there is the appointment of a board that would not have a clue. We really need to get back to basics.

Ian McCauley is the Chairman of the Queensland Racing Unity Group. At the committee hearing he said—

The bill should be withdrawn on these grounds ...

...

One possible process that the Minister for Racing could consider is to lead an open conference where invited knowledgeable people representing racing industries from other states could describe their integrity and government structures and comment on their strengths and weaknesses. The conference could break into workshops, maybe led by the Office of Racing, that could come forward with recommendations for the future structure of integrity and operations appropriate to Queensland. Any ensuring legislation will likely have bipartisan support as well as support from the industry participants ...

A process such as this will take some time. In the meantime an interim government structure could be established under the current Racing Act. The government has already demonstrated that it has the power to make such interim arrangements. QRUG members believe that this opportunity for an industry-wide review is fundamental to securing a satisfactory, long-term future for the administration of racing in this state.

In summary, QRUG strongly suggests that the government recalls this bill, appoints a temporary board and begins a deliberative and inclusive process that leads to a Queensland Racing structure that has industry and bipartisan political support.

I believe that Ian McCauley has a very good point. What he is relating here in only a small way is what the people in my electorate, in rural and regional Queensland and in country racing are saying. They have deep concerns about this bill.