




Speech By  
**Verity Barton**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 April 2016

**RACING INTEGRITY BILL**

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (12.48 pm): I rise to speak against the Racing Integrity Bill. At the outset I acknowledge the great work that has been done by the shadow minister for racing, the honourable member for Currumbin, over the past 15 months. I do not think there could have been a more dedicated shadow minister when it comes to building strong networks, relationships and connections with the industry. Certainly those I have spoken to on the Gold Coast have very much appreciated the time and effort the shadow minister has put in, not only to meet with them and understand their concerns but equally to do so around the state.

There are a couple of issues that I want to touch on in my brief contribution to the House today. Coming from the Gold Coast, I am very proud to say that the Gold Coast Turf Club is the home of the Magic Millions and is a great host of racing in paradise every weekend. I have had the opportunity to talk with representatives of the Gold Coast Turf Club and they have expressed one or two concerns with the bill which I want to raise today. The first concern that they have raised is with respect to the disciplinary process of the board. They are incredibly concerned that the process and the powers are rather broad sweeping and that that has the potential to be abused. Equally, they are concerned with the broad scope of possible directions that could be made by the board. Not only would the board have the ability to suspend racing events; they are particularly concerned that the board will have the ability to suspend other operations that really are integral to their operation and integral to their revenue stream. As I am sure we would all appreciate, racing clubs across Queensland, particularly those in regional and rural areas, are the hosts of many events in their communities, not just racing meets, and representatives of the Gold Coast Turf Club have expressed concern particularly with respect to their regional colleagues.

One of the other concerns that has been raised is the fact that the minister has been unable to provide a clear idea of how much this is going to cost and representatives of the industry have expressed great concern that that will mean that the industry itself will have to bear the cost, which will put further strain on the industry. Equally, they are incredibly concerned—and this is something that the shadow minister has been particularly vocal about—with the lack of consultation. Each and every day this government claims that it is a consultative government and it wants to go out and talk to Queenslanders and talk to stakeholders, but the feedback that has been overwhelmingly received—and it was even acknowledged by the Labor members of the committee that considered this bill—is that there was no consultation done with the very stakeholders and with the industry, and that really is quite concerning. Given that the government talks about the fact that it wants to be a consultative government, the only thing you can say is hypocrisy thy name is Labor.

Having had a look at the remainder of the speaking list, I know that a number of my colleagues from rural and regional Queensland intend to make contributions to this debate. They are incredibly concerned that this will be a disaster for country racing as well as the industry generally. The member

for Burnett, who is also the deputy chair of the committee that considered this bill, spoke particularly about the impacts that this bill will have on country racing in his area. Like many of my colleagues, I have received emails from racing clubs across Queensland that express great concern about what this means for them. Particularly where they are racing clubs that might have one or two meets a year, they are incredibly concerned about what this legislation is going to mean for them.

Finally, this bill is supposed to be entirely about integrity and integrity in the racing system. When we consider that the industry has expressed a real lack of confidence in the minister, I just have one question for the minister. Yesterday in question time there was an opportunity for the minister to table the Integrity Commissioner's advice with respect to any potential conflict of interest. Given that this bill is entirely about integrity in the racing system, I would like to give the minister the opportunity to clear the air and to affirm what she claimed yesterday in question time. I would like to ask the minister if she would, in responding to the second reading debate, please table the advice from the Integrity Commissioner with respect to any potential conflict of interest when it comes to the appointments of the boards. If the minister could please address that in her response to the second reading debate, that would be very much appreciated by not only me and all members on this side of the House but also the industry that is supposed to have confidence in her and her claims that she is talking about racing integrity.

As I said, I will not be able to support this bill. Again, I commend and thank my good friend and colleague the member for Currumbin for the great work that she has done because she has been an incredibly strong advocate for this industry. At a time when that has been sorely lacking from the government, those in the industry have been able to turn to the LNP and the shadow minister to be their strongest advocates in this state and in this parliament.