




Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

**CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.49 pm): I want to make a contribution on the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I want to start by saying that sometimes you know when a government and a minister do not quite have their heart in a bill. This one is a case in point. Never has there been more resistance from a government to do what was clearly needed and what was clearly demanded and deserved by the community. I want to highlight a couple of issues just to show how reluctant they were to ensure that we had a casino industry above reproach.

I start by contrasting the approach from other jurisdictions. New South Wales launched a review, and it was not until mid-June this year that this state government did the same. That was despite months of serious allegations. It was despite misconduct being raised of allegations, of all the things we were seeing going on and yet the attorney and indeed the government found every reason to resist.

If members want to know how much their heart was not in it and just how little interest they took, find no other reason but to see the fact that at two minutes to midnight we saw 20 amendments come through out of the blue. I would have thought that something of this magnitude, seriousness and importance would have a little more attention to detail. That goes to the heart of what we are seeing in Queensland. We are seeing a government that is slow to address problems. We have seen that with the stonewalling of the calls in terms of the forensic services lab where we were told that we were politicking by raising that. We have seen that in Mackay and in Caboolture. We have seen a complete and utter resistance to acting, to stepping up to the plate when it is necessary. Queenslanders are worse off because of it.

I want to highlight a couple of issues in this bill that show why this was really the government's political solution rather than the government's integrity and regulation solution. I point to the terms of reference given to Mr Gotterson. They were so narrow, so tight and so specific that Mr Gotterson had his hands tied. What was needed was a wideranging review with the powers to ensure that Queenslanders got a casino industry that was regulated beyond reproach, that could be best of breed, that could ensure that any form of money laundering or any form of corruption could be stamped out. Instead, we received a narrow terms of reference.

Mr Gotterson was not able to investigate fully the role of the OLGR. If the government were serious about putting a microscope over the way that the casino industry is regulated, surely that microscope should have been put over its ability to set the standards and its ability to be able to—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** We will be addressing that one shortly, chair. Surely we could have had—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Logan!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have the call.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Surely the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation would have been the starting point. If you were serious as a government and if you were serious as people who want to bring integrity and sunlight into the operation, surely the body tasked with setting the standards would have been part of that review.

Mr Gotterson was also unable to investigate any of those links between Labor lobbyists and the industry. Why would that be? Why would it be that the government would not want a microscope, with all of the resources and all of the laws, to seek to find a way to make sure that any of those dealings could be brought to light? Why would a terms of reference be so tight that it would prevent that from occurring?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I take both of those interjections. It is because the government never had its heart in this bill—ever. This was always about a political pressure valve release mechanism rather than honesty, transparency and setting the standard for a world-class regulated casino industry.

We need casino operators to operate with the utmost integrity. Queenslanders expect and deserve nothing less than that. I place on record that the LNP will always support any measures to reduce gambling harm. Therefore, those elements of the bill are something that we all should embrace and should all work together. There is no doubt that it has never been easier for a Queensland to gamble. The modern world means that that is the case for every Australian and every citizen. We have a duty to those who have a problem in that area to ensure that they are given every support measure to get on top of what is an addiction. We also encourage the government to keep working as part of those further regulations discussed in the committee.

In my remaining short period of time, I want to make a contribution about the industry and why it is important that we have a well-regulated industry. The reason for that is I am not fussed about what the logo is on a casino. What I care for are the thousands of men and women who turn up to work there every day. I am concerned to make sure that they have a viable industry, that they are well paid, that they understand that as part of working in a casino there are many opportunities for people to get professional development and to get qualifications. That is important.

I look at the many thousands of people who work at the casino on the Gold Coast as an example. I know of one of my very close personal friends who started in that industry and used that as an opportunity to better himself and put himself through the skills that he learnt there. It was the start of his career. He has done extremely well for himself.

I want to make sure that we as a state can have a casino industry that provides for everyday Queenslanders, for working Queenslanders. We, though, have a duty to make sure that it is above reproach. That starts with holding the existing operators accountable. It starts with ensuring that murky links are examined, scrutinised and stamped out and to make sure that the level of influence of people who have the ability to run elections for political parties, sometimes operating out of government funded buildings, does not translate into the corporate world. That is very important.

We also owe it to make sure that we as regulators have world-class standards of regulations. It does not matter in what industry or in what arm of government: every public servant deserves the right to know that they are respected and valued, that their organisation and their entity that they work for is above reproach. That is why the failure of the analysis of the OLGR is one of a missed opportunity. It was an opportunity to ensure that the regulator is regulating in the best interests.

This is a serious industry where hundreds of millions of dollars go through it. It is a serious industry where thousands of working Queenslanders derive an income, where people can begin work on day one and rise through the ranks, where we offer an incredible tourism product—and that is something Queensland should be very proud of. It is another piece of our tourism puzzle. It is about dining and it is about hospitality, but the industry has to be administered beyond reproach. That is why when we look at the last-minute amendments, at the reluctance to call it and at the fact that the government was dragged kicking and screaming to do this, they do not have their heart in it. As a result, the lack of a blowtorch on the regulation sector of this represents a missed opportunity.