




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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RACING INTEGRITY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.29 pm): I too rise to contribute to the Racing Integrity Amendment Bill 2022. We all know that racing is an incredible part of our Queensland economy. It contributes a massive amount to the Queensland economy. When I first campaigned in 2011 to get into this wonderful House—and I did in 2012—I campaigned on country racing. I continue to enjoy the fact that the LNP government restored country racing back to the bush. We restored it!

Government members: Ha! Ha!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: They laugh over there. They have no idea. Even Minister Grace will agree there were no Esk races under the former Labor government. They cut them all out. Now we are back and firing the starter's gun. I will tell you this—

Mr Power interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You ask the country racing industry. They absolutely were. Con Searle, who has a milestone birthday coming up very soon, is the president of the Kilcoy Jockey Club. It was Con Searle who spoke to me way back then and said that the Labor government was refusing to support the country racing industry. It was 100 per cent true. All you need to say at a country race meet are these two words: Bob Bentley. They all say, 'Goodness me, please don't bring back a Labor government into country racing.' We know that it is the LNP on this side of the House that understands country racing.

I want to talk about the integrity issues this bill addresses. It is important to note that I follow a former speaker who tried to rewrite history in relation to integrity issues. As the shadow minister the member for Everton pointed out, I would like to highlight some of the debacles and integrity issues that have happened and are happening. Let me give some examples: David Gafa, a thoroughbred trainer from Caloundra, not guilty on all charges and it took two years to get to court; trainer Brad Smith, three charges discontinued, lack of evidence; hall of fame greyhound trainer Reg Kay banned for life, judge elected not to proceed; March 2018, Ipswich, QRIC stewards failed to read an ear brand and match it to a scanned microchip when a dog entered in race 2 started in the first and vice versa, not picked up by Labor QRIC stewards—they have all gone quiet now—and in April 2021 at Townsville QRIC officials started a race with a rake against the boxes, then notified all clear. QRIC truth is seriously stranger than fiction.

Then we go to the ABC's *7.30 Report*. Honourable members might remember that. It showed Labor's QRIC as amateurs over the Caboolture slaughterhouse. Everyone in this House would remember those horrific images, and our hearts just go out to everyone in relation to the absolute nightmare that was happening at the Caboolture slaughterhouse. Horse wastage—that is all you can put it down to. QRIC was unable to uncover what amateurs did. Despite coercive powers, partners in the racing squad, a veterinary team, an investigative squad, body worn cameras, a staff of more than 200, search warrants, a promotional website, Crime Stoppers and various agencies such as the RSPCA, QRIC could not uncover anything.

Continuing: in late March 2019 a horse ran in the wrong race at Rockhampton; nine days later at the Weetwood meeting at Toowoomba wrong numbers were semaphored, correct weight declared before the official result was changed; Cairns, June 2019, a judge overruled placings; the same day a winner was disqualified for jockey weighing in light; and in Yeppoon, July 2019, a result was overturned two months after the race. QRIC was so culpable that connections of both horses were paid as winners! At the Capalaba greyhounds in August 2021 the all clear was given on the wrong numbers, second and third were placed in the incorrect order; Marburg trots, July 2020, third and fourth placings were transposed; and Barcaldine, August 2020, correct weight on wrong numbers.

There are constant delays in Labor's QRIC judgements: Ben Currie's case is like Blue Hills; Darrell Graham's matter took three years to come to fruition. The list goes on. In February 2022 Labor's QRIC stewards overturned the judge's decision of a dead heat for a first at the Rockhampton gallops a month earlier. Frankie Blue Eyes was declared the winner a month after correct weight. So when people on this side say that it has taken too long for this bill to get to the House, we are absolutely right. Let me say this to the minister: Brisbane Racing Club—

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The minister is welcome to jump up and take that interjection. In May 2020 Brisbane Racing Club chairman Neville Bell said in relation to QRIC—

Has proved to be it just can't deliver the sort of integrity, or confidence in integrity, that it was originally meant to.

I would like to move to the minister's introductory speech, where Minister Grace said that someone said she was Queensland's best racing minister.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It probably was the member for Pine Rivers who said that. It was? There you go. The minister said that in her introductory speech. In March this year the website letsghorseracing said—

Whoever the racing legend was that told Grace Grace that she was the best racing minister we have had should not only be named and shamed—

This next bit I do not agree with, but I am going to say it because it is a quote—

and tied to a tree because he certainly is a voice crying in the wilderness.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The minister still proclaims to be the best racing minister Queensland has ever had. Why has it taken four years, Minister? Why has it taken four years to fix up the integrity problems? The reason I read out these integrity problems, Minister, was to highlight the fact that it has taken too long to get this bill into the House and passed. That is what the racing industry has called for; that is what the shadow racing minister has called for; that is what we in the LNP have called for; and that is what all of those people who work hard each and every day supporting the racing industry, supporting the jockeys and the trainers and supporting the guys and girls who take the photos at the races have called for. With one minute and 23 seconds to go I just want to say that I cannot wait for Flemington in the Bush on Tuesday, the annual Kumbia races. I know the minister has been there before.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. It is a good race. The annual Kumbia race day will be on. We will be firing. It will all be happening at Kumbia. I want to give a real shout-out to Brian Lenihan, who has put his whole life into the Kumbia Race Club, and his entire committee. I know that I am going to have a fabulous day. I should also give a big shout-out to all of those country bookies who still work so hard at our country race days. They have been meeting in Kumbia for more than 50 years on Melbourne Cup Day. There is no better spot in Queensland to spend Melbourne Cup Day than at the Kumbia Race Club, where I am more than happy to serve you a burger because I work behind the burger bar. It will be fun.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will give you a tip next week. It is very important that we all continue to support the vital racing industry in Queensland.