



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**


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Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2022

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)**

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**BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (12.39 pm): I will take that on notice and we can have a meeting about it, member for Theodore. I rise to support the bills before the House, in particular the Betting Tax and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The racing industry is stronger than ever, thanks to the Palaszczuk government. Our important reforms have delivered better integrity, animal welfare, financial stability and the infrastructure that racing needs to grow.

The results are clear: the economic contribution of the racing industry to Queensland has soared almost 60 per cent under our government, to a record nearly \$2 billion in 2020-21. This bill builds on the legacy by delivering a more sustainable funding model for Queensland's racing industry which replaces most of the government's current racing grants with a consolidated, ongoing revenue stream. It does this by introducing a five per cent racing levy, in addition to the 15 per cent betting tax rate; incorporating free bets in the calculation of the betting tax; and providing for the hypothecation of 80 per cent of annual betting tax revenue to Racing Queensland.

Broadening the betting tax and returning 80 per cent of the revenue collected to the industry gives the industry greater certainty and sustainability. It ensures that as and if the size of the pie generated through wagering on Queensland racing product grows, so too will the industry's share. The new arrangements will put all providers of online wagering services on a more level playing field.

Under the current exclusive wagering agreement, TAB Queensland does not pay the betting tax or race field fees, which are paid by corporate bookmakers and interstate TABs to Racing Queensland for providing race field information. Once these changes commence on 1 December, TAB Queensland will be required to pay the betting tax and racing field fees. While Tabcorp will still offer on-course betting services and retain retail exclusivity, its on-course sponsorship and advertising exclusivity will end. I inherited probably the worst deal I could ever imagine that the previous government negotiated. It was incredible! Thank goodness I have been able to unravel it. It means race clubs across Queensland will have new opportunities to enter into lucrative sponsorship agreements with other bookmakers.

As part of the settlement between Tabcorp and Racing Queensland, announced in June, Tabcorp will also be required to make a one-off \$100 million payment to RQ which will be put towards further investment in the long-term sustainability of the industry and provide \$50 million to the Racing Infrastructure Fund used for vital building projects that help grow racing right across Queensland in rural, regional and metropolitan areas.

This bill is further proof that country racing in Queensland has had no greater friend than the Palaszczuk government. In line with broader amendments to the Betting Tax Act, an alternative funding method is required to provide funding certainty to country racing participants into the future. To this end,

the bill amends the Racing Act and Racing Regulation to hypothecate funding to country thoroughbred racing and allow for indexation, and to allow for details of the minimum dollar amount and indexation to be prescribed in the Racing Regulation. The amendments to the Racing Regulation prescribe the minimum amount to country racing to be \$20 million, to be indexed at two per cent per annum.

Queensland has had a minimum level of funding for non-TAB thoroughbred racing required under the Racing Act since 2005. In 2016-17, prior to the Palaszczuk government establishing the Country Racing Program, the legislated minimum amount of country racing funding was 5.32 per cent of the net product fee, which amounted to about \$5.65 million a year. Our Country Racing Program that we introduced the year after, 2017-18, has invested nearly \$106 million into country racing over the last six years. Each year the program has invested \$17.6 million into country racing—that is 3½ times the amount that we inherited from those opposite—providing \$15 million to support prize money, including the Queensland thoroughbred incentive scheme, clubs, jockey riding fees, superannuation and WorkCover expenses, and club meeting payments to support country race meetings; and \$2.6 million in grants for country racing club infrastructure repairs, maintenance and asset replenishment and replacement. You can go to any country racing club around Queensland and you will see this money being invested in those clubs—and aren't they loving it!

The new proposed minimum dollar amount of \$20 million will replace the Country Racing Program from 1 December—it will be in legislation—representing a real increase in the minimum funding for country racing. Should betting tax revenue grow at greater rates than we expected, the government is able to re-evaluate the prescribed amount. This model is all about providing certainty so that country thoroughbred racing is no longer dependent on grants but instead has a sustainable funding source. On this side of the House, we know how important racing is to the economic and social fabric of regional and rural communities across Queensland but, unlike those opposite, we put our money where our mouth is.

Since the point-of-consumption tax came in on 1 October 2018, it has really delivered in spades for the racing industry. It is worth remembering the LNP's scaremongering in 2018 when we brought it in. During the debate on the original bill, I remember the member for Surfers Paradise saying, 'Labor will rip \$366 million out of Queensland's wagering and racing industry.' Nothing could be further from the truth. What an hysterical statement to make! Not only has that not come about but the industry has gone from strength to strength. In fact, that prediction was laughable then, just as it is laughable today. What actually happened is we have grown wagering and betting in this state and it has gone from strength to strength.

We are really looking forward to delivering this. Racing Queensland used the funding boost to release a new investment growth plan, delivering \$29 million over two years in increased prize money. That is incredible—in two years, \$29 million being delivered. You can ask all of the clubs' CEOs. Lizzie King said this is a game changer. There is no-one in the industry, except those who have to pay the tax and the levy, of course, who does not back this; everyone is behind this. They cannot believe what we are doing in this state. It is a fantastic step forward.

I also acknowledge Racing Queensland CEO Brendan Parnell, who had this to say at the committee hearings: 'We will have the long-term certainty to be able to provide an investment program for our clubs for infrastructure and major events.' I take this opportunity to say that Brendan has indicated that he will be leaving next year, in around March. He has been an absolute delight to work with. He is absolutely first-class when it comes to his knowledge of racing. I know that we are going to greatly miss him, but he is going to take the opportunity to go overseas, to the UK. It is a wonderful opportunity for him. I wish him all the very best. He has been an absolute delight. A lot of this would not have happened if it were not for his expert advice. I wish him all the very best.

It is interesting: in her contribution the member for South Brisbane talked about the evils of betting. Honestly, this is rank hypocrisy from the member of South Brisbane; you have to draw breath when you hear it. I want to mention one person—Mr Duncan Turpie. He is reportedly part of the secretive punters club. That club turns over about \$2.4 billion a year in betting, in reported activity. He is a private individual, as all private individuals are who bet, including the member for Mermaid Beach and me. We absolutely love placing a bet—no doubt about it at all. They talked about us pandering to Tabcorp on a \$14,000 donation they made to the Labor Party and others—the LNP was mentioned and the Labor Party was mentioned. What they failed to mention is that Mr Duncan Turpie in 2021-22, it is my understanding, provided \$201,000 to the Greens party. In June 2020 he provided \$100,000 to the—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Minister, take your seat. I remind all members who are on a warning that they should not be interjecting. The list is very long. You know who you are. I am not going to remind you. Even the members who have been sent out of the chamber are still on a warning for another 11 minutes. Let's keep it calm.

**Ms GRACE:** In June 2020 he provided \$100,000 just before the election, an example of rank hypocrisy that has come to categorise the Greens.

I thank the Gold Coast Turf Club, Australian Trainers Association, Redcliffe Harness Racing Club, Australian Harness Racing but, most of all, Ken O'Dowd, who said, 'These are some of the best laws in the country.' That was from the former federal member for Flynn. Good on him. That is fantastic. With those words, I commend the bill to the House. It is a fantastic piece of legislation.