




Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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**RACING INTEGRITY AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.33 pm): I begin by acknowledging students and teachers from the Islamic College of Brisbane in the electorate of Stretton who are in the gallery. I rise to contribute briefly to the Racing Integrity Amendment Bill. I regret to inform the House that I do not own a racehorse, unlike my second cousin, the member for Rockhampton.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Ms PUGH:** No, I do not have anything. Nonetheless, the racing industry is important to all Queenslanders, not just the member for Rockhampton. The racing industry, including thoroughbred horses, greyhound and harness horse racing, is a core component of many Queensland communities and many Queenslanders themselves. In the racing industry we have close to 43,500 participants employing the equivalent of more than 13,500 full-time employees. I should declare that I do have a number of in-law relations tangentially employed in the racing industry in various ways.

In 2021 in Queensland there were 1,591 race meetings involving 14,237 races. It is estimated that some 8.2 per cent of Australian adults wager on the races in an average month. That is roughly 330,000 people in Queensland. In the 2020-21 financial year, the Queensland racing industry was responsible for generating close to \$1.9 billion in value-added contribution to the Queensland economy, an increase of nearly 60 per cent since 2016, and 48 per cent of that contribution directly benefits regional economies like Rockhampton. In 2020-21, a wagering turnover of \$6.7 billion was expended on the three racing codes in Queensland.

We also know, as we have heard from members already today, that racing is an important leisure and social activity in Queensland, particularly in regional Queensland. Every year some 62 Queensland towns host a race day as a highlight of that community's social calendar. Some members have attested that they are not much for racing, but whether you are a punter or not or whether you like going to the races or not, I do not think anybody in this House would not have heard of the Birdsville Races, which is a significant economic contributor to the economy of that town. It brings in people who are interested not only in racing but also in a more broad tourism experience. The benefit of racing to those regional communities cannot be overstated.

I turn now to the provisions of the bill that ensure the responsible use of digital platforms used in racing. After the few weeks that we have had, we all have an increased awareness of the importance of digital safety. Online safety and privacy is important to all Australians, especially in the evolving online environment and the recent health concerns over attendance at licensed premises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Racing Integrity Amendment Bill clarifies that an approved telecommunications system must be used regardless of whether a bookmaker is making a bet with a person who is not present at a licensed venue or the bookmaker is not present at a licensed venue. This is intended to protect the integrity of the bets, the money and the privacy of the person placing that bet. Clarity on approved telecommunication systems for betting in a remote setting supports the transparency and the reputation

of the industry. This complements the Queensland government's implementation of the national code to protect persons placing bets through the national consumer protection framework. As the framework applies to any wagering undertaken via the telecommunications system, it will impact those bookmakers with off-course approvals.

The framework also—and this is important—provides staff training measures for all staff who can provide or can influence wagering services. These staff must be trained to provide a responsible online wagering service to create a culture of responsible gambling within the organisation. That is important. Recently in the House we debated the casino bill where I spoke about the importance of responsible betting and ensuring that we are helping people who might have issues manage that. This is an important part of the bill and I commend the bill to the House.