



Speech By
Kim Richards

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 3)

BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.14 pm): I rise to support the Betting Tax and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 3) 2022 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2022. Like the member for Mermaid Beach, my dear dad was a mad keen punter and he would have bet with nobody else but the TAB. As a kid I remember every Saturday morning the form guide would be out and he would be raring and ready to go. I even remember his phone account number: 10145 KIRA, KI for Kim and RA for Rachel. That was the account number. I heard it so often that it is still stuck with me at 51 years of age.

Mr Stevens: You're not 51!

Ms RICHARDS: Yes, I am.

Mr Langbroek: Can I use that number?

Ms RICHARDS: I think it is closed now, member for Southport, and I do not think it had much left in it. He never seemed to be very good at picking a winner, I have to tell you.

Mr Langbroek: The same as Ray!

Ms RICHARDS: Probably the same. The Racing Integrity Bill and this bill were referred to our committee. Hopefully I am not messing up your speech, member for Theodore, but he won on the Melbourne Cup.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Through the chair, please, member for Redlands.

Ms RICHARDS: It was the first time he has ever had a bet in his life. That was on the back of some great champions, the member for Rockhampton and the member for Hinchinbrook, who are both very passionate about the country racing program, which this bill will support.

Can I take this opportunity to thank all of the committee members, the secretariat and all of the witnesses, submitters and the departments for their briefings and public hearings. This bill has been prepared to create a more sustainable funding model for racing. Racing is one of those sectors that has been extraordinarily disrupted by technology and the players who have come into that market. We heard from one of the witnesses in the public hearing, Mr Ryteskild from Tabcorp, in terms of what that has meant for their business and how they are able to contribute back to Queensland racing. I think this bill will be very good for Queensland racing. The CEO Mr Parnell also confirmed that this is going to be really good for Queensland racing, particularly for country racing.

In addition to looking at the funding model for racing, the bill also looked at the new mental health levy on large employers to create a dedicated funding stream for mental health. Can I take this opportunity to thank everybody on the Mental Health Select Committee for all of their hard work in coming up with some fantastic solutions. As a result of its mechanisms this bill will help bring those funds in in a streamlined way for employers.

The two main sources of revenue for racing have been wagering revenue and grants contributions. Wagering revenue totalling almost \$221 million made up 61 per cent of Racing Queensland's consolidated revenue in 2021-22 and payments from Tabcorp made up roughly half of this revenue. They also had grants totalling \$107 million. Racing Queensland's funding model no longer provides it with adequate financial certainty. This bill will go to the heart of making sure we provide certainty for that industry.

One of the competitive pressures affecting Tabcorp is the growth of foreign owned Northern Territory licensed online bookmakers, and we heard a lot about that. Responsible Wagering Australia appeared as a witness in the public hearing. Their response to a question on notice was interesting in terms of where their parent companies are domiciled, where their tax revenues are going and where Queenslanders' betting money is going. There is a lot of it that is not staying in Queensland and it is not staying in Australia. There are an awful lot of people who are using the Northern Territory licensing system as an opportunity to not do the right thing by Queensland and Queensland punters, so I think this bill will be very good in that space.

During the inquiry process we received nine written submissions. One was from Mr Ken O'Dowd, and I know the Treasurer spoke about that. He said that this is a very good, sensible piece of legislation. We also received written submissions from: BetGold Racing & Sports, Redcliffe Peninsula Harness Racing and Sporting Club, Gold Coast Turf Club, Racing Queensland Board, Harness Racing Australia, the Australian Trainers' Association, Tabcorp Holdings and the Queensland Hotels Association.

One of the other interesting things in the public hearing was hearing the benefit this will provide back to our sporting clubs, like the Victoria Point Sharks that has its own little TAB outlet. What this bill will do is equal the playing field and that was good to hear. In the public hearing, we heard from the CEO of Racing Queensland, the CEO of Tabcorp, the CEO of Responsible Wagering Australia and the CEO of BetGold Racing & Sports.

I know that country racing was a really important part of the inquiry process, particularly to the members for Hinchinbrook and Rockhampton. This bill will ensure they have that secured certainty with that minimum set amount that will come through out of this tax. It is really important because racing is such a big part of the social fabric of communities, and it gives them certainty to know they can keep investing in the infrastructure that our communities enjoy using.

The committee made three recommendations. The first was that the bill be passed. The second was that the bill be amended to remove the opportunity for aggregated totaliser bets in the free bet space. We heard a lot about free bets and how they have not been included as part of the taxing. I think they are included in every other jurisdiction outside of Tasmania in terms of being able to collect that revenue that goes back into the infrastructure for racing and back into making sure we have a sustainable Queensland racing industry, particularly country racing.

I turn to the large multinationals which are principally foreign owned. A significant amount of their money leaves Queensland. Ladbrokes and Neds recorded nearly \$2 billion in revenue last year, and Betfair recorded \$2.5 billion in global revenue. This goes a long way to making sure we can keep Queenslanders' punting money delivering for the industry and delivering for Queenslanders.

We heard from the department on the mental health levy. As a result of amendments made by the Revenue Legislation Amendment Act 2022, the mental health levy will be imposed on employers or groups of employers for payroll tax purposes with annual taxable wages over \$10 million. The explanatory notes to the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill noted that, as the Queensland Revenue Office prepared for implementation of the mental health levy, it would be necessary to develop further administrative, machinery and transitional arrangements, and that is exactly what this legislation will do. It will make it easier for employers within the payroll tax system to make sure they contribute their fair share. It is great that the large employers will assist with the pressures and ensure that workers have good mental health by actually contributing back to Queensland and providing better mental health infrastructure and services to support all Queenslanders.

I did not touch much on the appropriation bill, but I think it is pretty much nuts and bolts business as usual in terms of the overs and unders. In conclusion, I thank the committee, the secretariat and all of the people who were involved in the betting bill. May you have happy racing days and good luck and good fortune in your betting prosperity. I commend the bills to the House.