




Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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RACING INTEGRITY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.43 pm): I rise to contribute to the Racing Integrity Amendment Bill. With almost 40,000 industry participants and about 81 per cent of those in regional communities, the Queensland racing industry contributes more than \$1.6 billion to our state's economy and supports over 12,600 local jobs. It is a huge industry and it is a critical industry for our state. It is absolutely paramount that we do what we can to ensure public confidence in the integrity of an industry that provides so much economic growth and development and local jobs right throughout our state. In fact, every dollar that is invested in the Queensland racing industry generates \$1.56 in benefits for the broader community.

Every year, more than 60 Queensland towns host a race day and enormous economic and community benefits stem from the hosting of that day. Of course, stewards are absolutely central to the operation of race days. They work on the track to monitor the rules of racing that apply to race days. In 2020-21, Queensland Racing Integrity Commission stewards made 1,947 decisions and 148 applications were made for internal review. On average, over the five years to 2020-21, more than 70 per cent of applications for both internal and external review by QCAT concerned thoroughbred racing compared to around 20 per cent for harness racing and approximately 10 per cent for greyhound racing. Under the current model, an aggrieved party can seek an internal review of a steward's decision, followed by an external review by QCAT.

Every now and again, on a Saturday afternoon, I have been known to have a punt. Like many punters, I am familiar with the feeling that comes when a race result is under protest and you are waiting to hear the outcome. It is an incredibly important part of a broader process that underscores and is the foundation of the integrity that surrounds the system, not just for the punters but also for the broader public, industry participants including the owners, and the businesses that are part of the racing industry here in Queensland.

Consultation on the reforms that are contained in this bill can be traced back to a June 2019 discussion paper through to industry consultation on possible reforms that occurred in December 2021. Stakeholders identified and brought forward concerns with the operation of the review process including around a perceived lack of independence from the commission, the time it takes for matters to be heard and a lack of racing industry knowledge within QCAT when undertaking external reviews. Perhaps most concerning, though, is the issue that some industry participants deliberately seek to use stays so that they can continue to ride, particularly through lucrative periods, whilst waiting for their matters to be heard. We have heard previous speakers talk about evidence given to the committee around that gaming of the system.

This bill contains reforms to the review process for decisions made by stewards under the rules of racing by seeking to replace the current internal and external review processes for decisions made by stewards under the rules of racing with review by an independent panel; ensuring that reviews are finalised within a reasonable time frame; and reducing serious welfare, human safety or integrity risks

from being stayed pending the hearing of an appeal by QCAT. It also provides important reforms around the publication of stewards' reports and other types of reports online. I think this is an important positive step when it comes to accountability and transparency, which of course are both critical to integrity.

In my local community, racing has a proud history and an important role today. In fact, we have invested \$25 million in the Ipswich Turf Club at Bundamba. That has delivered the new Ipswich Events & Entertainment Centre as well as a host of other upgrades including new and improved facilities and supporting infrastructure. This project included the replacement of the former jockeys' facilities with a new two-storey building providing state-of-the-art areas for jockeys and stewards on the ground floor. It also delivers new hospitality facilities on the top floor which I am very proud to attend quite frequently, supporting the Ipswich Turf Club's vision to diversify its business and revenue to host more private and corporate functions and events. It is not just about direct jobs in the racing industry; there is a huge benefit from indirect jobs. This is a perfect example, because it is delivering hospitality jobs and providing a place for our community to gather for all kinds of reasons. In fact, recently we marked the 50th anniversary of the Box Flat mine disaster at this facility.

The project also includes new tie-up stalls and car-parking facilities as well as new drainage and irrigation—very important to ensuring our local turf club is set up very well for the future. In fact, probably the most well known and supported annual event hosted at the Ipswich Turf Club is the time-honoured Ipswich Cup, one of the biggest days on the Queensland racing calendar.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This has absolutely nothing to do with the bill. He has been going on for a couple of minutes about what is happening at Ipswich.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Bundamba, I have allowed some latitude, but I draw you back to the bill.

Mr McCALLUM: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I certainly vehemently disagree with the contribution from the member for Everton, who suggests that the Ipswich Turf Club and the Ipswich Cup are in fact irrelevant.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat. Member for Bundamba, I have given a direction on that. You will abide by the chair's direction or I will sit you down.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that comment and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, the member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

Mr McCALLUM: I withdraw. A few weeks before the cup I was very proud to attend the Better Future Labour Day Races at the turf club. More than 2,000 people turned out for free family fun that day. It was a shining example of what racing clubs across our great state are delivering for their communities. We had a full card of racing complemented by plenty of action off the track like children's rides, entertainment and food trucks. I bring this up because, in addition to delivering thousands of jobs, racing also—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I have given you a direction. Please come back to the bill. This is your last warning.

Mr McCALLUM: Racing also contributes to the social fabric and wellbeing within our communities. The reforms in this bill continue the Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to improving integrity in the racing industry. They bolster confidence for industry participants—whether you are a horse owner or trainer or work at a club—and for members of the broader public and humble punters. I commend this bill and its reforms to the House.