



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

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BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.46 pm): I rise to make a contribution with a particular focus on the Betting Tax and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. My understanding of the bill is that there is now a focus on introducing a five per cent racing levy in addition to the 15 per cent betting tax rate. As I understand it, there is a more rigorous regime of assessment for these bigger multinationals that quite likely have been avoiding paying their fair share of tax in the country. Last I checked, we were looking at \$20 billion or \$30 billion companies versus Tabcorp, which is junior in comparison. I think they are in the vicinity of \$200 million, the member for Hinchinbrook is telling me. A much smaller company with a much smaller advertising budget is doing all the heavy lifting and paying tax. This levels the playing field and addresses the fact that multinationals know how to thwart the system.

It is a principle on which I have judged the government pretty harshly in the past. I give them a gold star for this one. We in the KAP have sat here defending the public over Uber, which pays no tax in Australia and smashed our taxi industry—near destroyed it in Queensland. The government gave them free rein to do that. We defended the public over the gas reserve policy where big multinational gas companies have come in and are taking all our gas in Queensland. They took away our competitive gas advantage here in Queensland, and they were cheered on their way and patted on the back. We defended the public over the ethanol industry. The big oil companies get to exploit us as much as they want to. The government has never chased them or taken them on when given the opportunity to issue fines or to progress that.

The tide has turned. Perhaps the tide has not turned but it is time to show the government some appreciation and say well done for putting this legislation through. It is providing some much needed revenue to the racing industry. The racing industry is intrinsic to regional communities. It means a hell of a lot more than just sport. If you live in McKinlay, Julia Creek, Richmond, Hughenden or Pentland, the big event of your year is the race meeting. That is where blokes meet their wives and boyfriends meet their girlfriends. It is where you catch up with people you have not seen for years and, if you are a politician in those areas, you go to the races because that is where you catch up with everyone.

It is not just the cockies coming into town; it is the railway workers, the council workers and the fencing contractors. Everyone is mixing at the races, having a beer, having a drink, having a good time. If you do not have financial support and racing infrastructure to build around, it collapses. Country racing and metropolitan racing are completely different animals, and that is a big problem we have in the industry. There has been some movement in this area, but country racing and large metropolitan racing are often treated the same. Country racing is a much less commercial enterprise, especially the remote bush races. They are not a commercial enterprise; they are much more a community event than a money-making sport. I think that always creates a problem in policy when governing this.

I will pay the government a compliment for the investment that has gone into racing under their tenure. There has been some good money going out there for infrastructure. We have seen a lot of upgrades. I need to pay tribute to some of the leaders of those race clubs—one standout is Sally Kirkwood and her husband Robbie, a trainer in Charters Towers—for what they have done at the Charters Towers racetrack. Mind you, it was a pretty horrible track before, but there has been a lot spent there. I will not go into the details. The work was really poorly done, but there was a big investment and that is as a result of champions like that. When you move to Mount Isa, Jay Morris and one of the former presidents, Danny Ballard, and jockeys like Terry Hill are big pillars of the community, and in racing they mean a lot. They need that investment in jockey rooms and tack rooms which comes from this extra \$20 million a year.

That is desperately needed because for a long time it has been let go and ignored. We need to look after country racing because it is the feeder for metropolitan racing. A lot of the jockeys that ride at Eagle Farm and Doomben have done their time in the country and worked their way up. It is a nursery. One cannot exist without the other if you do not keep that viable. It is easy to say, 'This is where we make all our money on the betting.' Mind you, pound for pound Mount Isa used to be a huge generator of income for the TAB but it never got any commensurate return back. With the onset of online gaming there is a huge opportunity, and well done to the government for taking that opportunity. At a federal level a lot more needs to be done with online gaming because there is still a lot of this stuff out there where we miss the revenue.

We are grateful for this move. It is a turnaround in terms of the government taking on multinationals and taking hard stands, but we will give you a gold star. Well done! We need to see this going out to regional areas. It says there is money quarantined for the regions, but we need to see that is it done effectively and not squirreled away, that there is no trickery done in relation to that money, that it actually gets there and that there is some equity brought into the industry, which has been exploited for a long time by these multinationals.