



Speech By  
**Tim Mander**

**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation Bill**

#### **Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (4.31 pm): I rise to speak about the racing component of the education minister's portfolios. Education, industrial relations and racing are an unusual combination, I must say. I see that the member for Mermaid Beach has just risen in interest as I talk about his great love: racing.

**Ms Grace:** The Gold Coast.

**Mr MANDER:** And the Gold Coast in particular—I take that interjection from the minister.

**Mr Stevens:** That was probably Lawlor's time.

**Mr MANDER:** I am not taking interjections from the member for Mermaid Beach. The first thing that was a bit of a concern was that we had only half an hour dedicated to racing. I heard the minister speak earlier about how she would have liked to talk a lot more about racing and the racing portfolio. I support that sentiment. Having only 15 minutes for the opposition makes it very difficult to explore issues and to ask follow-up questions. I wanted to do that, particularly with regard to QRIC.

There have been some big changes in QRIC of late. Of course, there has been a new commissioner in the last 18 months. Upon questioning the acting commissioner, I was concerned that a number of senior staff have left the organisation over the last 18 months—people who have a high level of expertise and a high level of corporate knowledge. They included the general manager of racing in North Queensland, the thoroughbred deputy chief steward of North Queensland, the manager of the Greyhound Adoption Program, the QRIC senior counsel, the chief vet, the chief thoroughbred steward and the director of racing, licensing and registration. They are some very senior people who have all left in the last 18 months. In fact, the attrition rate over the last 18 months in QRIC has been 24.6 per cent. That is a huge turnover. The acting commissioner seemed to dismiss that as not being an issue of concern. I have heard that people are very concerned about that. I must admit: if I were the head of an organisation where the attrition rate was 24.6 per cent, I would be very concerned about the workplace culture. It is very important that QRIC be run effectively and be beyond reproach. I will be interested to see how that progresses over the next 12 months.

Another issue of concern is our jockey shortage. When I talked about a jockey shortage in regional areas, the head of Racing Queensland said, 'It's not only in regional areas; it is everywhere.'

**Mr Stevens:** The apprentice program is failing.

**Mr MANDER:** I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach, who said that the apprentice system is failing. It is having an effect right across the board. The number of scratchings is so high that it is affecting race meets.

**Mr Stevens:** The jockey is missing.

**Mr MANDER:** Exactly, because the jockey is missing. That is not a good thing. I raised this at an estimates hearing a couple of years ago, and the then head of Racing Queensland said, 'We are very much aware of it and it's under control.' Guess what: it is not under control. I would like to see Racing Queensland's strategy to address this very serious issue. Racing in regional Queensland is very important. It very much adds to the fabric of the community.

**Mr Stevens:** A lot like Rugby League.

**Mr MANDER:** Again I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach: it is just like Rugby League. It is very important. In fact, you would say that in the regions Rugby League and racing are the major sports. When there is a big Rugby League game, everybody turns out to watch that game. It is the same with the couple of racing meets per year. That is where we have an issue. I would like to see this issue addressed. I want to see a strategy that addresses this issue. It is a very serious issue. It is important for the future of racing, particularly in our regions, that it is addressed.