




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (11.43 am): I was not intending to speak on the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, but after listening to the contributions of those opposite yesterday and again today from the member for Cooper, who just spent 4½ minutes talking about this bill but on somewhat of a completely different subject matter, I decided I wanted to speak. Those on the opposite side of the House have left out a significant part of the history of why we are standing here today debating this bill. I am going to come in particular to the member for Redcliffe, the Attorney-General, but what I wanted to put before the House again—and we heard it well articulated yesterday by the shadow Attorney-General and the shadow youth justice minister—is why we are here debating this bill.

This is the second tranche of legislation. The first bill was passed in 2022. What we saw then again was, as is so common with this government, 27 pages of amendments dropped into the House about half an hour before the debate on the second reading beginning, so we had a traditional approach by the Labor government. However, the House needs to be reminded of what it took for the government to reach that stage, because the government was dragged kicking and screaming to undertake a review of this important area of regulatory oversight in the very first place. Before it was dragged kicking and screaming to undertake a review and commission the Gotterson review—we saw it through other jurisdictions in Australia with Bergin, Finkelstein, Bell and Owen, all the eminent QCs undertaking reviews of Star's activities throughout the nation—this government turned a blind eye to all of it for too long.

Before I come to the particulars of what is in the bill and what the Labor government has done in relation to it, it is worth recalling first the seriousness of the behaviour that Star was engaging in in terms of what was actually happening under the unwatchful eye of the Attorney-General and the OLGR for all those years here in Queensland and around the nation. What was Star doing? It was bringing in illegal Chinese junket operators and their clients and Star casinos were providing customers with China UnionPay facilities. That worked around Chinese regulations and facilitated the gambling of \$900 million across the nation which was all noted—deceptively noted—as hotel fees or hotel expenses. That is the seriousness of the behaviour that was across the nation and in Queensland under the eye of the Attorney-General, the member for Redcliffe, and the regulatory regime of the OLGR.

When the government was finally dragged kicking and screaming to undertake the Gotterson review, we then saw that the Gotterson review was severely curtailed in its terms of reference—severely curtailed—and the terms of reference were significantly pulled back from what we had seen in other jurisdictions around the nation. It is worth remembering what the Gotterson review could not review, and that included the investigation of the role of the regulator, what the regulator knew, what it did not know, what it should have done and what it should not have done. The review had no power to compel statements from those who might have something relevant to say to that review and it had no ability to

protect whistleblowers in that review process. That review process was undertaken and we had the first tranche of legislation in 2022, and here we have the second tranche of legislation which seeks to enact recommendations 1 to 11 of the Gotterson review.

My question for all of this time has been: what was the Attorney-General doing? What was the OLGR doing? The Gotterson review could not invest the regulatory oversight and the regulatory environment, but it is a fundamental regulatory oversight responsibility of the state government. The review went nowhere near the regulatory oversight review that was necessary, so what was the Attorney-General doing? I point to paragraph 560 of the Gotterson review in particular. His Honour did not go into the regulatory review but noted the tension in particular between those that seek to regulate it and the gaming revenues that come from it. In particular, at paragraph 560 he noted—

... there is a real risk of Governments experiencing a tension between the duty to regulate casinos strictly and the revenue they derive from casinos ...

There is a clear tension. His Honour noted it and the review, unfortunately, was not given the broadest terms of reference that it could have had to investigate those matters. What in particular was the Attorney-General doing? We know one thing for sure: thankfully, because of the reporting of the *Australian*, there were a whole bunch of different issues that had been raised by the reporting of Michael McKenna and Sarah Elks in the *Australian* as to the conduct of the Labor government and the tension between the regulatory oversight and in fact personal interests.

The attorney-general of the time received a personal fundraiser from an entity that she was regulating. Who can forget the gathering of former Labor attorneys-general for a fundraiser? It was a great debate. It was personally paid for by staff and donated to the personal fundraising abilities of the member for Redcliffe. That is the kind of tension that—

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to two points of order. One is on relevance and the second is that I take personal offence at what the member is saying. The member is well aware that it has been investigated—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): This is not an opportunity to prosecute an argument. Take your seat.

Mrs D'ATH: I will be writing to the Speaker.

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

Mr JANETZKI: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the matter of relevance, am I to understand that you are speaking about the Gotterson review—

Mr JANETZKI: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:—and the bill is concerned with the implementation of the—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Smith interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundaberg, are you on a warning at the moment? You are now. I will not tolerate levity and noise during a ruling. Member for Toowoomba South, can you assure us that you will be returning to the long title of the bill? If you are referring to the Gotterson review then I will allow that, provided you do not stray too far.

Mr JANETZKI: Yes, Deputy Speaker. This bill is entirely about the regulation of casinos so I would have thought that the activities of the attorney-general of the day were directly relevant to the regulation of casinos in this state. His Honour said—

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is now misleading parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba South, please resume your seat.

Mrs D'ATH: This is a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I was not the attorney-general at the time and the member is well aware of that. I will be writing to the Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, I have just ruled that you are not to prosecute an argument during a point of order. That is the second time. I am going to warn you under the standing orders.

Mr JANETZKI: The conduct of any attorney-general, particularly the member for Redcliffe at the time that she was attorney-general, is directly relevant to the regulation, but I will move on. What else was happening at the time in relation to how this important area of legislative oversight was being regulated? We know that during that period Anacta was appointed. I go to the Coaldrake review and Peter Coaldrake's findings where he talked about the conflict that was obvious between lobbyists who were acting for clients seeking to influence government and then actually running election campaigns for the government of the day. There was a clear—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The standing orders are quite clear. Standing order 234 relates to imputations and improper motives. Notwithstanding that, I cannot see how the member for Toowoomba South's trip down memory lane is at all relevant to the debate. I ask you to rule in relation to standing order 236 and bring him back to the matters of substance contained in the bill. He did say earlier that he would get to that at some stage. He has one minute and 54 seconds left and we would like to see that happen.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I note that members have the capacity to rise and seek a withdrawal if there is an imputation that they object to. I do not believe that the member has strayed from normal practice. However, you have been sailing a bit close to the wind, member for Toowoomba South. Please make sure that you remain relevant. In fact, we have now reached the expiry of the time for this stage of the debate so I ask you to resume your seat.