



Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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ADJOURNMENT

Gambling

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (9.18 pm): Given the disallowance motion last sitting I put this speech aside. However, with the lack of support for that motion and the 894 days of inaction since the federal government received the Murphy report which recommended urgent action to reduce gambling related harm affecting our communities I had no option other than to raise it again. Queenslanders lose in excess of \$6 billion to gambling annually, exceeding spending on essential utilities like electricity and gas. One in three Australian children aged 12 to 17 years are already gambling, increasing to one in two for 18- to 19-year-olds. With suicide the leading cause of death for young Australians and gambling a known risk factor we must protect them. That is our job as adults and as legislators.

Gambling harm is also linked to domestic violence, declining mental health and financial hardship. Our young people are being aggressively targeted and groomed by gambling ads and seemingly fun games via apps such as Roblox, which has 160 million users under the age of 13 worldwide. Young Queenslanders are opening online gaming accounts with devastating speed and ease, using the IDs of their parents or older siblings. Travelling to and from school on public transport offers no escape. Queensland lags behind Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia which have banned these ads on public transport and surrounding areas of train stations and bus stops. We can take immediate steps to remedy this. To start, Queensland Rail generates less than \$345,000 per year, under five per cent of their total advertising revenue, from gambling ads so why don't we get rid of them? The economics do not justify the inaction, especially when the harm generated is extensive and expensive. Governments should never promote or profit from gambling, nor should political parties or MPs be funded by the proceeds of gambling.

To end this, simply end all donations and follow South Australia's lead. It has been wonderful to see that Noosa Yacht & Rowing Club will remove all onsite gambling and councils are revisiting their policies on land they manage and gaming. What are we doing in this chamber? Like any addiction, whether cigarettes, alcohol or illicit substances, we should not be promoting gambling, especially to our young people. Yes, gambling is in Aussies' blood. However, it should be a bit of fun, a flutter, not what it has become for some whose addictions are seeing their health, happiness, families and finances going into a game that they can never win. Come on, everyone; we can do better for our kids and our grandkids.