



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

HANSARD

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STATUTES AMENDMENT (CHELTENHAM PARK AND RELATED AMENDMENTS) BILL

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:19): I rise too to support the bill in regard to Cheltenham Park and related amendments, introduced by the member for Davenport. I think it is absolutely appropriate that this bill be debated, especially in light of the issue around the moving of the gaming machines only a few hundred metres to another site. It certainly, to my mind, seems ridiculous that, just because of this minor move, the club would have to give up 10 of its 40 machines and, essentially then, if it wanted to get them back, buy them back.

I understand the current rate, roughly, for a gaming machine is about \$65,000, so there is already a \$650,000 cost in that transaction before anything else happens in regard to the moving of these premises. I think this is certainly a fair and equitable move, and I agree in the main with some of the comments made by the member for Stuart in regard to poker machines. I have the odd flutter, but I really do not get how people can sit there for hours on end and just lose money, but I do understand how they have become part of our community.

People have built businesses—not necessarily racing venues but certainly the hotel industry—and they supply a lot of employment across the state. So, whether we fully appreciate them or not, they are part of the economy. They are certainly part of many businesses' business plans, including the racing industry. We have a racing industry which, like any business in this state, is having its moments, especially at this time.

I reflect on the proposed change at Murray Bridge with the new racing club developments there and the Gifford Hill proposal. I know there have been applications to the diversification fund for money, and we are still waiting on the outcome as to whether that will be agreed to by the new federal government. I certainly hope it will be.

There was \$5 million put up for that, and this is part of a \$36 million project on a broader scale, which will assist the racing industry not only in Murray Bridge but right across the state by having a venue that can have not only a normal grass track, obviously, which is already in place bar the fencing, but also, in the future, with a \$4 million investment—it might be a bit more than that—an artificial track, so that race meetings can be held in all weather. It is certainly applicable, given the many meetings we have recently seen having to be cancelled.

I heard of one the other day on the radio, I think in Bordertown, from memory. The officials were flying down to start the race day but, because it was so wet, apart from the fact that they could not hold the race day on that track, the officials could not land in the weather conditions. So, they certainly need an appropriate venue so that, if events like that happen, races can be transferred to somewhere else in the state.

I certainly think it is when and not if that, with the drive of the Murray Bridge Racing Club and their co-partners Burke Urban and Thoroughbred Racing South Australia, they will get there, and this will be a pristine development for racing in this state. The beauty of this development is it is not only about

racing: it is about supplying housing. There will be at least 3,500 housing allotments, and it will essentially be another suburb of Murray Bridge.

Murray Bridge now already exceeds 20,000 in population, and this Gifford Hill development could certainly give the town up to 50 per cent of that again with up to 10,000 people living in that area at Gifford Hill, just south of the freeway as you head towards Adelaide.

So, anything that can assist racing—and not everyone gets involved in racing, but racing needs all forms of its operations to function so that it can function. I have noticed recently that a hotel just outside my electorate at Coonalpyn does not have live betting anymore because it is just too costly to host the facilities. These are the types of things that are happening in the industry, where these charges are reflected on businesses throughout communities.

This is a country hotel that services regional people, like many others, and gives them the chance, if they want it, to have a flutter on the races; now that opportunity is gone because it was so expensive to do. As I said, this is an industry where the cost structures can be very large. We need to do what we can to make sure that it is another industry that flourishes in this state and not one that walks away.

Certainly, in regard to the Murray Bridge Gifford Hill proposal, it would be nice if the state Labor government came up with the \$6 million they gave to the Gawler Racing Club; somehow I cannot see that coming, but I would certainly appreciate it. I would shake the Premier's hand if it were forthcoming and thank him very much for the support. I am sure the Murray Bridge Racing Club would be more than excited if it came, but one thing I have learned about politics is that there is not too much equity when it comes to handing out the cash.

The SPEAKER: Is there any chance the member for Hammond might join up his remarks to the bill?

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely, Mr Speaker, and thank you—

Mr Gardner: A chance.

Mr PEDERICK: There will be a chance that I may get back to the absolute substance of the bill.

Mr Treloar: Talk about politics again.

Mr PEDERICK: Oh, member for Flinders! What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that all this is linked to the success of racing in this state, and one part of this process is the proposal that could see the SAJC having to fork out hundreds of thousands of dollars in moving these pokie machines a few hundred metres. What I am trying to indicate is that the racing industry in South Australia is not just tied into the South Australian Jockey Club proposal; it is a state-based proposal. I am just talking about the issue across the state, and different race tracks, and the opportunities for racing across the state and how it can be developed.

I think it would certainly assist the South Australian Jockey Club if these state-of-the-art facilities could be developed at Murray Bridge, as I think they will be, but it would certainly be a major help if the state government would put their hand in their pocket and offer the same sort of support, the \$6 million, they gave to the Gawler racing fraternity. I do not deny them having that money, but let's see some equity across the state, instead of having a government that is just so focused on the city and does not even think of anything outside the boundaries of the city.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: You are all happy to speak, if you like. There is still a minute or so.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Ramsay to order.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. What I will say in my closing remarks—and I keep getting these interjections, these waves of disinterest from the other side—

The SPEAKER: No, 'uninterest'.

Mr PEDERICK: Uninterest, thank you. But I fully support the motion.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: A point of order by the member for Torrens.

Mrs GERAGHTY: The member's comments about waving and disinterest or whatever are quite incorrect, and it is unlike the member to make statements like that.

The SPEAKER: That is a bogus point of order and I call the member for Torrens to order. Before the member for Morialta rises, is the member for Hammond telling us that one cannot get a bet on at Coonalpyn?

Mr PEDERICK: I am, sir.

Mr Goldsworthy: Outrageous!

Mr PEDERICK: And it is outrageous. So, if you are ever travelling down the Dukes Highway, sir, and you want to call into Coonalpyn and put a bet on, it cannot happen.

Mr van Holst Pellekaan: Legally.

Mr PEDERICK: Legally, thank you. But you can play the pokies.

The SPEAKER: The terminator.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

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