

# NSW Premier Mike Baird says jibes such as ‘Casino Mike’ hurt and have a personal impact

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*NSW Premier Mike Baird says the insults he receives hurt, but that's political life. Picture: Tim Hunter*

NSW Premier Mike Baird has said being called names, such as ‘Casino Mike’, by his detractors smarts but it won’t stop his resolve to make difficult decisions.

[The embattled Premier, who is on the back foot following a miserable Coalition result at last weekend’s local council elections](#), was speaking to radio station 2UE’s John Stanley and Garry Linnell on Tuesday morning.

Mr Baird also said while he didn’t support same-sex marriage he expected it would pass a public vote.

One of the government's toughest battles has been its decision to shut down the entire NSW greyhound racing industry after evidence of animal cruelty emerged.

On Tuesday, adding to Mr Baird's woes, a document surfaced in the [Daily Telegraph](#), which suggested many in the government regarded those opposed to the greyhound industry axe were likely to have "low levels of literacy".

The Premier said he didn't know the intent of the document, which was a "creative brief" to the company creating the adverts in support of the ban, but denied it was a sledge against opponents.

"My understanding of reading that is that it could well be that across the community there are low levels of literacy and any campaign needs to take that into account," Mr Baird said.

Bringing the curtain down on the dishlickers was "one of the most difficult decisions we've had to make" said Mr Baird but denied it was a knee-jerk reaction saying there was a "systemic culture of cruelty and profit over animal welfare" in the industry.

"The evidence is in the report. There are close to 100,000 greyhounds born since 2004 and we know there's less than 10,000 with us (now). My question is where are they?"

Mr Baird's approval ratings have sunk since the last state election. Whereas once he [was affectionately known as the daggy dad who made bemused observation about The Bachelor on social media](#), Stanley and Linnell said he was now known as a dictator and arrogant.

They asked if epithets such as 'Casino Mike', given to the Premier due to the Star Casino lying just outside of the controversial Sydney lockout zone, personally hurt him.

"There's quite a list (of names) and I think it's just a reality of political life. Just because people give you those labels doesn't make it true."

Some of the anger directed at him was precisely because he was making decisions, he speculated, and not "kicking problems down the road".



*Street art in Chippendale, inner Sydney, by artist Scott Marsh depicting the premier as 'Casino Mike' enjoying a late night booze up at the casino while elsewhere in central Sydney having a drink would be banned. Source: Supplied*

“I’m not going to pretend it doesn’t (hurt), I’m human and anyone who says it doesn’t have any impact is not telling truth, but that doesn’t stop your resolve to continue what’s right.”

Although Mr Baird did concede elements of the government’s infrastructure projects could have been handled better such as the destruction of a swath of heritage listed homes in inner western Sydney for the new WestConnex motorway.

But he said, on balance, the results would be worth the heartbreak. “When we roll 10 years forward, we’ll have the metro, convention centre, Pacific Highway, M4 and M5 duplicated, hospitals expanded, it’s going to be a pretty excited city.”

The Callinan Review into the lockouts is due to be handed to government on Tuesday but Mr Baird would not be drawn on it, only saying he would look at the evidence when it was received.

[On the terror attack in Minto in Sydney’s southwest, Mr Baird, said people had to remain vigilant.](#) “It is a reminder we have to keep an eye out for any

behaviours that are unusual or suspicions and certainly police are doing that every day.”

Mr Baird squirmed, however, on the topic of same-sex marriage. With moves towards a plebiscite hastening, Stanley asked the Premier if he was still against couples of the same gender marrying.

“I have a view (against same-sex marriage) and that’s my personal view,” he said.

He, somewhat unconvincingly, defended the Federal Government’s decision to hold a plebiscite saying only it was the policy the Liberals took to the election.

But he would not be campaigning for the no side, Mr Baird said. When asked which way he thought the vote would go, Mr Baird replied, “I think it would undoubtedly be carried.”

<http://www.news.com.au/finance/work/leaders/nsw-premier-mike-baird-says-jibes-such-as-casino-mike-hurt-and-have-a-personal-impact/news-story/7b3df83b2aa4d7fbeb06fe4f3a9f8e4>