

MT. GRAVATT SHOWGROUNDS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee



Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.48 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

The Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988 is essentially unchanged since its commencement some 23 years ago. The legislation has supported community use of the showgrounds over all those years; however, it is now in need of an update to better reflect the society we live in.

The Mount Gravatt Showgrounds is an iconic facility on the south side of Brisbane, in my own backyard in fact. The local community I live in is proud to have such a wonderful asset to enjoy. As the local member for Mansfield, I have a strong track record of supporting the showgrounds and many of the tenants that call the site home. This will never change.

As Minister for Sport, I am responsible for the administration of the showgrounds legislation and I want to ensure it is as strong and balanced as it can be to ensure a strong and positive future for the grounds. That is why I am bringing this legislation to parliament to help strengthen the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act and to make some positive changes—such as guaranteeing the inclusion of women in the running of the grounds. The current act does not provide for any gender balance for the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Trust to reflect the community it is established to serve.

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The primary purpose of this bill is to ensure that women will be represented on the showgrounds trust in the future. The bill will also make other minor changes to trust governance arrangements. The purpose of the act is to reserve the site for showgrounds, park and recreational purposes. Over the last 23 years activities at the showgrounds have diversified and expanded to include community, sporting and commercial uses. As a long-time friend of the showgrounds, I have watched them grow beyond the original feature event, the Mount Gravatt annual show, to now include numerous regular events including a variety of community based uses such as the Sunday markets, the Men's Shed and the golf driving range. The trust also has agreements with users ranging from knitters' clubs, sporting groups, dog training, dance clubs, garden clubs, Weight Watchers, and church and senior citizens groups.

Having a broad range of community tenants raises challenges for the management and operation of the showgrounds. It is important that the trust has a balanced outlook to move with the changing needs of the community. In order to help achieve that, it should have an appropriate balance of male and female members. I know that the local community wants to see women guaranteed a role in the management of the showgrounds. I have received letters from 209 people in my local electorate supporting this view. Each one of those people went to the trouble of posting me a letter or sending me an email to express their views, and I thank them for that. At the moment there is no requirement that women be nominated or appointed to the trust and I would hope that all of those in this House would agree that in this day and age that could be seen as sexist and inappropriate. However, there are those who have been hell-bent on campaigning against gender equality. They have shown their true colours by making deliberately misleading statements to local residents and through media comments. One would have to question their motives. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has also written to me outlining that he does not support a gender balance in changes to the act, yet the same council, as part of the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, is required to ensure that there is a gender balance on that corporation's board.

The Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Trust is appointed to manage the operation and development of the showgrounds and it is important it stays in step with modern governance expectations and practices. To this end, the bill requires stakeholders to nominate persons for membership based on the range of skills, expertise and experience appropriate to the management and operation of the site. I fully support the government's Women on Boards strategy and I am committed to achieving a balance of male and female representatives on the statutory authorities for which I have administrative responsibility. Accordingly, the bill requires nominations for appointments to include men and women. Practically, this means that the Brisbane City Council, the Mount Gravatt Show Society and the Queensland government will need to ensure that both men and women are put forward amongst their respective nominations for the trust. This reform supports the implementation of the Women on Boards strategy and promotes a membership better reflecting local community expectations in the 21st century. Each of the three nominating stakeholders will continue to have the same level of representation on the trust.

During the review of the legislation, unfounded claims were made about government taking control of the trust. The bill clearly demonstrates that no such motives ever existed. We have maintained the status quo in terms of representation of the council, show society and community representatives appointed by the government. In the case of Brisbane City Council, which will continue to be represented by two trust members, one of those nominees must be the local councillor. Instead of being

on the trust in an ex-officio role, the local councillor will become a fully appointed member and will naturally be succeeded by future councillors. No other elected representatives will be able to serve on the trust other than the local councillor. The trust will nominate at least two members for consideration as chairperson. The minister will select the chair from these nominations. This reform will help ensure the chairperson represents the community and acts in the best interests of the trust rather than their respective organisations. An additional reform will permit showground lessees, such as the Men's Shed, with the approval of the trust, to continue to access the site during the period of the annual show.

During the review I was appalled by an ongoing LNP-driven campaign to frighten the community by saying there was a secret plan to sell off the showgrounds for housing or commercial development. By introducing this bill, it can plainly be seen that this was nothing more than scaremongering. Those who spread this misinformation should be ashamed that they would try to hide their opposition to women serving on the trust behind false claims designed to upset local residents. Worse, though, in my opinion, are those who label the support of women as tokenism—an incredibly backwards view to hold in 2011. In order for the showgrounds and the trust to move forward and have a fresh start, the bill seeks to dissolve the current membership to allow new appointments based on reformed member nomination and selection criteria. I have great confidence in the future of the showgrounds and commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.54 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 pm to 2.30 pm.

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~~ABORIGINAL LAND AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~

Second Reading

~~Resumed from 23 November 2010 (see p. 4129), on motion of Mr Robertson—~~

~~That the bill be now read a second time.~~

~~**Mr DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (2.30 pm): The Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is an important bill. It must be recognised by all levels of government and all political parties that having a bill that will improve Indigenous people's lives and the lives of future generations can only be an asset to the state of Queensland. As all members know, development in Indigenous communities requires a careful balance. We on this side of the House are committed to providing Indigenous communities with economic development that provides viability, stability and productivity whilst respecting Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the many complex issues that go with those cultures. It is quite easy for South East Queensland orientated regulations to often be misguided. I am glad that the department has worked well in consultation with Indigenous communities to get a good balance in relation to these important issues that affect Indigenous communities in North Queensland and elsewhere.~~

~~However, it is important to understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities live under different circumstances in terms of geography, housing, economic participation and access to services. We must also recognise previous wrongdoings in relation to social engineering and enforced relocation. I understand that officers of the department have worked hard to address those complex issues and have taken them into account for the benefit of future generations. In order to provide the best possible outcome for Indigenous communities, changes have to be made to account for those circumstances and to take into consideration cultural and social needs to provide the best possible outcomes in terms of the quality of life and economic participation of people in Indigenous communities.~~

~~More than three years ago in April 2008 the House passed the first stage of this legislation. This second piece of legislation has been a long time coming. Although I recognise the complexities of the issues and the different communities and the different families within those communities, it is a good result to finally have this legislation before the House. However, I think issues such as these should be~~