



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard 12 November 1998

HEALTH PRACTITIONERS (SPECIAL EVENTS EXEMPTION) BILL

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (4.29 p.m.): I am pleased to speak in support of this Bill for fairly obviously reasons. This Bill is not one that stretches the minds of members on either side of the House. It is self-evident that it is needed.

From time to time we in Queensland are pleased to host special events. In fact, we would hope to increase the frequency with which international events are hosted in Queensland. I must admit that I hope that the number of special events being hosted in the City of Cairns increases as the years go on. It is appropriate, particularly when sporting endeavours are involved, that the attendance of medical practitioners at those special events be facilitated. Therefore, to have in place a means of recognising appropriately the qualifications of those trained overseas who may wish to travel as part of a special event, for example, with a sporting team, is quite in order. That is the main thrust of this Bill and is surely to be supported.

The reason that the Bill is being introduced now is that we in Queensland have an opportunity to host many of the sporting teams that come to Australia to prepare for the 2000 Olympics. These opportunities are important for our own people in terms of their ability to compete with, to be educated by and to otherwise benefit from the presence of world-level sportsmen and women. They are opportunities, too, for a very special kind of tourism and one of considerable economic benefit to the State.

There is no harm in this Bill in terms of its permission for health practitioners from other countries and having been qualified through different mechanisms than those in Australia to be registered to treat their own team members. It will not impact on Australians or the quality and standards of the training we expect of Australian health professionals. It also will not give these foreign health professionals the ability to treat Australians, to access anyone other than their team. It will enable us to subject to tight scrutiny the kinds of medications that may be essential for their team. As further insurance, the Bill gives special responsibilities to our own health staff to monitor any prescriptions they write and the use of any restricted drugs. Therefore, I have no hesitation at all in suggesting that this is an appropriate, modern and speedy resolution towards that attraction of many more happy and educational events for Queensland, particularly in the lead-up to the 2000 Olympics.
