



Speech by

Hon. JUDY SPENCE

MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT

Hansard 5 August 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Brisbane Exhibition Show Bags

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt— ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Fair Trading) (9.59 a.m.), by leave: Ekka time is a great date claimer on the Brisbane calendar. As a child, there is nothing quite like the hype of fairy floss and show bags. As a parent, there is nothing quite like the relief of kicking off the shoes after a family day at the Ekka.

All in all, the Ekka continues to be an event that attracts the interest and participation of tens of thousands of Queenslanders. Whether it is the beef producer from Blackall, the woolgrower from Winton or the motor mechanic from Moorooka, the Ekka has something to offer. What is probably unknown and, indeed, in my view dangerously so, is the potential safety problems—especially for young people—that exist in that great Ekka institution, the show bag. The RNA is acutely aware of this and over the years has invited my departmental consumer safety officers to scrutinise the show bags to ensure that the toys and novelties therein are safe. I want to place on record my appreciation for the responsible attitude being displayed by the RNA.

This may sound like a small matter to some members, but the fact is that the potential for some misfortune, perhaps even disabling injury, to occur as a result of an unsafe toy or gimmick finding its way into a show bag and ultimately into the eye of a young child exists. However, as I stated previously, thanks to the RNA and my department, thorough checks are carried out on a 200 bag sample and each of the toys and novelties therein are given the once over.

A Government member: Are they worth the value?

Ms SPENCE: At this stage, I am not commenting on value. Age labelling, general safety issues such as sharp points, structural soundness and other suitability checks are made. I have to say that this process has revealed two facts: that most toys and games in show bags are totally unsuitable for children under three and, as a parent and the Minister responsible for this matter, I want to take this opportunity to highlight that fact to parents. The message is simple: most show bags are not appropriate for under three-year-olds.

The RNA's vigilance in ensuring that the process has been followed has led to a very high standard of product delivery and very, very few incidences of inappropriate or unsafe toys or novelties have been detected. The precautions taken by the RNA and my department could well mean the difference between a happy, memorable outing to the Ekka or an equally unhappy, memorable disaster for a family. I am pleased to reassure Queenslanders of the Department of Fair Trading's vigilance in this matter.
