



Speech by

Mr N. ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

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ZILLMERE COMMUNITY SPORT AND RECREATION CENTRE

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about a momentous initiative for my electorate. Sports Minister Bob Gibbs has approved funding of \$1 million to construct an indoor sport and recreation centre at Zillmere. The Brisbane City Council has also agreed to provide around \$100,000 in assistance towards this project. The funding has been provided through the State Government's Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Program.

The Zillmere sport and recreation centre will be a great asset for the northern suburbs and will have features such as indoor playing courts, a stage and community meeting rooms. It will provide a much-needed boost to the district and give hope to local youth and families and to our elderly community.

I thank the Minister, his department and the many individuals and organisations that have given this project strong support over the past three years. I particularly congratulate the board of management of the North Star Sports Club for having the foresight and courage to take on this initiative on behalf of the Zillmere and surrounding communities. I particularly mention its secretary/manager, Barry Hardie, and president, Wayne Yule. I also thank the Brisbane City Council for its support, particularly Councillor Terry Hampson and Lord Mayor Jim Soorley.

This sport and recreation facility will service the needs of many north side suburbs, including Zillmere, Boondall, Geebung, Taigum and Aspley. It will also be an attractive alternative venue for schools and community groups as far afield as Banyo and Nudgee. People in these communities currently travel as far as Sandgate to access a decent facility to conduct events such as school presentation evenings and performances. This is a matter upon which I have been campaigning since my election in 1995. I take particular pride in being a part of a great decision of a true Labor Government. Quite simply, if it was not for a Labor Government, that facility would not be built.

The guidelines for the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Program provided for up to 50% of funding for eligible projects. However, the Minister has exercised his discretion in this matter and decided to provide 100% of the funding for the project. This decision is based on the significant and genuine needs of the Zillmere community. These needs have been identified in a range of Government studies which acknowledge Zillmere as an area of high social need. I have argued strongly that if the 50% funding guideline was applied in this instance, the people of Zillmere and surrounding suburbs would never be able to construct the facility they so desperately need.

In 1995, the then Department of Tourism, Sport and Youth identified Zillmere as the area in Brisbane most in need of community facility development. It was also ranked in the top 10 areas of need in the State. In acknowledging the reality of Zillmere's needs and agreeing to wholly fund this project, Bob Gibbs has proved the Government is truly committed to fairness and equity—fairness and equity which could only be delivered by a preparedness to recognise that sometimes bureaucratic guidelines need to be modified when basic decency requires it. This decision is a great victory for the Zillmere, Boondall and Geebung communities. It demonstrates a genuine commitment to fairness and, in my opinion, is indicative of a real Labor Government at work.

The campaign for this facility began in 1995, when I established a small community working group to progress an application for funding under the Goss Government's Community Recreation Facility Program. The working group had its hopes raised when Clem Jones, who was heading the unit responsible for the program, visited Zillmere in February 1996 and advised that his committee was keen

to work towards a facility in the Zillmere district. Soon after that visit, the Goss Government lost office to the coalition which, in its next Budget, abolished that very worthwhile program.

Despite an acknowledgment from the coalition Government of Zillmere's needs, there was no funding program put in place to address those needs. In the lead-up to the 1998 election, Labor announced that it would introduce a new Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Program should it be re-elected. As a pre-emptive move, I met with representatives of the North Star Sports Club in early 1998 to ascertain their interest in applying for funding on behalf of the local communities. They agreed, Labor was re-elected, and the rest is history.

Throughout the campaign to secure this facility, I have stressed to the North Star Sports Club the need to provide a facility which is accessible by a wide range of community interests—a place for activities for our youth, families and our elderly population. The club has supported this approach and is keen to ensure appropriate community input into the development and management of the facility. A consultative process will be put in place to inform the community of what is proposed at the centre and to seek feedback on how best to ensure that as many community needs as possible are met. I look forward to working with the community and the North Star Sports Club to achieve that objective and to ensure that we get the best value for the \$1.1 million that will be allocated for this project. In many respects, this is a dream come true for Zillmere and the surrounding suburbs. I am particularly proud to have played a part in securing this decision for my constituents.

In my first speech in September 1995, I spoke of the need for this facility and committed myself to working with the community to achieve it. We now have what we want and need. Let us now work together to ensure that the Zillmere sport and recreation centre delivers great and positive benefits for our community.
