



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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GAMING MACHINE AMENDMENT BILL

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (11.31 a.m.): An important initiative of the Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2001 is the establishment of the new fund to be known as the Major Facilities Fund, which is to receive a percentage of the monthly profit from gaming machines operated within category 1 licensed hotels that record a monthly metered win of \$100,001 and over.

The major facilities levy that is being introduced in this bill will be paid into the Major Facilities Fund. The first major project to receive funding in this way will be Lang Park. Old habits die hard and I still call it Lang Park. I do not think I will ever know it by any other name. Funding from this levy will not be restricted to sporting facilities, as cultural facilities will also be eligible. I want to focus my comments on the need for such a fund to ensure that facilities such as Lang Park are built for the benefit of Queenslanders and many tourists. It is a bit of a follow-on from what the Premier was just speaking about in question time.

Brisbane's No. 1 tourism opportunity is being an event leader—the place where all the big events occur. This helps not only Brisbane but also Queensland. I will give honourable members an example. While I was on my honeymoon I spent a couple of days in Cairns. I was amazed at the number of Lions tour shirts I saw both where I was staying and also at different places I visited. This was nearly 10 days after the initial Lions game held at the Gabba. Without the holding of these games in Brisbane, hoards of people would not have been spending money in regional Queensland. Attracting people to the event in Brisbane meant that the benefits were spread far and wide—even as far as Cairns.

However, unless we have a world-class stadium we will not be able to attract these high-quality events. We now have a first-class oval shaped sporting facility at the Gabba, but we do not have a rectangular and state-of-the-art spectator facility that will be sure to attract the best of the best. One had only to go to the third State of Origin game to see why ANZ Stadium is simply not conducive to games of Rugby League or Rugby Union. No matter where people are seated, they are far away from the action. Spectators expect more from these first-class events.

The other problem with ANZ is that the flow-on effects of after match trade or before match trade for hotels, restaurants, et cetera are severely minimised by its distance from the city. Despite access to the world-class busway system that we have—and as the No. 1 busway ticket holder, I am fully aware of this busway system—it still takes considerable time to get out of the ground and into the city, whereas Lang Park is less than 10 minutes walk from restaurants, hotels and everything else that the city has to offer.

A government member: And the Caxton.

Mr REEVES: And the Caxton and the Paddo as well.

We need a world-class facility which is close to the city but does not have a negative impact on our budget. That is why the establishment of this fund is a win-win situation. Not only will jobs be created at the construction stage, but the operational stage will create a major shot in the arm in the area of tourism and hospitality in Brisbane and throughout the state.

Considering the problems with gambling and poker machines, I think the cap on the number of machines is terrific. I am sure that the recent announcement by the New South Wales government will

ensure that we continue reviewing whether or not a further cap is needed. I have spoken to the minister and the minister assures me—and I have no doubts about that—that his department is looking at a lot of clubs that are being established. I am a bit concerned. A few years ago we introduced legislation to stop the licensed machine operators becoming entrepreneurial clubs as occurred under the old system of the member for Moggill.

I am a bit concerned that some unscrupulous entrepreneurs might see clubs as a way of getting around this present legislation. The minister has assured me that the Office of Gaming Regulation will keep a close eye on this and make sure that any new clubs or even present clubs have landlords and contract managers. It will be closely examined to ensure that the entrepreneurs do not look at the club industry in the same way as the hotel industry. I commend the bill to the House and I look forward to the major shot in the arm it will provide to event tourism for Brisbane and Queensland by the year 2003 with the Lang Park facility.
