



Speech by

**GEOFF WILSON**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Hansard 1 May 2003

### **SPORTS DRUG TESTING BILL**

**Mr WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (3.15 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to support the Sports Drug Testing Bill 2003. A number of speakers who have preceded me have outlined well the contents of this legislation. I do not seek to repeat that.

I will identify what appear very clearly to be the principles and values upon which this legislation is based. In the Australian community and here in Queensland we are saying through this legislation that we support fair, open and honest competition in sport. We are saying that it is fundamental to sport that we maintain a level playing field between all competitors. We are also saying that sports participants should rely upon their talent and their effort to achieve success and not on artificial means and that victory should be achieved through long training and hard work. Through this legislation we are also saying that we want to protect the health and safety of sporting participants and, more broadly, to protect the high reputation of Queensland's elite sporting competition.

There are a number of other very good reasons for supporting this legislation. They are matters to do with protecting, enhancing and building junior sport. The general community rightly has a great concern about the abuse and use of illegal drugs across society, especially amongst young people. We rightly support a relentless campaign to attack the scourge of illegal drugs in our community. More particularly, the community also rejects the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport. That is a very consistent position with the broader approach that the community takes towards illegal drugs generally. I believe that this legislation sets an impeccable example for all young Queenslanders, either those already participating in junior sport or those who hopefully will participate in junior sport.

Often we hear comments in the media and elsewhere about the important role models that we find in elite sport not only in Queensland and Australia but also internationally. There is no getting around it. Like it or not, elite athletes, in every area of sport, are in fact role models for young people. It is quite appropriate that this legislation seeks to introduce a random testing regime on a compulsory basis to help eradicate performance enhancing drugs from the elite level of sports participation.

About 18 months ago the Deputy Premier and Treasurer was kind enough to open the Ferry Grove Sports Centre, which is a major sporting initiative in my electorate into which the state government has contributed substantial funds, reflecting the state government's sport and recreation policy of supporting sporting programs that are directed towards getting more young people off the street, away from risk and into sporting activities.

This legislation is important not only for all of the values and principles that I have identified but also because of the indirect assistance it will provide in encouraging and building youth participation in sport in Queensland.

There is evidence only as recently as this month, in fact, which shows that participation in sport has a significant positive impact on antisocial behaviour by young people. I want to draw the House's attention to a report of the Australian Institute of Criminology which was released in April 2003 which reveals some preliminary research information on this important question of the link between young people participating in sport and recreation and the diversion from antisocial behaviour.

This paper summarises the main findings from the report of the institute, and it is directed towards sport and physical activity and antisocial behaviour. It was funded by the Australian Sports Commission. The report documented the effects of sport and physical activity on antisocial behaviour through the targeting of underlying risk and protective factors and other behaviour. It found—

Together with the obvious physiological benefits, sport has been shown to improve emotional and cognitive skills including self-esteem and problem-solving ... These improvements can impact directly on behavioural risk factors and, as such, sport may be a useful intervention strategy in reducing antisocial behaviour.

It is that sort of indirect and maybe not initially realised value of this legislation that I think we should also turn our mind in supporting it in the House today. The more young people we encourage to be involved in junior sport, the far better off our society is. This legislation sets the right standard at the elite level, and I believe that is reflected to the benefit of junior sport as well. I commend the bill to the House.