



Speech by

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AFL GRAND FINAL, BRISBANE LIONS

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): Before Queensland gets totally swept up in Rugby World Cup fever, I would like to join the Premier and pay tribute to players in another code of football. It is always a great privilege to be present when history is made. It is also very exciting when that history involves Queensland footballers demonstrating enormous courage, endurance and skill to earn themselves and their coach accolades from across the nation. I am of course referring to the AFL grand final held on 27 September in Melbourne when the Brisbane Lions beat the Collingwood Magpies by a convincing 50 points, making it their third spectacular grand final victory in a row and the first time the Queensland club has ever achieved this feat.

I braved the infamous Melbourne weather, together with my husband and son and thousands of other Lions fans, including some others from Cairns. Complete with our Lions scarves, flag and clapper, we proudly sang our team song and leaped to our feet screaming at every one of the 20 amazing goals that were scored. We thrilled to the magic of Akermanis and Lynch's incredible marks, scoring nine goals between them. We shared in the pride of young Richard Hadley as he scored his first grand final goal in only his fourth game. We suffered with Jonathan Brown when he was poleaxed by the Magpies' Scott Burns just seconds into the game. Simon Black, who won the Norm Smith Medal for his performance, was worth two players, as demonstrated by his staggering 39 disposals. We roared when captain Michael Voss came back in the final stages of the game.

But the Lions' victory would not have been possible without their coach and mentor, Leigh Matthews. Already acclaimed as the number one player of the 20th century, Matthews' achievement as a four-time premiership coach from as many grand finals confirms his status as an immortal of the game.

On behalf of Brisbane Lions Club members Liddy Clark and Geoff Wilson and all the other Lions supporters in the parliament, I say: go the Lions in 2004! We know you can do it again.