



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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GOLD COAST POLO CLUB; TS TYALGUM NAVAL CADETS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.05 p.m.): Earlier in the year I was privileged to attend the Queensland state polo championships at the magnificent new Gold Coast polo and country club in Oxenford on the northern Gold Coast. The event was very well attended and was a tribute to the wonderful facility, which has finally brought a world-class equine centre to Queensland. The facility is run by Ginger Hunt and brings another diverse events, with associated benefits and spinoffs, to the events city, the Gold Coast. The new facility is wonderful, boasting world-class features such as a 15,000 square foot clubhouse with a five-star restaurant and breathtaking views of the Gold Coast hinterland.

The field itself is also amazing. It was explained to me on the day that the field is seeded with the latest Bermuda couch grass and is laser levelled, thus making for a very smooth and free flowing game. The facility also houses tennis courts, a pool and 118 stables. The centre is truly amazing and I urge members to go out and have a look at upcoming events at the club.

Equestrian is not just a sport for the high society set. This was evidenced by the eclectic crowd in attendance, including my children, Bronte and Piers, who enjoyed having their faces painted and the pony rides.

Equestrian has one of the longest and most colourful Olympic histories. It was first staged at Paris in 1900 and in 1952 it was one of the first sports where women and men competed against each other. In Athens, fellow dentist, Ricky Macmillan—who graduated from university with me in 1983—came 37th in the dressage and represented Australia with distinction. It was well worth burning the midnight oil to watch her and I congratulate her on her efforts.

On the same weekend, I was similarly privileged to attend the annual inspection of the TS Tyalgum naval cadets. The naval cadets at the training ship Tyalgum are widely regarded as one of the finest cadet units in Australia. Each year, every cadet unit is inspected for efficiency to determine the most efficient Australian naval cadet unit in the state and, subsequently, in Australia. In two of the last seven years, 1997 and 2002, training ship Tyalgum has won the honour of being the most efficient unit in Australia. On two other occasions in that period, 2001 and 2003, the unit has been named the most efficient unit in south-east Queensland.

The cadets were wonderful at this year's inspection. The unit is a credit to their commanding officer, Christine Sheppard, and to themselves for the hard work and commitment they show week in and week out. I look forward to continuing my association with training ship Tyalgum over the coming years and I encourage all of the cadets to pursue their passions for the water and for the defence forces.