



Speech by

## Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 28 November 2006

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### MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (3.42 pm), in reply: I start by thanking all honourable members for their contributions to today's debate. I thank the opposition for their support for this bill. I knew we had to agree on something somewhere along the line. In particular, I would like to record my thanks to the honourable Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, Andrew Fraser, who has been instrumental in the development of this bill and will handle the bill in the debate on the clauses.

I support the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the magnificent venues such as the Gabba and Suncorp Stadium and the management of the Major Sports Facilities Authority. For the record, I might just say to all those critics who attacked my government along the way for building Suncorp and who attacked my government for also completing the Gabba that I think they now realise that they were wrong because Queensland is entitled to the best sporting facilities in the world. That is what we have. We are attracting sporting events and out of that comes an enormous amount of economic activity. I say to those people who whinge about everything that sooner or later they have to support those who are building these sorts of facilities. The same goes for the new library I opened last week and the art gallery that I will be opening on Friday: they are great pieces of infrastructure but they are also culturally and intellectually enriching for the state. That is what we have been trying to do. I accept the sentiments of the Leader of the Opposition and I acknowledge that.

These amendments will strengthen Queensland's position as the premier destination for sporting, entertainment and cultural events. The amendments will protect fans, supporters, promoters, sporting bodies and sponsors alike by tightening controls over the conduct of major events at our major sporting facilities. Importantly, as I said earlier, these amendments will help to preserve the community fabric that centres on families attending major events and seeing their heroes in action.

One of the things I am really pleased about is the increased number of women who are supporting major sporting events. Take Australian football, for example. I know, Madam Acting Speaker, that you are an AFL fan. You can tell the intelligent fans. Australian football has the highest percentage of female support. Cricket is in the high thirties and AFL is in the forties. The real challenge is for Rugby League and Rugby Union, which I love, to lift the number of women who support it. I am sure there are some female members of this House who could give them some guidance.

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** So women use public transport?

**Mr Reeves:** If they come there will be even more.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Fair enough, and the member for Mansfield will be there to show them the way. Importantly, these amendments will help preserve the community fabric and the families. The ticket-scalping measures will protect the public from the actions of unscrupulous scalpers who merely seek to make a profit and who really could not care less about the event. They are only interested in greed. In this electronic age scalpers have been able to exploit web sites like eBay to profit from onselling tickets at grossly inflated prices. I would like to acknowledge eBay's cooperation with the government on this bill.

They had discussions with the minister for sport and I think he has allayed any concerns they may have had about the legislation. I am pleased to advise that they have agreed to put appropriate measures in place to alert their customers to the new offences. I thank them for that. I think the amendments have been circulated.

Again, I acknowledge the views of the Leader of the Opposition in wanting to preserve some of the theatre associated with test cricket. However, it is important that families can attend these events feeling safe and with some surety that their enjoyment will not be disrupted. In relation to the issues that the Leader of the Opposition has raised, the government is balancing the requirements for public safety at events, including appropriate antiterrorism measures, with the need to ensure that our facilities remain attractive venues for staging events. I say to the Leader of the Opposition, who has left the chamber, that it is important to not simply act on—and I say this with the greatest courtesy—the television coverage of the arrest. Often what happens—and I talk to police from time to time, and I was talking to the Deputy Premier and the police minister a little bit earlier about this—is that there is a long period of inappropriate behaviour before the people are actually thrown out of the venue. The police, I have to say, have been incredibly tolerant.

Why should a family going to the cricket have to be subject to behaviour such as beer being thrown over them or inappropriate loutish behaviour, obscene language or whatever? We should be able to be civilised when we go to a sporting venue. If we are going to increase the percentage of women and families who go to view cricket particularly beyond the high thirties and into the forties and fifties, then we should act like civilised people. There is nothing wrong with a bit of fun. I have welcomed the balmy army here on a number of occasions. I think there are about 10,000 of them wondering around. The minister for tourism has confirmed that because most of them are friends of hers. The important thing is that if we do welcome the balmy army—and they are generally well behaved—we need to make sure that everyone else behaves appropriately. I think the police behaved appropriately. I want to say to the police publicly: well done. I do not think we want to go to sporting events to be slobbered on.

The penalties for ticket scalping will only apply if a person attempts to sell a ticket for more than 10 per cent of the purchase price. This is designed to allow people who genuinely need to do so to recoup the cost of the ticket. I think that is reasonable, although 10 per cent is not a bad return. I would not mind that on any investments. I am sure that the Leader of the Liberal Party, who has extensive investments, would love a 10 per cent return.

I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support regarding the aerial advertising provisions. Further, I would ask that he convey his support to his federal colleagues so that we can achieve a nationally consistent approach to this matter and therefore overcome the need for state parliaments to deal with this matter individually. The government will be monitoring the implementation of the legislation to ensure that any anomalies which are identified can be addressed.

In relation to comments made about exemptions for scheduled flights by the member for Surfers Paradise, who is in the chamber, it should be noted that the bill specifies that this must be a scheduled commercial flight—in other words, a flight operated by an airline. Therefore, the situation to which the member referred will not arise.

I thank the member for Gladstone for her support for the bill. The bill provides that advertising on buildings adjacent to major sports facilities that are in place on more than a temporary basis are exempt from the restrictions. So the point that the member for Gladstone raised is covered. The XXXX sign is a case in point. The MSFA has some discretion in relation to these matters anyway. I do not think that is a problem as the MSFA would be able to pursue the matter.

The aerial advertising provisions will provide surety to event organisers and sponsors when they stage events in Queensland. In turn, this will make Queensland an even more attractive location in which to hold events. That is something that will ultimately benefit the event-loving public.

Recent weeks have seen international acts such as U2, Kylie and Billy Joel perform at our facilities. As well, there was the first test match of the Ashes series played at the Gabba. I would like to see Queensland build on this momentum. If the attendance figures from the recent Rugby League test matches in Sydney are anything to go by, Queensland venues have a bright future.

By the way, I agree with the speculation I heard that the Tri-Nations final next year should be held at Suncorp. The Australia versus England match on 18 November—it was held on my birthday; I was away overseas—was well attended. The final was not anywhere near as well attended. I think that it makes sense that they should go where the fans are. I say to those organisers in both Rugby League and Rugby Union that it is worth remembering that when they allocate matches in the future. While they have to build crowds in other places, including Melbourne, it does not do any harm to ensure that they look after their base constituency.

What they should do, if I can give them some unsolicited advice, is build on the solid foundations they have got and then expand their support base. That is what the AFL did. AFL has one of the most successful track records in this nation of expanding its sport. While I have come to appreciate it, love it and support it, having grown up with Rugby League and Rugby Union I would like these sports to equally expand.

I want to congratulate Rugby League on the Tri-Nations series. Rugby League did a fantastic job. The final was certainly a gripping game. We could not ask for a better final between Australia and New Zealand. Congratulations to the New Zealanders. While I was obviously passionately supporting Australia and I was delighted to see Darren Lockyer pull off that brilliant try at the end, set up by Thurston, I think the New Zealanders should be very proud of their performance.

Let me come back to the final points. It is worth making the point that sporting events lead to economic activity. That is one of the reasons we have to have the best sporting facilities in the world and that is what my government has built. That is one of the reasons we are bidding for the world athletic championships in 2011. That was one of the reasons I was in Monaco a couple of weeks ago.

Finally, for the information of members I point out that the minister for sport, Andrew Fraser, and I have dual roles here because sporting facilities are technically my responsibility through the MFSA. By and large, the minister for sport looks after them for me. I want to acknowledge the contribution that he has made here. He has negotiated most of the provisions of this bill and is largely the driving force behind it. I want to thank him publicly for it. I commend the bill to the House.