



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.24 pm): It is my pleasure to rise as many members have before me to speak to the Associations Incorporation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I do not want to canvass many of the issues that many members before me have in the same detail. I will simply point out that, even though Surfers Paradise is one of the smallest electorates of Queensland in area, there are certainly many organisations and associations which this legislation applies to. I looked at them and looked at the tiered reporting system that the minister mentioned in the second reading speech when she said that the lesser requirements for level 2 and 3 associations is expected to benefit some 80 per cent of Queensland associations. When I was briefly writing down some of the associations that this refers to in the Surfers Paradise and Gold Coast area, I realised that it is probably a similar percentage of organisations that I am about to mention.

When I think about some of the AGMs I go to, as the member for Mansfield already mentioned, I see some of them having real difficulty getting people to fill positions. People dread the responsibility, or the perceived responsibility, of going on the committees of these organisations because they think the reporting responsibilities are going to be very onerous. If we can do anything to make it easier for these organisations, then we should obviously be encouraging that, and that is what this legislation does.

I note the extensive speech by the member for Clayfield, the opposition spokesperson. As I said, I also want to give my support for the bill, as everyone else in the opposition has. Some of the organisations in Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast that I attend include the Friends of the Gold Coast Arts Centre, the Capri Sorrento Benowa Community Association, the Main Beach Progress Association, the Friends of Federation Walk, the Chevron Island Progress Association, the Gold Coast City Wind Orchestra, the Surfers Paradise Brass Band, various sporting and religious groups, various service clubs, the Friends of the Rosser Park, and the bigger ones including the Gold Coast Bridge Club, the Surfers Paradise Bridge Club, the Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth, the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce and the Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club.

In relation to the public liability insurance sections of this bill, obviously the bigger organisations own or lease land and they are going to keep the public liability insurance requirements. But, as many members have mentioned before, since the insurance crisis around HIH and the tort law reform that happened, it has been very difficult for the smaller associations to get smaller amounts of insurance. I note the comments of the member for Keppel in his cynicism about insurance companies and the profits he thinks they have been making—and I would tend to concur with that—by taking advantage of the insurance situation that has occurred since HIH and the insurance tort law reform that occurred after it.

I want to briefly refer to the three-tiered system of reporting. As I mentioned, it is often hard to get people to nominate for committee member positions, but it is the dreaded position of treasurer that people never want to fill. Also, as other members have said, it is often very difficult to find someone who will offer to do auditing services. As we can see, 80 per cent of the organisations are level 2 and 3 associations so

they will not have to be concerned with that as much now, so hopefully we will get more people prepared to volunteer.

I note in clause 25, which replaces section 70 of the act, that the requirements mandate the steps the management committee must take to consider the issue of public liability insurance. The association will be put on notice at each annual general meeting of the association's public liability insurance status. I think that is very commendable because often a lot of corporate knowledge gets lost when committees change. New people come in and they are not quite sure what they are supposed to do, and that may be one reason why they do not want to volunteer for the committee. So, on top of the concern they have about speaking publicly at meetings, they may be scared about what they will have to do or are expected to do. I also note that the new section 70A states that those who hold land on trust will have to have public liability insurance, as will those who lease real property. They are those big organisations that I mentioned earlier. Once again, I commend the minister and the practical applications of law that I am sure most people will welcome.