



Speech by

Karen Struthers

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2007

QUEENSLAND HEALTH, SUPPORT FOR NETBALL

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (11.41 am): In a scan over the sports pages in the *Courier-Mail* over nine days, I saw 122 pictures of sportsmen, 26 pictures of sportswomen, 10 pictures of horses and three cars. This empirical study of mine was yet another indicator of how women's sport is undervalued and under the radar. Women's sport struggles to get media coverage, it struggles to get sponsorship and sportswomen get little opportunity to make a living out of their sport either as players or sports administrators.

As the Senate committee in 2006 examining women's sport found, the big money and most of the big sports jobs and roles on sports boards go to blokes. Yet sports like netball thrive in my local community and around the state. Netball Queensland can boast one of the highest memberships and participation rates of any sport with 37,000 registered members statewide. I am very proud of the fact that the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, does value women's sport. He has made a great offer to Netball Queensland and the Firebirds—a \$200,000 partnership over the next two years. I am very pleased to have had a hand in supporting this. As part of the deal, Netball Queensland and the fabulous Firebirds will help to promote the Queensland Health initiated Feeling Good campaign—an antismoking campaign aimed at young women.

In a recent Queensland Health survey just 11 per cent of male and 12 per cent of female students aged 12 to 17 years said that they had smoked in the week prior to the survey. That is three per cent lower than the 2002 survey and nearly half the 1995 rate of 20 per cent. It is also the lowest percentage since polling began in 1984, which is showing some really good results that young people are not taking up smoking. I would urge those young people in the gallery not to smoke. Hands up those who do. Sixty-two per cent overall in this survey of young people had never smoked a cigarette—the first time this figure had topped 60 per cent in Queensland.

The Feeling Good campaign has had a very positive impact on young women. Of the young women surveyed following phase 1 of the campaign, 14 per cent said they had quit smoking, six per cent had begun the quit stage and four per cent had reduced their intake of tobacco. The results of phase 2 released last Friday showed even more positive results. Again, to labour the point, I urge those young people in the gallery to have a look at the Feeling Good web site at www.feelinggood.com.au.

The Firebirds are great role models for young women. They have had two great, gutsy seasons defeating some of the top teams in the national league. The netball is fast paced and thrilling, it is great to watch, and it is deserving of more corporate and public support.

Not only are women underrated, underpaid and under the radar in sport; we lag behind men in economic and social standing generally. In fact, I call the period we are in at the moment the 30 per cent equal period. For example, in Queensland 38 per cent of cabinet appointed board members are women. Women hold around 32 per cent of Commonwealth controlled positions on Australian government boards. By June 2004 we held nearly 32 per cent of senior executive positions in federal government. Sadly, the state Public Service is lagging behind at only around 23 per cent. We make up over 30 per cent of this parliament.

Ms Stone: Hear, hear!

Ms STRUTHERS: Hear, hear! In Queensland 34 per cent of solicitors are women, 33 per cent of TAFE directors are women, and 43 per cent of state school principals are now women. So we are around 30 per cent equal is how I see this period. It is not good enough. In many other areas we are doing even worse than 30 per cent. For instance, the dirty truth is that women still do the bulk of the household duties and caring for kids. Men average about only five hours a week. But I am not sure who did that survey because I bet they probably do only one or two hours.

I am sorry to say that in the private sector women comprise around only 8.6 per cent of board directorships in the Australian Stock Exchange's top 200 companies, and there is little more than 10 per cent of the private sector executive management positions held by women. We have a long way to go, but young women now are being educated in rights and entitlements. They have seized on opportunities for higher qualifications and work. They are taking equality for granted and signs are positive that their generation or the next generation may actually get to 50 per cent. Go the Firebirds for the 2008 season!