



Speech by

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**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

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## **SPORTS DRUG TESTING AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.01 pm): It is a real pleasure to speak to the bill before the House today, the Sports Drug Testing Amendment Bill 2006, which is about enhancing the fairness of competition and thereby making sport more enjoyable for people at all levels, in particular for young people who look up to higher levels, but ultimately making those elite levels of sport that many people aspire to fair and honest and thereby standing by all the principles that we value that come out of sport.

The opposition welcomes this bill and will be supporting it fully because it is about making sport fairer. Many of us here in parliament often have to deal with things that are hugely negative and critical or have disappointed people and so forth, but one of the most enlightening aspects of our society is sport. Whether it is sport for recreation and social enjoyment, whether it is sport where people just develop friendships and become a member of a club and enjoy not only the sporting activity but the friends around them, or whether it is at higher levels of sport, the sheer excitement and enjoyment of watching sportsmen and women at the highest level, sport plays a very, very important role in our life. Sport can provide people, particularly young people, with many of the lessons of life. If young people are encouraged to participate in sport and enjoy it then they learn that they have to try, to train and practice, to have discipline and listen to their coach, captain or manager; they have to share the ups and downs of winning and losing and be a good sport and try their best and, at the end of the day, shake hands and move on to the next day. There are many lessons involved in sport that can be transferred to normal life. Sport gives young people a great balance and enables them to adjust and to deal with many of the things in life that may be difficult. We all need to know how to win and we all need to know how to lose. There is a great saying in sport that you accept your victories humbly and at the same time become a gracious loser.

This particular bill is bringing about some technical changes to align legislation and heads of power in Queensland with Commonwealth legislation. It is all to do with drugs. Drugs have become a scourge on our society. Whether it is for recreation, causing crime or causing these problems of cheating in sport, it is something that we all find repulsive. The difficulty is that for young sportspeople or other people in life there is always the temptation of drugs. In previous eras kids might have got a thrill out of having a smoke at the school fete or having a drink; today the dangers are so much greater. People get hooked on these drugs and there are very, very bad consequences. Some of the drugs causing crime get people so focused. If they set their mind to do something while they are on drugs, in particular amphetamines, they will go ahead and do it regardless of the consequences—they will attack a policeman, they will break and enter, regardless of the consequences. They will do all those things because they are out of their mind and driven by the drugs. The other problem with drugs is that, without a doubt, they do all lead to mental illness. Very few people who take drugs and take them to some considerable extent ever escape the effects of the various forms of mental illness. That in itself is also creating a problem for our society.

Then we have elite sports stars who are playing sport full time and often have a bit of time on their hands. They do not have a job because they are full-time professionals. There is the temptation of recreational drugs. They have been through the highs and lows. Many of these sports stars have been playing in games or events of massive national and international importance. There is great tension, stress and pressure on them. They have run out before 80,000 to 100,000 people and played the game of their

life and then had to sit down in the dressing room and accept sobering defeat or the joys of victory. There is a lot of pressure on them. That is no excuse, but those are the sorts of things that are behind many of the problems of drug taking. To avoid drugs they need great discipline, family support and the enormous support of coaches and managerial staff and all the people around them who are there to guide and mentor them through the elite sport that they are involved in.

Ultimately there needs to be the pressure not only of sanctions but also of testing and of punishment, because some people will break the faith, break the trust, and just go that little bit further and take performance-enhancing drugs.

**Mr English:** Like Marion Jones.

**Mr HORAN:** Which was a tragic thing. I take that interjection. They also take recreational drugs, which are just as bad, and for which they are tested in many sports during the season but also in some sports out of season.

I have a few notes on an event that I, along with many people in this House, will never forget. At the time I felt it was the most wonderful sporting event that I had ever seen, and I have seen a few. It was Ben Johnson winning the 1988 100 metres. When he lined up on the blocks he just looked magnificent. He came out of the blocks like a shot out of a gun. It was an absolutely brilliant run. He won easily with one hand in the air. He broke the world record and would have broken it by more if he did not have one hand in the air. I do not think many of us have ever witnessed an elite performance like that. There was devastation when three days later he tested positive to Stanozolol, an anabolic steroid. People all over the world were devastated for sport and devastated for the great principles of the Olympic Games and for Carl Lewis whom he had beaten.

Whilst there had been drug testing in the era before that, that was probably the turning point where everything became ultra serious about proper testing. How could an event like the 100 metres, the blue ribbon event of the Olympic Games, and the principles of the Olympics be destroyed by something like that.

I will briefly run through some of the legislation that has led to what we are discussing tonight. We have had the Australian Sports Drug Agency Act 1990, a Commonwealth act. It has established ASDA, the Australian Sports Drug Agency. That was following a recommendation of the Senate standing committee and its report which was called *Drugs in Sport*. The major service provided by ASDA was its sporting event and out-of-competition testing. ASDA would collect samples which were analysed by an accredited laboratory, and it also maintained a register of notifiable events.

The Australian Sports Drug Agency Amendment Act 1998 was a Commonwealth Act. The purpose of that act was to ensure that the Australian Sports Drug Agency could continue to undertake its responsibilities effectively and to provide leadership in the international fight against the use of drugs in sport up to and beyond the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. That then led to a further amending act in 2004 from the Commonwealth which enabled ASDA to perform particular functions required as a result of the introduction of the World Anti-Doping Code.

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2005, a Commonwealth Act, provided for the establishment of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority, or ASADA, which now carries out the functions of the Australian Sports Drug Agency; additional functions in relation to the investigation of potential additional sports doping violations; and the presentation of cases against alleged offenders at hearings conducted by the International Council of Arbitration for Sport and other sports tribunals. It also determines the mandatory antidoping rules to be included in Australian Sports Commission funding agreements with sport, and advises the ASC of the performance of sports in observing these requirements.

We then had the Sports Drug Testing Act 2003, which was a Queensland act supported by both sides of the House and passed without amendment. The policy objective of the act was to provide a legislative framework for the conduct of testing of state level athletes for the use of drugs or doping methods.

The bill that we are debating tonight ensures that the Queensland Sports Drug Testing Act 2003 is consistent with Commonwealth legislation. It seeks to change various terms to reflect changes in Commonwealth legislation to ensure consistent terminology. It removes section 6 references in the Commonwealth Act due to the broader scope of the Commonwealth Act; replaces part 3 to allow for the provision of agreements about matters relating to state athletes with the Commonwealth in particular; provides for antidoping testing services for state athletes; provides for educational services for state athletes about doping in sport; and other matters related to achieving the objects of this act. A very important aspect of the particular amending bill is that it allows for the testing of state athletes under 18 years of age and it amends the terminology in the dictionary to reflect the terminology in the new Commonwealth legislation.

Since the introduction of the Commonwealth drug testing legislation, a number of sports have become involved in this over the years. I think at the moment there are about 11 different sports involved in drug testing. The drug testing has always been carried out for the state by the Commonwealth agencies. I think it has helped greatly in the work of keeping sports honest and everybody competing on a level playing field.

One of the aspects of this bill that is important is the testing of young people under 18 years of age. Queensland is working with the Commonwealth to try to bring about parental consent in this case. This bill certainly provides for parental consent and the government is working with the Commonwealth to make that a standard throughout the nation, because it is something that I think is important. It might be a little bit frightening to young athletes competing in state championships to be tested. It can be a bit daunting.

I can remember on occasions when my son was tested after test matches when they drew the marble for random testing. I remember being with him for two or three hours at a function and him being followed around by the drug tester, because they do not feel inclined to go to the toilet for two or three hours after the game. The drug tester from the Commonwealth would follow whoever drew the marble around and around through the function while signing autographs or eating white bread sandwiches until they were able to provide a sample. For senior people that was part of the standard, but I think for young people under 18 it is very important that everything is done properly and professionally with parents' approval and everything is properly looked after in the way that the testing is undertaken, particularly with girls.

I hope that this bill provides Queensland sportsmen and women and junior sports people with every opportunity to enjoy their sport in a fair way. I think it is worthwhile mentioning a few things about Queensland sport. All of us in this House, as are most Queenslanders, are very parochial and passionate about the successes of Queensland sportsmen and women. There have been some unbelievable successes in this state. Queensland is gradually growing to the extent where it is probably the leading sports state of our nation. This may be due to our climate and the healthy way that kids after school can participate in sport, but I think it is also due to the wonderful ethos of volunteers. Those people are prepared to form junior clubs, to provide the coaching, the managing and the running of the club, to be on committees, to be in the canteen, to mark out the fields or to get the gear ready. It is wonderful that people in this state want to be involved in sport, particularly for young people.

There have been a lot of successes in Queensland sport. I tend to think that we matured as a sporting state in 1996 when we won the Sheffield Shield. I remember Carl Rackemann taking that catch at the end. I thought it would never happen. I thought it was going to rain or something would happen, but it did not rain and they finally got the last South Australian out and we won. My eldest boy was on the hill with Rupert McCall. They had a wonderful time, as did everybody else on that hill at the Gabba.

**An opposition member:** Did they have a drink on it?

**Mr HORAN:** No, Rupert wrote a poem about it. It is a good poem and that is where he probably got the idea for it. Another great turning point in our state was the first State of Origin. A great friend of mine John McDonald, from Toowoomba, who has given so much back to Rugby League was the first coach. There was only one game played that year. Wally Lewis was the lock. He did not play five-eight. A wonderful story was written about that night by Hugh Lunn in a book of short stories about Queensland. He described how for years and years we had seen our side flogged. I remember the year they got beaten 59-0 and I think Bill Pearson was the Norths captain—or he was in the side. It was just terrible because all these Queenslanders were playing for New South Wales. Then Senator Ron McAuliffe brought about this concept of State of Origin.

Hugh Lunn wrote a short story about this. He described all the hidings and beatings. He described the Queenslanders traipsing down into the valley in which Lang Park sat and the hills around Lang Park, with the Queensland homes and people sitting on the steps in singlets even though it was winter. Everyone was trooping down to the game hoping we may have a credible display. I think with about 10 minutes to go Queensland was leading 18 to 12 and the crowd started chanting 'Easy, easy, easy.' Since then it has been a most phenomenal series. After all those years and all those games I think we are only one game ahead. When one adds the scores up they are almost level. It has been quite a phenomenal series.

Not only is there our league side but there are the Queensland Reds and the Brisbane Lions, which won three consecutive premierships. Some of the women hockey players in Queensland have in recent years made the Olympic teams. The champion swimmers who have come from this state for so long have certainly been something.

Perhaps one of the greatest sports in Australia is netball. It has the largest number of people actually registered to play. There is great organisation, whether it is in Brisbane or in country centres of Queensland. The way the siren goes and the games start on the different courts and the siren goes and they finish and the enjoyment and participation is a wonderful thing.

One sport that I think deserves mention is boxing. It is a sport which gives young men a chance to learn self-defence. I particularly refer to clubs like the Police Citizens Youth Clubs that have been able to use boxing to help a lot of young men stabilise their lives. The thing that boxing teaches people—and I spoke earlier about the lessons of sport—is discipline and sportsmanship. It can be very lonely for two men in a ring boxing or doing marital arts. At the end of it, to accept the win or loss and shake hands, which is part of the tradition of boxing, is one of the good things about that sport.

There are many other aspects of Queensland sport that I could go on with. I have touched on a few items. It has been truly wonderful for people to be able to watch and enjoy sport and to support our sportsmen and women. To see Billy Moore walk down the tunnel calling out 'Queenslander' has become part of our psyche.

I remember another wonderful sportsman from the Darling Downs Rohan Hancock, the last Rugby League player to come from the country to play for Australia. It was not long ago. This was at a time when all players came from the NRL or Sydney clubs. He came from Killarney and played for the Wattles.

In Queensland we should be very proud of, and do all we can through this parliament and government departments to support, those organisations that provide junior sport. When we look at the organisation that goes into primary school sports at school, district, regional and state level in virtually every possible sport that we can think of and the same organisation that goes into the Queensland secondary school sports association—the mix of state schools, independent schools, grammar schools, Catholic schools and so forth—it provides the most outstanding opportunities for young people to participate in sport. There are the various trips that they are able to undertake and which teach them so much.

I can always remember when my son had his first game for the Wallabies. He had just turned 19 and he ran out before 55,000 people in Auckland. I thought at the time that he was too young and too small. Then I remembered all those coaches and Darling Downs teams for cricket, footy and so on. They had learnt to travel and learnt to play at a higher level or in representative sides. I then thought, 'No. He is ready because he has had all that background.' That is the case for thousands of young Queenslanders. They are ready at 18 or 19 if they are good enough because they have been through the secondary school sports association experience, whether for a team event or an individual event, and it has got them ready for elite adult sport.

Tonight I would like to compliment an organisation in Toowoomba and the downs called Darling Downs Sport, led by Mick Smith and his committee. They have done a wonderful job in providing annual awards for young sportspeople in a whole host of sports. One of the things they do is provide a scholarship. If a young boy or girl is doing well at a particular sport—it might be a team sport or individual sport—they provide them with a scholarship to be tutored in public speaking so that they can get up and address a crowd or sponsors or people at a sports function and not be shy and say a little bit about their sport and what the experience has meant to them. That is part of the growing up that sport provides.

Toowoomba has been very lucky to have some wonderful leaders in sport. The career of Mick Katsidis and his quest for world titles has just been amazing. He has had a couple of dry gullies to cross along the way. He has learnt his lesson and has done very well. That is another example of someone with determination, dedication and acceptance of the discipline and mentoring provided by his coach Brendon Smith.

There is one other person that I wanted to mention in particular. That person is Steven Price. Steven was the captain of Harristown State High School Rugby League team. He has been an absolute icon to the game in terms of sportsmanship. At the age of 33 he is still playing State of Origin and is the captain of an NRL team. He was in the Australian team that played last weekend.

Steven was captain of Canterbury Bankstown when they went through an extremely difficult time some four years ago. There were some dramatic events that brought the club and the game into disrepute. He was a gentleman through the entire process. He accepted some of the difficulties and shame that went with it. I know he was very disappointed that they were not able to go to some schools and coach. I wrote to him and told him at the time that I believed that sport, Rugby League, Toowoomba and Queensland could be very proud of the way he did everything he could for the honour of the game and to rebuild the honour of the club that he represented. Whilst we have leaders like that in sport then sport is very good hands.

I said at the outset that we will support this bill. We support it wholeheartedly. We also support anything that the government can do to bring about better opportunities for sport in this state, be that assistance with coaching and volunteers or equipment or facilities. The things we can do for sport will pay off 100-fold for us as a state and as a nation. To keep sport as an activity that is so worthwhile and so enjoyable and have people moving on from being competitors to administrators and always having the feeling of belonging to a particular club or organisation is important.

It is essential that we rub drugs right out of sport, be they recreational drugs or performance enhancing drugs, because they are bad for the sport, they are bad for the individuals taking them, and they will lead to mental health problems in the future. It destroys all the principles and values of sport that we hold so dear. Anything that can be done to educate sportspeople, particularly young sportspeople, to keep them from entering into the dangers of drug taking we will support. This bill does provide for those further educational opportunities. As I said, I thank the minister and her department for the courtesies of the briefing that they provided me on this bill. I and all of my colleagues on this side of the House hope that all of the amendments in this bill bring about a drug-free environment in sport for the good of one and all.