



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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### MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (8.15 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2008. We are continuing this debate from our last sitting of the parliament. The main objectives of the bill are to amend the act of 2001 to change the name of the Major Sports Facilities Authority to Stadiums Queensland and to make explicit the authority's role in developing major sports facilities. In my first term in the parliament we debated an amendment bill to this act after a review. That was in October 2004. I am certainly happy to see the title of Stadiums Queensland coming in to give some nomenclature to the stadia that people can easily relate to. There were six facilities covered in the legislation in 2004. Since then we have added Skilled Park at Robina and the State Tennis Centre at Tennyson which is due for completion in the near future. Wherever they go in the world people love seeing stadiums, whether they are full or empty. It is certainly nice to see them full, but people are fascinated with stadia. It is interesting to note that in the minister's second reading speech she said that the big events help portray Queensland as a premier sporting destination to an audience across Australia and internationally.

That brings me to the crux of what I want to say this evening, and that is that I noted back in 2005 that sport is the livelihood of many players and an injury caused by a spectator interfering with them in the course of the game could open up a Pandora's box of litigation. While such action may not end up at the feet of the state because stadiums are under a public authority, such actions could certainly hurt the sport and willingness of sportsmen and sportswomen to play in Queensland. I said on that day, 8 March 2005, that I would encourage the authority to exercise the maximum penalty where possible and make it to be seen that it is doing so. This may prevent further behaviour of this nature. In 2004 the objective of the increases in the fines for people invading was to deter invasions on to the ground, protect participants' and spectators' safety and ensure that Queensland is able to attract major events. That is very important, bearing in mind what the minister had to say about keeping Queensland as a premier sporting destination.

The reason I bring these matters to the House's attention is that we have had a number of incidents recently that have been pretty well covered in the media. On 4 March I was at the Gabba. The honourable minister was there as well. There were two incidents that evening where streakers came on to the Gabba ground. Robert Ogilvie was subsequently fined \$1,500. This was after he had been shoulder charged by Andrew Symonds. Subsequently a second streaker was fined \$3,000 and had a conviction recorded against him. Australian umpire Simon Taufel commented that when the second streaker came running onto the field he was concerned that from the position that he was standing in the streaker was running straight for a player. It is very important to note that that could cause serious injury. There are many people who think this is just a bit of fun, but I think that it could have serious repercussions as has been noted by other people whom I will refer to shortly.

I note that outside court Sean Currie, the second streaker who was fined \$3,000, said—

It was pretty good, actually. It was like, 30,000 people stand up and roar when I jumped the fence.

How many people can say they've streaked at a cricket final? Not many.

My point is that he was fined as much as possible under the legislation, which is \$3,000. The fine is \$6,000 if you interfere with a player. Of course, the moot point is whether Robert Ogilvie, the fellow who was shoulder charged by Andrew Symonds, could have been given that fine. I suppose the debate would have been who handled whom, as Andrew Symonds got Robert Ogilvie with the shoulder charge. As I recall, he was pretty proud of having been shoulder charged by Andrew Symonds. My point is whether there is a deterrent effect in the penalties in the current legislation.

I note another incident occurred at the first game of the Gold Coast Titans at Skilled Park. That facility will be covered by Stadiums Queensland and we definitely consider it to be a premier sporting destination, to use the minister's words. Dwayne Joshua Norman was fined \$900 for running 50 metres up the field where he did a sidestep and scored in the corner during the Titans first home game at Skilled Park. It cost him \$900. According to the *Courier-Mail* Magistrate Catherine Pirie said—

Your explanation is that this was a bit of fun that's been taken too far.

She is later quoted as saying—

I accept some deterrence should be built into the fine to prevent this type of behaviour.

Even the magistrate acknowledged that there should be some sort of deterrent for other people. I certainly think that is the case. The *Courier-Mail* also stated—

In imposing the \$900 fine, Ms Pirie said she hoped the warning had served as a deterrent to other spectators.

I note that the *Courier-Mail* has commented on this issue and the minister has said that the government will look at changing legislation if stadium hirers ask for a ban. I note that the same *Courier-Mail* article states that one of the hirers of the Gabba, Queensland Cricket, has confirmed that it will approach Stadiums Queensland, and therefore the minister, to pursue total bans as part of Cricket Australia's overall review of behaviour issues. The *Courier-Mail* quoted Graham Dixon as saying that pitch invasions could result in the International Cricket Council putting a black mark against the Gabba as a venue. That would create a real problem for Queensland's premier sporting destinations, so I am pleased to see that the minister is taking that into consideration.

The Brisbane Lions is the Gabba's other major tenant. The *Courier-Mail* quotes Lions CEO Mike Bowers as saying—

We're concerned about player safety and, certainly, major deterrents are not being put forward by the courts so we thank the Government for the ability to have some input.

It is fairly clear that the minister has acknowledged that the government would look at changing legislation, and I would encourage her to do so. In doing so she may be able to look at some of the legislation in other places. In New South Wales I see that the—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have given you substantial time. However, I ask you to come back to the bill. This is about changing the name of the facility that runs the stadiums. I have given you some latitude. Please come back to the bill.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am referring to a direct quote from the minister's second reading speech, which is that Queensland is portrayed as a premier sporting destination. This goes to the heart of that. I note the contributions of the members for Chatsworth and Charters Towers in the last sitting of parliament, during which considerable latitude was given. I am coming to the end of my remarks, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I thank you for your guidance.

I note that in New South Wales there is the potential of a life ban. The crux of my comments is that we should possibly consider that. In New South Wales, a person who is removed for unauthorised entry onto a playing field is banned from entering the venue for 12 months and will face a life ban if they enter the venue while the ban is in force or if they have previously been banned from the venue. In Victoria, if a person has been convicted of these offences on two or more occasions over a five-year period a magistrate can order they be banned from entering a managed venue or access area during all or part of an event period.

I certainly agree with the minister that it is important that Queensland is portrayed as a premier sporting destination. The points I have made this evening are salient. I look forward to a response from the government in due course, hopefully before we see something that may reflect poorly on Queensland in terms of its sporting accessibility.