



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.23 pm): I rise to support the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill. I believe strongly in encouraging the promotion of anything in Queensland, whether it is the Mount Garnet rodeo and race day or the State of Origin. If it happens in Queensland it must be good. The Major Sports Facilities Authority was established in December 2001 as a single entity to own, operate, use and promote the state's major sporting infrastructure.

While the list of international standard sporting venues in Queensland includes Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba, the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre, the Sleeman Sports Complex, the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Dairy Farmers Stadium in Townsville, Skilled Park on the Gold Coast and the nearly completed State Tennis Centre at Tennyson there are thousands of other sporting venues across this state where great things have happened but unfortunately they do not get the recognition or financial assistance they need. For example, at the sports stadium at Richmond 1,500 people—more than twice the town's population—turned out to witness the Cowboy young guns take on the mid-west representative side.

I had the privilege of kicking off at that game. It was a great kick. They also asked me to kick off at the main game between Mackay and Townsville in Moranbah in front of 2,000 people. As I kicked off I strained a muscle in my leg. I had to hobble off and leave the crowd with the perception that it was a great kick—little did everyone know. We also have the Capella undercover arena—

Ms SPENCE: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you have been very lenient in terms of relevance with the shadow minister. I accept that because he is the shadow sports minister. This bill is very defined. It is about two things. It is about changing the name of the MSFA to Stadiums Queensland and about clarifying the powers of that organisation. It is not about everyone's parochial sporting interests in their electorates. I ask you to rule on that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): I will take the minister's comments on board. In fact, I was going to ask the member to get back to the purpose of the bill. I did allow the opposition spokesperson a bit of latitude, but I would ask the member to get back to the bill. I will do that for all speakers from now on.

Mr KNUTH: The Capella undercover arena is used for anything from the Queensland Quarter Horse Association championships to Shannon Noll's concert. There are facilities used across the state to provide for function, entertainment and sporting opportunities.

The Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill has economic benefits for these communities. It is priceless. Not only will it give the residents of towns the opportunity to showcase their lifestyle; it will also prop up the local economy and provide opportunities for local charities and non-profit organisations to benefit through the tendering of services. The Major Sports Facilities Authority laid the framework and foundation to provide a 300 participant all-weather court at Charters Towers. This has brought benefits to the community. I believe this bill will lay the framework to provide facilities such as that all-weather court. The Lang Park upgrade was a Major Sport Facilities Authority project. I have played 30 or 40 games at Lang Park and a Brisbane Rugby grand final there where we lost to Brothers. I was marking Mark Coyne on one wing and 'Smokin' Joe Kilroy was on the other.

The member for Toowoomba South talked about Lang Park. When I played at Lang Park in front of 30,000 people someone would make a break and they could not hear the player beside calling for the ball because the roar of the crowd was so loud that it was virtually impossible to hear them. I had the opportunity to play 30 or 40 games there. I played 90 first grade games for Redcliffe. We lost that grand final. I played about 15 games for north Queensland. They were very special moments for me. It is a great honour to be able to present that to the House. There is another issue that I hope the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill will address. Clermont is a very successful sporting town. For the last couple of years it has won premierships in the central highlands in Rugby League, Rugby Union and cricket.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Charters Towers, I would ask that you move on to the purposes of the bill, please.

Mr KNUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am hoping this bill will address this issue that I am bringing to the attention of the House, and this is a question that I need to put to the minister. The Clermont combined Rugby League clubs, both junior and senior, have won the right to host the Queensland Rugby League city versus country game to be held on 31 May 2008. Despite all its success, the situation remains where one sporting oval has lighting and one showgrounds oval has lighting. The showgrounds are used—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Charters Towers, please return to the bill or you will have to sit down.

Mr KNUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am speaking to the bill. I am asking if this bill is going to address these issues.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Continue on the purpose of the bill, please.

Mr KNUTH: The showgrounds are used by horse sports, rodeos, the annual show and so forth while the sportsground is used for sporting groups such as Rugby Union, Rugby League, soccer, cricket and touch football for not only fixtures but also training. It is very well used and constantly suffers from overuse at all times. An ideal way to invest in sporting facilities in Clermont would be to have a second field at the sportsground with lighting. Throughout the year, night-time sporting features are a way of life. An additional field with lights would alleviate the pressure on the main oval and ensure it remains a viable and safe venue for sporting fixtures. In all these cases the clubs and the facilities are managed by volunteers. While we do not reject the financial investment made in major sporting facilities in the south-east corner—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Charters Towers, I ask you to take your seat please while I seek some advice. Member for Charters Towers, you can resume but as long as you continue on the purpose of this bill.

Mr KNUTH: With the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill, we do wish to see the offer of more support for clubs and supporting bodies in rural and regional Queensland. It would be good to see greater financial investment in local councils, specifically for the upgrade and maintenance of existing sporting fields and venues. It would also be good to see greater financial assistance offered to sporting bodies willing to take on organising major events that will provide countless opportunities for this great state to be promoted and enjoyed as a sporting destination. This is a very important bill because sport is everything to those communities in rural and regional Queensland. It is the Australian way of life. It keeps those communities functioning. It keeps those communities going. It keeps them healthy and active, and I support this bill.