




Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 6 September 2011

MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (2.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. I congratulate the Minister for Sport for responding to the environmental changes over the past 10 years and introducing this bill. Unlike the opposition, which has stood still for the last 10 years, if not the last 20 years, and which does not change with the times and which has the same old motley crew in this House, this government acknowledges changes and moves with the times.

The year 2011 has been amazingly successful for Queensland football teams. This year the Brisbane Roar hosted and won the A-League grand final. The Queensland Reds hosted and won the Super Rugby grand final. Queensland hosted two State of Origins and won the series for the sixth time. The Brisbane Broncos will make the NRL finals. At least that is one thing on which I agree with the member for Gympie.

On top of all this, we have hosted a number of international sporting events at the stadium, such as the final Tri Nations Bledisloe Cup match two weekends ago where Queenslander James Horwill led the Wallabies to their first Tri Nations series victory over the All Blacks and the Springboks in 10 years. I was at that game at that stadium. It is a fantastic stadium.

Unlike those opposite, we will not rubbish Brisbane institutions like Suncorp Stadium. We will not bag Queensland's economic performance for cheap political tricks. This is about not rubbishing Brisbane's iconic stadiums for cheap political gain and therefore doing anything you can to win government.

Mr Gibson: Embarrassing.

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection about being embarrassing. The only embarrassing thing in this House is hearing those opposite continually bag Suncorp Stadium, which is a fantastic facility built by a Labor government.

Unlike the member for Gympie, I was at that game. It had been raining all day and the condition of that ground was second to none. It was absolutely fantastic. You would not have known that it had been raining all day. The teams played fantastic rugby. They did a great job. There is nothing more embarrassing than having to sit in this House listening to those opposite, like the member for Gympie, continually bagging and giving Queensland and Brisbane a hard time. Enough is enough. They are not going to win government by doing that so they should not continue to do it. Not only is the ground a world-class facility, it commands record crowd attendances. These events have also had a significant economic impact on Brisbane. They also create jobs for Queenslanders.

This is not the first time that amendments have been proposed to the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001 to make better use of these world-class facilities. In 2006 amendments were made to the Major Sports Facilities Act to allow the staging of concerts at Suncorp Stadium. I went to the U2 concert. That was one of the best concerts I have been to in my life. It was absolutely fantastic.

As a result of these amendments, Suncorp Stadium has been allowed to host three concerts and one religious event each year. The crowd cap that this bill amends was voluntarily imposed by the government as it was considered appropriate for Suncorp Stadium in 2001. But 10 years on there has

been a lot of change in Brisbane during that time. There has not been much for those opposite, I might add. Brisbane has grown. It has grown under a Labor government. An additional 600,000 people have moved to South-East Queensland.

The Brisbane Broncos are not the only major team playing home games at Suncorp Stadium, as was the case in 2001. More and more people are frequently attending live sporting events and concerts. Today, major national and international sporting events are a key tourism strategy for Queensland. It is a fantastic strategy that this state government supports.

Queensland's globally competitive capability in facilities development and operation, sports goods and services and event management underpin our success in attracting these major international events. It does not help when those opposite continue to downplay and downgrade the quality of the events and the sporting venues that Queensland has. Many jobs in tourism depend on Queensland's strong reputation as a sporting destination. We as a government will do all we can to keep that reputation alive and well. It is critical that we maintain our competitiveness in ensuring that our facilities, including Suncorp Stadium, are used to capacity and are not forced to limit the number of people attending events.

We built this stadium, we support this stadium and we will continue to make sure that it is one of the fabulous places to host concerts, sporting events and major events not only today but in years to come. It is therefore with great pride that I commend the bill to the House.