



Speech by


## Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 12 October 2011

---

### BRISBANE NETBALL ASSOCIATION

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (8.56 pm): I rise to acknowledge the achievements of the Brisbane Netball Association at Bradbury Park in my electorate over 40 successful sporting years. The Brisbane Netball Association emerged from a revolution. Before its formation in 1971, the then Queensland Netball Association was the only netball association in Brisbane. At the time, Downey Park had no facilities, no development plans and no coaching or umpiring programs. Its main focus was to run the fixtures. There was no fixture draw and every two weeks teams collected slips of paper telling players their times over the next two weeks.

There were a number of rebellious players who thought, 'This just is not good enough.' After their stymied attempts to reform official netball, seven local champions—among them Lorraine Decker—decided to take matters into their own hands. Each contributed \$1.00 to establish a bank account, and the Brisbane Netball Association came into being with a humble opening balance of \$7.00.

It was not an easy road for the so-called rebels. Finding a headquarters was their first hurdle. A generous northside firm, Meyers Taylor, granted the association the use of their land in Robinson Road, Virginia, free of charge for a year. This former golf practice range, with a floodlit grassed area, was an excellent start. But to get the grounds in playing condition for the start of their first season the girls and their families had to bring out their picks, shovels and lawnmowers. Everything had to be manufactured from scratch, including the goals and nets. However, their major goal was to establish a permanent headquarters.

In 1972, a lease was granted at Bradbury Park in Chermside. A facility had to be built, but the banks would not lend money to a women's sporting organisation with few assets other than talent, determination and brains. So Lorraine Decker, her husband, John, and her parents stood as personal guarantors. With the help of a state government subsidy, a bank loan was approved for their first clubhouse and two additional bitumen courts. Once again, the members became surveyors, landscapers, painters, concrete layers, fundraisers, players, umpires and coaches. Fast forward 40 years and today the Brisbane Netball Association has grown from having an opening balance of \$7.00 to \$725,000, let alone the social capital that they have created.

It has been an amazing journey for the Brisbane Netball Association and I wish them well on their 40th anniversary. I want to pay particular tribute to all the stalwarts of the BNA, including Lorraine Decker, Joan Butler and current secretary, Tamara Hall. Their tenacity and sheer determination has opened up opportunities for thousands of other women and girls to enjoy the great team sport of netball.