




Speech By
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**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (COMMONWEALTH GAMES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.38 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Commonwealth Games) Amendment Bill 2017. I thank the members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for their comprehensive report No. 31. I thank the chair, Scott Stewart, the member for Townsville; Verity Barton, the member for Broadwater; all other members of the committee; and the secretariat who support them. Once again they have provided us with a comprehensive summary and assessment of this bill. As the shadow Commonwealth Games minister, it is a pleasure for me to speak to this bill.

Following on from the member for Pumicestone, can I say that it is nice to pray for a successful event, but I am very happy that we have extra police powers and responsibilities to ensure we have a safe event because Gold Coast locals are proud to play host to the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. We are excited to show off our world-class city to over 6,600 athletes and team officials, 3,000 media personnel, 1.5 million spectators and a global audience of 1.5 billion people.

For those of us who remember the 1982 Commonwealth Games—I was at university—this is going to be an event that dwarfs the 1982 games. Along with Expo in 1988, they were seen as changing how Brisbane was perceived. I think there were only a couple of thousand athletes at the 1982 games, but it was certainly a game-changer for Brisbane. I think the member for Pumicestone said that these games will be similar to Sydney and Melbourne, but I think that the 2000 Sydney Olympics really brought Sydney onto the world stage whereas, having attended the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, generally speaking it was really seen as just another event amongst all the events that Melbourne tends to do. I think that, as the Gold Coast is the first regional city in Australia to host the Commonwealth Games, it is really going to make a big difference to the city and our state.

I take this opportunity to thank the tourism and Commonwealth Games minister for the regular briefings I have been receiving from the chair and CEO of Goldoc. That has been very helpful. It is obvious that we on this side of the House have supported the games ever since former premier Bligh first proposed bidding for them. The games have certainly given a real fillip of confidence to the south-east region that is not necessarily being reflected in other parts of the state in terms of infrastructure provision. There is a real sense of economic success, buoyed with real estate success and development success, that has lifted us since the global financial crisis.

I know that for many within Goldoc and those who experienced the Glasgow Commonwealth Games there have been many learnings. We are looking forward to hosting the games, enjoying the 70 other Commonwealth countries who will come and following things like the Queen's Baton Relay, which has been travelling around Africa over the past couple of months. There is a real sense of excitement on the Gold Coast with just nine or 10 months to go.

I take this opportunity to thank the 47,000 people who have applied to fill 15,000 volunteer opportunities at the games and the 1.2 million people who have registered for tickets. There really has been an amazing outburst of enthusiasm from Gold Coasters and Queenslanders who, sometimes when there is an event that is up to a year away, often think, 'We will follow that much closer to the event.' That 1.2 million people have registered for tickets is a vote of confidence in the games. It will be a fantastic festival involving arts and culture as well as sporting activities. Gold Coasters are very excited about the games. I know that other members of the parliament share that excitement. It will be a fantastic time. I look forward to hearing about the progress of applications to be a baton bearer for the Queen's Baton Relay. Applications closed on Wednesday, 15 May 2017.

As mentioned on the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games website, the event is unprecedented in our city's history and is destined to define our future. The games will be the largest international sporting event in Australia this decade. Locals are excited to establish a legacy as a fun and safe family tourism destination. That is a very important part of this bill. There is nothing more important to me, as the member for Surfers Paradise and the shadow minister for the Commonwealth Games, than the safety of my constituents and visitors to our city. It is something that I speak about nearly every day, whether I am meeting with constituents or whether I am engaging in social media or standard, old style media. The views of the stakeholders who are mentioned in the committee report are best exemplified by the City of Gold Coast's submission, mentioned at page 4 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee report. It states—

The City of Gold Coast submission strongly supported the objectives of the Bill to provide additional police powers to protect mass gatherings of people in public areas associated with the Games. The submission noted that the 'legacy benefit of the Games is the opportunity to host other large scale sports, events and festivals on the Gold Coast, and remain an international tourist destination'.

The CoGC agrees that the powers are a proportionate and considered response to meet the identified security need for the Games and achieve a balance between individual civil liberties and the protection of the community.

That has been an important issue, with all of the infrastructure that has been created. The City of the Gold Coast is aware that, with all of the extra facilities that have been provided—I might add that they were funded by the LNP, because we inherited a situation whereby the games had been committed to but there was no funding within the budget for the provision of the games—the LNP's commitment to keep Gold Coast residents and visitors safe does not start and end with the 2018 Commonwealth Games. That is why we brought in the tough anti bkie laws which removed the scourge of criminal gangs from our city. We gave our hardworking police officers the resources that we see spoken about in this bill—extra resources to keep our streets and homes safe. It is disappointing—we have mentioned it many times—that these initiatives have been wound back. We know that, whilst there will be a significant increase in the amount of resources given during the period of the games, other parts of the state are concerned about the diminution of resources that will happen when all of those police officers and security officers are at the Gold Coast.

We are seeing a resurgence of crime in our city. It is the last thing we want to see at the Gold Coast. We have had reports of outlaw motorcycle gangs being back in Broadbeach and Coolangatta, turf wars in Coomera, armed robberies by 12-year-olds and triple 0 calls going unanswered due to a lack of police officers, just to name a couple of incidents. On the eve of the games, we want to have a reputation as the best place—the safest and most secure place—to live, work, play and raise a family. The last thing we need is more publicity in the lead-up to the games that there may be any questions about those issues. The LNP will always stand up for Gold Coasters. We did it in the lead-up to 2012, when we finally became the government. Former police ministers, including Neil Roberts, and the then deputy premier, Paul Lucas, denied that there was any problem with law and order at the Gold Coast.

I see that this bill gives additional and proportionate powers to create safe and secure environments during this unique event. Other members have spoken about a number of recent terrorist attacks overseas. Many of these attacks occurred in public, open and highly populated spaces in order to cause maximum impact. I see that there is a survey going around as to whether we—those of us in the public looking at this issue—would support banning backpacks from public events. They are the sorts of issues that police and security have to consider in terms of the overall safety of people attending these events.

Yesterday we watched in horror as the events of that terror attack which claimed the lives of 22 people unfolded at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester. My thoughts are also with the people of Manchester. These are gut-churning events, particularly at large gatherings such as that concert. They are a reminder of why security is always the No. 1 priority for locals, visitors and families in Queensland—never more so than during the Commonwealth Games. The security planning is informed by the current general public national terrorism threat level, which sits at 'probable'. The UK's terror threat level has been raised to 'critical'. I know that security and transport are two of the major issues at the Commonwealth Games.

LNP members do not oppose the bill. We note that the three recommendations made by the committee to improve the operation of the bill have been accepted, which we support. I thank the shadow police minister for his contribution. I note that all of the additional powers will expire at the end of the games except for the changes around enforcement registers, which can be used by police for other major events in Queensland in the future.