




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (COMMONWEALTH GAMES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.44 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Commonwealth Games) Amendment Bill 2017. As the chair of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee it was a pleasure to have this particular bill referred to the committee, to conduct the inquiry, to hear all the information and to contribute to the debate today. It is great to hear that both sides of the House support this very important bill.

The Commonwealth Games will be one of the biggest events Queensland has seen for decades. It will impact Cairns and the great city of Townsville—which is the location of one of the venues—and, of course, the Gold Coast. Townsville is fortunate to have this opportunity. The momentum is starting to build with regard to the Commonwealth Games. It is one of the locations for the preliminary rounds of basketball. Mr Deputy Speaker Crawford, your city of Cairns is also one of those locations. I imagine the excitement is building in Cairns also. We have less than one year to go. The impact of this is certainly on the lips of many people in the community. I imagine the anticipation is building in the electorates of those opposite whose electorates on the Gold Coast will be impacted by the Commonwealth Games.

Mr Hinchliffe: Townsville and Cairns are two great basketball cities.

Mr STEWART: I take the interjection. Townsville and Cairns are two great basketball cities. The Townsville Fire women's basketball team was the national champions not once but two years in a row. Being one of the venues for the Commonwealth Games is absolutely fantastic.

I have been the chair of this committee for about 2½ years. When we previously considered a bill related to the Commonwealth Games we had the opportunity to visit some of the Commonwealth Games sites. Almost two years ago to the day we visited those sites. Some of them were still under construction, some were ready to undergo facelifts and some of them only had concrete slabs poured. My understanding is that most of those venues are, if not complete, very close to complete. Some of them are already being used by the community which is absolutely fantastic.

The Commonwealth Games is all about showcasing Queensland. Why is it that we love Queensland? One only has to look at the people of Queensland and our laid-back and friendly approach and the environment we live in. These winters are to die for. That is why visitors love coming to Queensland.

The Commonwealth Games will present Queensland with a plethora of opportunities. There will be a number of cities and sites, not only in the south-east corner but right across Queensland, that will become training venues for teams when they come to Queensland in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games. More importantly, the legacy attached to the Commonwealth Games will last for years and decades. It will build tourism and trade opportunities that we will continue to revisit and build on year in, year out. That is the importance of the Commonwealth Games.

I will toot my own trumpet here. In 1982 I had the opportunity to be a Queen's Baton Relay runner when the Commonwealth Games were in Brisbane. The sleek greyhound physique has now disappeared. It would be a quick stroll if I were to run the baton this time. I also had the opportunity to go along to a number of events at the Commonwealth Games way back in 1982.

In those days when people entered venues their bags were searched. People opened their bags and they were searched to make sure they were not carrying in food items they could consume because that would do the food vendors at the sites out of business. That was why bags were searched back in those days. It was to make sure people did not do the food vendors a disservice. How our world has changed!

We have already heard about the impact of the events in Manchester. Every speaker this afternoon has passed on their thoughts and prayers. I will do the same very quickly. My thoughts and prayers and those of my family go out to each and every person impacted by the tragedy this week. We see this all too often, particularly when we think of the Boston Marathon. What happened at the Boston Marathon had a huge impact on the way we run our sporting events. This legislation will fit directly into our responses as a state and as a city around how we make sure that that does not happen to the thousands and thousands of visitors and the locals who will be going along to see each of these particular events. These things are not isolated. We have seen it happen in France and in Belgium and, as I said, we have seen it happen at the Boston Marathon.

Late last year in this House we implemented our counter-terrorism legislation. Each and every one of us who spoke in the House—I think there were a few members—also spoke about the importance of making sure that we do everything we can to protect our lifestyle and our people. When this legislation was referred to the committee, we knew that this was the foundation for, and at the heart of, what this legislation was about. It was about making sure that we protect our lifestyle and that we protect our people. As the member for Broadwater has highlighted already, not only do we want these Commonwealth Games to be the best games but we want to make sure that they are the safest games.

To achieve this outcome—we want people to come back and revisit and revisit and bring their friends with them when they come not only to the Gold Coast but right across our fantastic state including that beautiful city of Townsville—we need to make sure that we back our police and that we give them the support that they particularly need. On that note, I give a shout-out to Assistant Commissioner Peter Crawford. He briefed the committee twice. He is a very smart man. He is the man who is looking after all of the security arrangements and making sure that the Commonwealth Games sites and venues will meet the needs of not only its competitors but also the patrons to make sure that they are going to be the best games ever. Sitting right beside him was Commissioner Ian Stewart. I wish to give a shout-out to Police Commissioner Ian Stewart because those people are doing a fantastic job not only with the Commonwealth Games but also right across our state.

It was interesting to hear Assistant Commissioner Peter Crawford talk about the issue of scanning the crowd as people come into the games venues and how we actually do the searches. We have already heard the member for Broadwater describe the time intensity it would take to record every single person who is searched, bearing in mind that for some of our venues there will be limited numbers. There may be 3,000 or 4,000 who go to some venues, but the opening of the games—the very first event of the Commonwealth Games—will attract the largest audience right across-the-board. This is the time that we need to get this right. We need to make sure that right off the bat we have this sorted, that we have this all worked out. That is exactly what this legislation will do.

Once this legislation is passed, the police will put into place their policies and processes to make sure that people will transition through particular areas—those safe zones that we have heard about—quickly so there are no big lag times but also to make sure that security is the utmost priority when they are performing their particular task. To achieve that, Assistant Commissioner Peter Crawford highlighted that they will be particularly relying on body worn cameras.

We have heard of the success of body worn cameras with our police force. He told us at the briefing, which was about four weeks ago, that at that time there were 2,644 body worn cameras used by police when performing their roles. He then went on to say that by the time the Commonwealth Games roll around and we are ready for that very first day, when the cameras right across the world zoom in and focus on and highlight not only the Gold Coast but our great state, there will be over 4,000 body worn cameras used by police. Using that technology, those body worn cameras will be able to record every single person who police come into contact with. Those recordings will then be used to determine safe processes of doing quick searches to ensure our safety.

When we heard those facts and figures, it certainly made those of us on the committee—I am sure I can speak on behalf of all those on the committee—feel very comfortable in the way that the police were approaching this, that they were doing everything they can to make sure it is security first

but also that people felt comfortable. There will be tens of thousands of people to process in a very short period of time, not only on the Gold Coast but in Townsville and in Cairns. Those processes need to be done right across our state.

We have heard of the various locations that have been determined where body worn cameras will be used. It is expected that protective security zones will include areas adjacent to prescribed major event areas and road based fields of play, designated pedestrian routes from transport hubs to venues, park-and-ride locations, games transport hubs and some transport networks. The reason for that is that there will be thousands upon thousands of people in those particular areas. We need to do everything we can to make sure that those people are safe but also process those people quickly. That is what those body worn cameras will do.

One of the key points that the police made was that during the G20 summit in Brisbane they learnt many different strategies and ways that they could perform their role without being intrusive. The police also learnt lessons from the 2012 London Olympics and from the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. The police have been working on this not just for the last three weeks, not for the last three months, but since the lead-up to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. They worked right beside the security forces and the police at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games and the London Olympics to make sure that they get this right.

I have absolutely no hesitation in commending this bill to the House today, particularly with the two recommendations that the committee made. It was great to hear the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games talk about the second recommendation and about our need to communicate expectations. This is what the committee said. We need to make sure that people know the expectations when they enter those particular safety zones so they can plan around them to accommodate their travel time and enjoy the event as well. That is why that recommendation was made—to make sure that people get that early communication to know what to expect, to know that their bags will be searched and to know all the particular requirements they will need to go through before they turn up to an event.

The third recommendation, which I heard the Minister for Police embrace, was the need to review the process afterwards. As any good teacher or good professional will know, once you perform a particular task the best thing you can do is to review it and put it under scrutiny to make sure that you get it right and do even better the next time you encounter such events. We want to demonstrate to the world that not only can we host the best Commonwealth Games ever but we can continue to host major events in this state, not only in the south-east corner but right up and down our coastline including Townsville, that we can continue to host sensational international events and pull them off knowing that they are going to be the best and the most secure events that anyone has ever seen. With that, I commend the bill to the House.