




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Police-Citizens Youth Clubs

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.24 pm): Today I am here to raise issues around Police-Citizens Youth Clubs, PCYCs. First, I need to declare my interest as a national patron of the Traditional Shotokan Karate-Do Federation, TSKF, Australia. Our Police-Citizens Youth Clubs have been playing an integral role in our communities for more than 80 years, providing youth and community programs, services and facilities. They claim their three pillars—youth development, crime prevention and community engagement—underpin all they do. PCYC Queensland also claim their programs and activities encourage social cohesion, address whole-of-community needs and positively impact local communities. Sadly, our PCYCs are being hijacked by greed. These clubs have a long and proud history, but now they face the threat of closure if they do not make enough money. PCYCs are under immense financial pressure and the lack of support is seen as a cop-out by volunteers and staff.

I was approached by members of TSKF that use the PCYC facility at Lang Park over their concerns. Let me tell members, the further we investigated their situation, the more damning it became. TSKF Lang Park has provided karate as a voluntary activity for all ages at the PCYC Lang Park for over three decades. The agreement as it stood was that the PCYC collected training fees from students and no money was paid to TSKF Lang Park for their instruction. However, late last year they were informed there was going to be a change in the way PCYC operated. This change was pushed out under the guise of streamlining and standardising activities across the PCYC whereby if the activity was not offered across all PCYCs in Queensland then they would have to change to a hall hire arrangement.

TSKF Lang Park are not alone in their fight. Some other affected groups include TSKF Crestmead and TSKF Loganholme along with other martial arts such as jujitsu, taekwondo, judo and aikido. All were told to pay up or get out. It appears the jujitsu martial arts clubs from Ipswich and Carindale PCYC have ceased operations. Judo has ceased in Inala and Ipswich.

So herein lies the problem. There seems to be a shift in the operating direction of the PCYC across Queensland with a noticeable push into the 24/7 gym and group fitness space, primarily targeting non-youth members of the community. If this is the decision of PCYC management to move away from offering activities to the youth of the community, why should taxpayers continue to subsidise the operation of the PCYC and provide 60 police officers for this service every year? These clubs play a vital role in communities across Queensland, but jacking up fees, changing hall hire arrangements and the lack of consultation is grossly unfair and out of touch.

The closure of the Castle Hill PCYC in 2019 was a devastating blow for that community. I will not stop fighting to ensure more of them do not suffer the same fate. Our communities want assurances that there will be no more closures of PCYCs and we need plans to keep them, not shut them.