




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.06 pm): Last weekend I got along to my 12-year-old daughter's basketball game. I do not always get the chance to get to her games. When I do I am always filled with pride, but this week I actually had a tear in my eye as I watched these girls, who turn up each week and who work so hard to please their coaches and to make their parents proud—girls who train hard but who already, at 12, have endured comments about their body shape, their appearance and their abilities yet keep showing up and playing the sport they love. I tear up because I know what is ahead of them.

These girls will face barriers in sport that men will never realise—having to play through the pain and discomfort of menstruation, getting changed behind trees because there are no female change rooms, having games cancelled because there are not enough refs for the men's and the women's games. Girls and women who play sport are champions, and the women who make it to the elite level are heroes who should be celebrated for their strength, commitment, endurance, discipline and courage. That is why the comments made in this House by the sport minister, describing female Paralympian Alexa Leary as 'cheery' and 'beautiful' are absolutely offensive.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that. It is an issue I have already written to the Speaker about. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Ms BUSH: I withdraw. Women in sport have fought long and hard to be respected for their talent and determination, not reduced to their appearance or demeanour. Language matters. When I called out the minister's language online, rather than take the opportunity to get—

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Ms BUSH: I am happy to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms BUSH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I ask you to withdraw.

Ms BUSH: I withdraw. Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker; I thought I said that.

He wrote to me and asked me to remove my post, stating that it was clearly referring to her character and her contribution. Let's talk about her contributions. Alexa Leary is an accomplished triathlete who suffered a cycling crash, incurring multiple fractures and major brain damage. She had to learn to walk again. She then went on to defy medical expectations to transition to para swimming and at the Paris Paralympics secured two gold medals and broke two world records. I am incredulous that the sport minister would choose words like 'cheery' and 'beautiful' to describe her contributions.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Not only do I take offence; Alexa Leary's family takes offence—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member—

Mr MANDER:—at the weaponisation of those comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Mr MANDER: I ask that she withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, take your seat, please.

Ms BUSH: I am happy to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Clearly, the member for Everton is harassing the Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat, please.

Mr BAILEY:—with frivolous points of order—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat.

Mr BAILEY:—on matters—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat, please, member! Member, would you withdraw?

Ms BUSH: I am happy to withdraw. Rather than asking me to censor my post, the minister's time would be better spent reviewing the long and ongoing history of women fighting for equality in sport on the field, in appointments and in funding allocations. The sport minister's comments are disgraceful and I call—

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Despite me—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just need your point of order.

Mr MANDER: I am telling you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Despite me taking offence at every comment she is making—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I just need your point of order.

Mr MANDER:—which is the same thing, she is insisting—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I do not want to argue with you.

Mr MANDER: I take offence and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Take your seat. Member, please withdraw.

Ms BUSH: I withdraw. This is the person responsible for championing women's sport in Queensland. It is offensive to women. The Speaker's office has written to me and stated that I may have offended standing orders in posting my original video and has asked that I apologise to the House. It was not my intention to reflect poorly on the House so at the Speaker's direction I will remove my original post and I do apologise unreservedly to the member and to the House.

Mr MANDER: I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. After offending me in three or four comments in her delivery, the member for Cooper then tries to apologise for the comments. The apology means nothing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat.

Mr MANDER: I will be writing to the Speaker about the issue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will have quiet while I get some advice. Member, that is not a matter of privilege arising. If you have an issue you write to the Speaker.