



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.22 pm): I rise to speak to the Major Sports Facilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Overall, my speech was going to be reasonably positive, but I have just picked up the amendments that have been circulated by the minister this evening and now I unfortunately do have some concerns that I will get to.

I will start with the essence of what I wanted to talk about tonight. I am the deputy chair of the committee that oversaw this particular bill. At its heart, the bill is really about ensuring Queensland can host major sporting and entertainment events in a way that is modern, fair and fit for purpose while still respecting the people who live, work and raise families in and around those venues.

The bill achieves this through three key changes. Firstly, it updates the framework for how major events and special events are regulated at our major stadiums, particularly around concerts and large-scale entertainment. It removes outdated barriers that would have made it harder for some venues to host events that are now pretty much standard across Australia and internationally. Secondly, it strengthens the protections against ticket scalping, cracking down on unfair resale practices that drive up prices and lock everyday mums and dads out of events that they should be able to attend and enjoy. Thirdly, it improves the governance arrangements for Stadiums Queensland, ensuring clearer roles, stronger accountability and better decision-making for assets that belong to the public.

Taken together, these changes are about making better use of public infrastructure. They are about supporting jobs, supporting the local economy and ensuring Queensland can remain competitive as a destination for major events. All of those things, of course, the Labor opposition supports.

I want to speak particularly to the experience I have in my own electorate, where Suncorp Stadium—or, depending on your vintage, Lang Park—sits at the heart of an established entertainment precinct. For years, Suncorp Stadium has shown that it is possible to host major concerts and events in the middle of a densified inner-city community if you do it properly and do it well. I have to applaud the efforts of the successive leadership teams we have had at Suncorp Stadium.

In my time, I have had the pleasure of working alongside former general manager Alan Graham. Alan had an incredible capability in both considering operational matters and meeting the needs of tour operators and customers while keeping central the needs of our community. Alan recognised that Suncorp is not only a major sporting and events stadium but also a neighbour and that as a neighbour it has a responsibility to minimise the disruption that it causes to residents and to ensure local businesses can actually benefit from the major events that are hosted there.

Alan's retirement in July last year left really large shoes to fill and I welcomed the incoming general manager, Darren Burden. I have had the pleasure of meeting Darren. I think he has a wonderful vision for Suncorp and I look forward to working alongside him to ensure Suncorp does remain the jewel in the crown for Brisbane's entertainment and sporting events and continues to be a wonderful neighbour to our local residents.

Events at Suncorp operate under clear conditions. They have strict noise management, defined finishing times, detailed transport plans, community notification requirements and real accountability when things go wrong. Residents know when events are happening. Public transport is built into ticketing. Traffic and crowd management are planned in advance. Noise is monitored and reported on. When concerns are raised, there are strong mechanisms to respond to those.

The result is a precinct that is vibrant, economically active and culturally alive while still being a place where people live, work, sleep and raise their families. This experience at Suncorp shows us that, if managed correctly, we do not have to make the choice between live events and local amenity. With the right rules and having an engaged and present management team, we can in fact have both.

This bill seeks to extend that kind of consistent and modern framework across other Queensland major sporting stadiums including venues that have until now been operating under a bit of a patchwork of outdated regulatory arrangements. It recognises that our live performance industry has changed. As a committee we also heard from JC, Queensland's Night-Life Economy Commissioner, about the changing shape of the live entertainment industry across Queensland. That experience is one that is shared right throughout the nation. There is a much greater demand now for major music events. Of course, we want to be able to rise to that challenge in Queensland. This bill recognises that artists, promoters and audiences operate on a national and global schedule and it recognises that if Queensland wants the jobs, tourism and cultural benefits that come with major events our regulatory settings have to keep up, without cutting corners on community impact.

In terms of ticket scalping, I agree with the strengthening of penalties and removing the perverse incentives to penalise buyers. Those of us who enjoy attending live events may have had firsthand experience of the frustration you feel when hundreds or thousands of tickets are snapped up by third parties and then on sold, often at an inflated price. Families saving up to take their kids to a concert or to a game should not be priced out by unfair resale practices. This bill attempts to manage that.

In supporting this bill, the Queensland opposition backs live sport, live music and live culture but also good governance, fairness and respect for local communities. That is ironic when I come in and look at the amendments that have been circulated by the minister. I have not had a chance to look at them in detail. From the glance I have had, I want to raise a few questions with the minister.

The amendments talk about vesting stage 1, 2 or 3 land and providing it to GIICA as an estate in fee simple. My understanding is that that is essentially handing that land over as freehold land. Handing over Victoria Park is essentially what we are talking about here. There is other land too, but Victoria Park is the one I am concerned about. It is not in my electorate, but a lot of people in my electorate feel strongly about this particular park and about the stadium that will go there. This is about handing it over as freehold land to GIICA.

It then talks about the fact that there is no compensation payable. I would like to know from the minister what that means exactly. What are we now doing? As the deputy chair of the committee that looked at this bill, this was never raised and never flagged. To sneak that amendment in here right before we are about to take a vote on it and to not discuss it and not circulate it is intentional and deliberate. They are hiding something here. If there was something fantastic happening in this we would be hearing about it, I am sure. It has been snuck in at the eleventh hour with no information and no detail. I can assure members that it does not have the community's interests at heart. It will mean that GIICA can sell off parts of the land. We all know that this government is not going to be able to deliver the Victoria Park and aquatic stadiums in line with the budget it has proposed.

We all know what they are going to do: they are going to flog off the rest of Victoria Park to developers. They are going to sell it off to developers to cover the cost. That is exactly what they are going to do. Everyone knows exactly what is going to happen, and this amendment is the gateway for that to happen. The minister needs to come in here and explain why he is doing that. Maybe we do not all in this place disagree with Victoria Park—people have different ideas about the placement of that stadium—but I think we would all agree that no government should be handing over public assets to an institution like GIICA to be able to sell off to the closest developer.

We have passed legislation as well this week allowing ministers and politicians to be in receipt of donations from developers and are now debating removing legislation that is essentially allowing us to sell off public land to developers with no consultation. We managed a bill within months of the LNP coming into government that essentially erased 15 pieces of planning legislation, including vital environmental protections and cultural protections. When it comes to building stadiums, that is erasing the ability of communities to have a say. There is no consultation required. We have residents in this area who have a strong interest in this.

Wherever you live in Queensland, everybody should be concerned why governments are making decisions like this—governments that campaigned on transparency, trust and, ‘When I say something it means something.’ Well, that is complete—I do not even know where to go with that, without pulling myself up as unparliamentary. That is a complete—

Mr Whiting: Fabrication.

Ms BUSH:—fabrication. We will leave it at that. They have absolutely been misleading Queenslanders on this—to come in here at the eleventh hour to introduce an amendment like this, to not talk about it. In the time I have left, I say the minister needs to come in here tonight and he needs to explain what these amendments are going to do and what the impact is. Who are we selling off land to? Who is going to benefit from that? What rights do our constituents have? What rights do our small businesses have? Why is there no compensation required? What do they expect will come from this?

This is 64 hectares of public land right in the middle of Brisbane City, one of the last remaining pieces of parkland that we have left, and I think we need to be talking honestly about what we are going to do with that. We are selling this off to developers at a time when we are trying to minimise the influence that developers have in politics and in the Public Service, and we are selling it off to anybody, with no explanation. It is extraordinary! The minister needs to come in here and explain that, get on the record about it, and explain why this was not put forward as part of the substantial bill, why it has been put in here now. There is no way you can tell me that they did not know this was coming. This is intentional and it is intended to mislead the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)