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World Youth Day Amendment Bill 2007

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WORLD YOUTH DAY AMENDMENT BILL 2007

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Bill introduced on motion by Mr John Watkins.

Agreement in Principle

Mr JOHN WATKINS (Ryde—Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, and Minister for Finance) [7.31 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

New South Wales has a well-deserved reputation for successfully hosting large-scale international events. The 2003 Rugby World Cup, and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games were recognised as great successes and enhanced the reputation of New South Wales and Sydney. In July 2008 Sydney will again be the centre of international attention when it hosts World Youth Day 2008. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI named Sydney as the host city for World Youth Day 2008 in 2005. The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, with the support of the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments and the city of Sydney, led the delegation that secured this event.

World Youth Day is a series of international and Australian events aimed at young people aged between 16 and 35 years from around the world, culminating with a vigil and mass to be celebrated by the Pope at Randwick racecourse on 20 July 2008. It is estimated that up to 500,000 people will attend the papal mass, many of them from overseas. This is a unique event. It is larger in scale than the Olympics, with higher international numbers participating in the event. The event is unticketed so planning is based on crowd modelling and analysis of previous World Youth Day events as well as known registrations of pilgrims.

Analysis of previous World Youth Days indicates that the staging of such events is logistically challenging. The crowd will be fluid and spontaneous. The event will comprise various activities across the Sydney central business district and metropolitan area over the course of a week. There will also be large movements of people into and out of Sydney before and after the event. Previous World Youth Days in other cities have highlighted how challenging it is to manage an event of this nature. The New South Wales Government wants to demonstrate that an event such as World Youth Day can be well managed. I believe that New South Wales has the necessary skills and experience to do this.

The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring the success of the event and managing its overall impact on Sydney, the community and the taxpayer. The bill will ensure that the New South Wales Government is able to meet this commitment and that the necessary support and services will be available to assist in the management and planning of the event. As the House is aware, Randwick racecourse will be the venue for the overnight vigil and final mass of World Youth Day. Previous papal masses in 1995, 1986 and 1970 have also been held at Randwick racecourse. The excellent public transport options and the ability to accommodate the expected crowds of people make Randwick racecourse the best and really only option for hosting the event again in 2008.

Approximately 350,000 people will be accommodated at Randwick racecourse with the balance at nearby Centennial Park. The more moderate overnight weather conditions during winter at Randwick, when compared to western Sydney, also make the site more suitable for the evening vigil on the Saturday night before the final mass. The New South Wales Government established the World Youth Day Coordination Authority in 2006 to plan, coordinate and provide government services for World Youth Day 2008. The authority is working together with other government agencies and the Local Organising Committee of the Catholic Church to ensure public safety and security, and the provision of sufficient public transport and accommodation for participants so that the staging of World Youth Day 2008 is also a success with minimal disruption to the everyday functioning of Sydney and minimal disruption to the operation of Randwick racecourse.

The authority has developed strong working relationships with the Church's event organiser, World Youth Day 2008, as well as partner agencies and key stakeholders. Planning for the delivery of government services for the event is well underway, including the securing of the key venues and logistical support. The Australian Jockey

Club is the lessee of Randwick racecourse. Negotiations have been ongoing with the Australian Jockey Club for sometime for access to the site, and a heads of agreement between the New South Wales Government and the Australian Jockey Club for the use of the site was reached on 14 November 2007.

This heads of agreement covers a range of compensation for the use of Randwick racecourse to a value of approximately \$40 million, with the Commonwealth Government contributing half. It will bring lasting benefits to the Australian Jockey Club and the New South Wales racing industry, with a significant amount of money going towards upgrading facilities at Rosehill and Warwick Farm racecourses. The agreement will assist in ensuring a highly successful World Youth Day event at Randwick racecourse and a successful 2008 Spring Racing Carnival.

I acknowledge the critical bipartisan assistance of the Federal Government in securing this agreement. The bill will facilitate the use of Randwick racecourse for World Youth Day events. The bill makes it clear that the Australian Jockey Club, its chairman and committee are authorised to use or permit the use of Randwick racecourse for World Youth Day, and to enter into agreements with the State of New South Wales for the use of Randwick racecourse. The bill will allow the Minister to give the authority, and other persons authorised by the authority, a right to enter Randwick racecourse and to carry out works there for the purposes of World Youth Day.

Regulations will be able to be made to set up a Randwick Racecourse Project Steering Committee to assist the authority in its planning and management role for the use of Randwick racecourse. The committee may include representatives of various stakeholders. Directions will be able to be issued to persons or bodies prescribed by regulation in aid of the agreement or to enable the site to be used for the purposes of World Youth Day. This will also assist in the return of the site to the racing industry to host the 2008 Spring Racing Carnival. The Government will only use this power on a discretionary basis. It has been included in the bill in case of significant disruptions or interference with the preparations or staging of the event or restoration of the site for the 2008 Spring Racing Carnival.

Importantly, a regulation will first need to be made to prescribe persons or bodies who may be issued a direction, and that regulation will be subject to disallowance by Parliament. It will not be a criminal offence to contravene the directions, but they may be enforced through civil proceedings brought by the authority in the Supreme Court. The authority will be able to apply for urgent injunctions, should that be necessary, to ensure the event will not be disrupted. It is hoped that no such action will be necessary. The conditions attached to authorisations issued by the authority for access to Randwick racecourse are also enforceable in the same manner.

It will be an offence to delay or obstruct a person lawfully entering Randwick racecourse or carrying out works there for World Youth Day. It will also be an offence to damage the works without lawful excuse. Other proposed amendments in the bill will assist in the general management and coordination of World Youth Day. The bill will also restrict the use of air space, aerial advertising and advertising on buildings and structures in and around specified World Youth Day venues and facilities. These restrictions are in line with the restrictions imposed during the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It is necessary to restrict the air space over key World Youth Day venues and facilities to ensure the security and amenity of the Pope and the participants. Aircraft will be prohibited from entering the restricted airspace without permission from Air Services Australia, excluding aircraft being used for emergencies, police or military reasons.

The restrictions on advertising will protect important commercial relationships between the event organiser and its business partners. Advertising generally will be prohibited on buildings or structures at the specified sites, unless the authority has approved it. Prohibited advertising is to be removed by owners or occupiers of the specified sites. These provisions form key aspects to provide clean venues and prevent ambush marketing, and they are consistent with the provisions for the Sydney Olympic Games.

Under the World Youth Day Act 2006 the World Youth Day period is currently 1 to 31 July 2008. During this period certain powers can be exercised and various activities are prohibited, including the use of illegal car parks, the sale of prescribed articles, the use of community land, the removal of unattended vehicles, the closure of roads and the use of restricted traffic lanes. This time period will be enough for most operational purposes, but to ensure that there is an ability to extend the period, should it become necessary, the bill enables the period to be extended by regulation.

Contracted bus operators for regular passenger services will be required to provide sufficient services for World Youth Day events in accordance with the provisions of existing contractual arrangements. The Director General of the Ministry of Transport may direct the operator to provide such services as the director general determines are necessary for World Youth Day events, and may determine a price or prices for such services. This will be required only when a negotiated outcome between the director general and the contract holder cannot be reached. It is a discretionary power that the director general may use if required. Again, we do not expect that those powers will be needed.

In addition the bill extends the period during which planning approval will not be required for temporary structures installed for the purposes of World Youth Day events and facilities. Currently, if the structures are removed by 1 August 2008, no planning approval will be required as long as the authority has provided permission for the

structure. The bill extends this period to 1 September 2008 as the current deadline may not provide enough time to remove all the temporary structures from World Youth Day venues and facilities.

The bill will also allow members of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service to assist the authority, other government agencies and the New South Wales Police Force in the delivery of services for World Youth Day events. They may assist with services such as crowd management and traffic or pedestrian control, as long as the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service or Director General of the State Emergency Service has agreed to that assistance. The authority can currently issue directions to government agencies in relation to transport functions. However, the authority's coordination functions extend beyond the transport area to other areas where it is involved in the planning, development and management of the Government's commitment to World Youth Day. The bill extends the authority's ability to coordinate government functions by enabling the Minister to direct prescribed government agencies to comply with a direction or request from the authority.

The measures in the bill will facilitate the use of Randwick racecourse for World Youth Day. They will ensure tight timeframes can be met in preparing Randwick racecourse for the event and in the clean-up and restoration of the site afterwards. The bill will also further improve the Government's ability to plan, manage and coordinate government services to support World Youth Day. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr George Souris and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

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