



Sporting Venues (Pitch Invasions) Bill.

Second Reading

Mr WATKINS (Ryde—Minister for Police) [4.10 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Sporting Venues (Pitch Invasions) Bill. I am grateful to the honourable member for Vaucluse for allowing this bill to be dealt with urgently. In October and November this year Australia will play host to the Rugby World Cup 2003. New South Wales will host 17 matches at four different venues: Telstra Stadium, formerly Stadium Australia; Aussie Stadium, formerly the Sydney Football Stadium; Central Coast Express Advocate Stadium in Gosford; and WIN Stadium in Wollongong. In this regard, there is a discrepancy as to how pitch invasions can be dealt with at the four venues being used in New South Wales. While it is anticipated that the incidence of people attempting to disrupt matches by running onto the field will be non-existent or negligible, the Government believes that we should have adequate offences and remedies to deter anyone who may try to do so.

Specific and adequate penalties are available for an offence of entering or remaining on the playing field at Telstra Stadium and Aussie Stadium, with fines of up to \$5,500, but no similar specific offence covers Central Coast stadium. Although a minor offence covers Wollongong stadium, the penalty is a maximum of \$550. This bill proposes legislation that brings penalties for offences at Gosford stadium and Wollongong stadium in line with those for the other grounds being used for the Rugby World Cup. Specifically, this bill will prohibit unauthorised entry to the playing fields of Central Coast Express Advocate Stadium and WIN Stadium. The maximum penalty that the court can impose for such an offence is proposed to be 50 penalty units or \$5,500, with penalty notices able to be issued by police. Upon removal from the venue for a contravention, a person will be banned from the venue for 12 months.

A person removed from a venue for committing a further contravention at the venue or entering the venue while banned will be banned for life from the venue. Importantly, any person who invades the pitch during a Rugby World Cup match at any of the four grounds being used in New South Wales will be banned from all other Rugby World Cup matches in the State. Authorised officers who suspect that a person has contravened the Act can take reasonable actions to remove the person from the ground, require them to provide their name and address and may photograph them. It is considered that these proposed offences and penalties will act as a significant deterrent for those who may consider disrupting games by running onto the field at these grounds. I commend the bill to the House.

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