

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. F. Pangallo:

That this council—

1. Congratulates Australia's men's football team, also known as the Socceroos, on qualifying for the sixth time for FIFA's World Cup tournament to be staged in Qatar from 21 November to 18 December 2022;
2. Acknowledges the contributions made to the team and to the code in Australia by their coach, Graham Arnold; his assistants; and the sport governing body, the Football Federation of Australia;
3. Wishes Australia success in their group D matches against France, Denmark and Tunisia;
4. Extends its appreciation and congratulates the emirate of Qatar and the organising committee for FIFA Qatar 2022 in staging the iconic four-yearly global event, and held in a Middle Eastern country for the first time; and
5. Notes that the FIFA Women's World Cup will be jointly staged for the first time in Australian cities, including Adelaide; in regions; and in New Zealand from 20 July to 20 August 2023.

(Continued from 28 September 2022.)

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (17:40): I rise to make a rather lengthy contribution on the motion of the Hon. Mr Pangallo. I see the look of dismay on your face, Acting President. Can I just remind you that in fact it will be lengthy in comparison to my normal contributions, but it will be very short in comparison to the Hon. Mr Pangallo's normal contributions. I indicate that I will be moving an amendment to the Hon. Mr Pangallo's motion.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Hon. Mr Pangallo for engaging with honourable members on the content of the motion. I had a discussion with him, and I know that other honourable members have as well, about some of the phrasing in his original proposition. I explained to the Hon. Mr Pangallo how some of us could find parts of his motion troubling and indeed offensive. I think the Hon. Mr Pangallo was quite surprised by that, but he engaged with a willingness to talk about the issue and was incredibly empathetic to the views that I expressed, at least, and I am sure to other members. So I want to thank the Hon. Mr Pangallo for doing that and for coming to a compromise position so that we can all support this motion today. With that, I move to amend the motion as follows:

Leave out paragraph 3 and insert new paragraph 3 as follows:

3. Congratulates the Socceroos on achieving a win over Tunisia and sitting second in group D as of 28 November 2022 and wishes Australia success in their match against Denmark;

In paragraph 4:

Leave out 'Extends its appreciation and congratulates the emirate of' and insert 'Recognises'

In paragraph 5, after '20 August 2023' insert:

'and recognises the state government's support for the local Women's World Cup activities, including funding for facilities upgrades and the establishment of a legacy program to ensure future South Australians are able to benefit from this historic event and to promote lasting change around gender equality and eradicating violence against women.'

I will make a few remarks, brief by the Hon. Mr Pangallo's standards but more lengthy by mine. The motion we are discussing today is the ongoing FIFA 2022 Men's World Cup, hosted in Qatar. Qatar in 2010 made the winning bid to hold the 2022 FIFA World Cup and is hosting it, as I said. They won the right to host the World Cup despite not meeting FIFA's parameters, I am advised.

They did not have the required infrastructure, they did not have a tradition of football or a large population to spread it to, and it was much too hot to host the cup at its usual time of year. Qatar was shown not to be a suitable host, according to the FIFA host country parameters, and was technically a much less viable candidate than the runner-up, the USA. So FIFA must have made a decision to ignore its own parameters and make the selection of Qatar, and I am at a loss to really understand why. Nonetheless, that is the situation we face and that is where the World Cup is being held.

The main points that I raise about this issue are basically because of the human rights record of Qatar. I base some of my concerns on a document called Human Rights Guide for Reporters: 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, a report produced, as I said, by Human Rights Watch. It is basically a guide for journalists. I seek leave to table that document.

Leave granted.

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER: In particular, I want to focus on three main areas: migrant workers, whose lives were unfortunately treated, I believe, as expendable; the issue of queer people in Qatar—it is illegal to be homosexual in Qatar; and the rights of women, who are treated as what I think can only be described as second-class citizens. These are the three most widely cited abuses, certainly in the report that I have just tabled.

To the frustration, probably, of FIFA and also Qatar, these are issues that have been firmly linked to the World Cup reporting. Considering that Qatar has none of the required infrastructure to hold a global event, the small nation has relied on a huge number of migrant workers to complete the gargantuan project list that they have undertaken. They have built seven new stadiums and fully rehabilitated an eighth, and they also built an entire city, complete with residential buildings, hotels and a subway system to support the event.

Qatar has reportedly spent \$220 billion on this infrastructure, but the eye-watering amount of money spent on infrastructure has not gone into the pockets of the migrant workers building it. I understand that migrant workers themselves report that their earnings amount to about \$1 per hour. There is a culture of abuse against migrant workers, which is prevalent and acknowledged in Qatar; it is called the kafala system of sponsorship-based employment, which legally binds foreign workers to their employers, trapping them in a cycle of abuse.

These workers are expected to work in up to 45° weather for 10 hours a day. Fatalities from heat stress are very common. There are estimates suggesting that 6,500 migrant workers have died due to the conditions they have faced whilst they work on these projects. Qatar only recognises 37 deaths, I am advised, as directly connected to the construction of the World Cup projects, saying that the rest were due to non-related causes, but those non-related causes that Qatar officially attributes to these other deaths include heart attacks and respiratory failure, symptoms that are very typical of heatstroke induced by heavy labour in extreme heat—the common working conditions which these labourers have been facing.

This number not only displays the Qatari government's clear disregard, I believe, for the lives they have taken but the willingness to severely obfuscate the number of deaths to hide their corrupt and exploitative treatment of workers. After significant pressure the Qatari government has introduced reforms, I understand, to improve the working conditions for migrant workers, but I am also advised—again relying on this report that I have tabled—there has been very little enforcement, which has allowed the abuse to continue largely unchecked. And this is just one form of human rights abuses that we have raised surrounding the World Cup.

Perhaps the most widely discussed human rights abuses are Qatar's archaic laws on sexuality and gender identity. Being gay, as I said earlier, is currently illegal in Qatar. The punishment for this uncontrollable aspect of our humanity ranges from three years to 10 years' imprisonment, and even death, through the Sharia court system. Qatar is one of just 10 countries around the world that still holds the power to enforce the death penalty for people who choose to love in ways that the Qatari officials do not support.

Queer people can be punished, as I said, for up to 10 years' imprisonment, seven years under the Penal Code of 2004, and under Sharia law gay men in Qatar can be sentenced to imprisonment, flogging and death. For years, queer people have reported being targeted and arbitrarily imprisoned by the notorious Preventive Security Department. Arrests have reportedly occurred in public with no apparent offence having taken place. People are detained without charge and subjected to verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Before they are released—if they are released—they are forced to sign pledges stating they will cease immoral activity.

These arbitrary detentions and this state-sanctioned abuse is imposed under Law No. 17 of the 2002 Protection of Community laws. Human rights abuses against queer people are essentially codified in Qatari law. This law allows authorities to detain individuals on the basis of a well-founded belief they committed crimes involving state security, honour, decency or public morals. In other words, you can be arrested in Qatar for being queer.

Queer people are not the only group to be victims of archaic and harsh treatment by the Qatari government. Women are by all measures treated as second-class citizens. Under a male guardianship system, Qatari women need permission from a male relative to marry, study abroad, work in government jobs and travel abroad. Women must have a marriage licence before they are able to receive some forms of reproductive health care, including Pap smears, transvaginal ultrasounds and womb biopsies.

This year, the World Cup will be hosted in a country where women's health care is dependent on their marital status, with no legal right to make decisions free from interference from men and religious codes. Despite this affront to human rights, FIFA selected Qatar as the host of the 2022 Men's World Cup event, knowing that many fans will face difficult and unfair decisions about their safety if they decide to travel.

There are soccer tragics who are queer and who would want to go and support their team in Qatar, but they are essentially, if they choose to do that, taking their life in their hands. I find FIFA's decision quite disappointing, but it is consistent with some of their past decision-making. In an unusual move, FIFA announced the host countries of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups at the same time. The 2022 winner, of course, was Qatar but the 2018 winner was Russia.

Russia has a comparably shameful approach to queer people and women, with both groups subjected to routine persecution, violence and infringements of their civil liberties. Both Qatar and Russia are countries with abysmal human rights records but very deep pockets. I suppose there is some kind of moral symmetry there in FIFA's decision-making. In making this decision to host the World Cup in Qatar and Russia, this has implicitly endorsed, I believe, the shameful human rights records of both countries. FIFA has done nothing at all to change the human rights records or the laws in Russia and is doing nothing about changing the laws in Qatar.

Athletes around the world are banding together to express their disgust with FIFA's decision to award Qatar the event and, similarly, the Qatari government's response to human rights abuses. South Australia's own Josh Cavallo has expressed fears for his safety were he to be invited to participate in the World Cup. Josh, members may recall, made history late last year when he publicly came out as a gay man, becoming at the time Australia's only openly gay active A-league footballer. He has stated that the handling of the 2022 cup by FIFA has shown that 'football isn't a place for everyone'.

Australia's own athletes participating in the cup, the Socceroos, have released a video and an open letter criticising the treatment of queer people in Qatar and requesting better conditions for migrant workers. In their video they state:

We have learned that the decision to host the World Cup in Qatar has resulted in the suffering and in the harm of countless of our fellow workers. As players we fully support the rights of LGBTI+ people. But in Qatar people are not free to love the person that they choose.

The Socceroos have joined calls for establishing a migrant resource centre, effective remedy for these who have been denied their rights and the decriminalisation of all same-sex relationships. These are the basic rights that should be afforded to all and will ensure continued progress in Qatar.

Many international teams have used various acts to make statements on the field about the issues in Qatar. Seven teams have planned to have their captains wear a rainbow 'one love' armband as a show of solidarity with their queer fans. However, this was abandoned when FIFA threatened to issue yellow cards or one-match bans if the armbands were worn.

Not only has FIFA barred players from wearing the armband, rainbows of any kind have drawn the attention of Qatari security forces. Many spectators, I am advised, wearing rainbow paraphernalia have reportedly been detained and denied entry to the facilities until they remove their rainbow clothing and accessories. One journalist was detained, he says, for at least 25 minutes and only allowed to leave when he took off his rainbow T-shirt.

FIFA has hurriedly instructed Qatari authorities, I am advised, that fans are permitted to wear rainbow items of clothing, have tried to reassure fans they will not be detained or have their items confiscated, but to no great effect. This event has been a debacle, and a deeply problematic one, from the very start. Whether it is the blatantly corrupt awarding of the hosting rights—and I understand some nations now are considering actually withdrawing from FIFA, some Nordic countries, because of this—fans being accosted for wearing rainbows or T-shirts with rainbows on them or players being given yellow cards for wearing an armband are the threats that have been made.

We cannot ignore the thousands of migrant workers dying to build stadiums and infrastructure. The women and the queer people, who will all have to continue in Qatar, where their rights are being suppressed when everybody else has left the stadiums and have gone home, will still be oppressed by these laws which make it illegal to be queer and subject to the death penalty.

FIFA must understand the importance of the role of sport on the international stage. It is not new—it has been going on since the All Blacks and South Africa, going back many years. I can remember having those debates inside the Labor Party, where I was advocating to stop flights by Qantas to South Africa. This is a long time that sport and politics have been in the mix, and I am so pleased to see now that athletes are finding their own voices and standing up to their teams and nations and countries like Qatar and saying that this is not on.

Alongside these athletes, I would like to add my voice to the call for FIFA to take seriously its role on the world stage. In its pursuit of profit, FIFA has become complicit in oppressing Qatar's migrant workers, women and the queer community in particular. No longer can we ignore human rights abuses during global events like the FIFA World Cup.

I welcome the focus on these failings in much of the reporting that is going on at the moment. I commend the amendment to the chamber. Again, I would like to thank the Hon. Mr Pangallo for his willingness to engage and the empathy with which he has done so.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:54): In starting, I really want to commend the Hon. Mr Hunter for the speech he has given and also recognise his decades of service as an advocate and a campaigner in the space of LGBTI rights and human rights more broadly.

I want to take this opportunity to condemn the decision of FIFA to hold the World Cup in a country that has a reputation as a human rights abuser. The human rights record of Qatar is well documented, and the Hon. Mr Hunter has detailed that history of abuse. Qatar has a history of abusing LGBTI people, women and workers. Indeed, *The Guardian* has reported that up to 6,500 South Asian migrant workers have died in connection with building infrastructure for the World Cup.

In its human rights report on the country in 2021, Amnesty International reported, and I quote from the report that is on their website:

Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice. Under the guardianship system, women remained tied to their male guardian, usually their father, brother, grandfather or uncle, or for married women, to their husband. Women continued to need their guardian's permission for key life decisions to marry, study abroad...work in many government jobs, travel abroad...and receive some forms of reproductive healthcare.

Family laws continued to discriminate against women by making it difficult for them to divorce. Divorced women are unable to act as their children's guardian.

This is in Qatar in 2022. The Human Dignity Trust provides information on the human rights abuses of LGBTI people in Qatar. It states, and again I quote from their website:

Qatar criminalises same-sex sexual activity between men and between women. Sentences can involve a possible maximum penalty of death by stoning.

Same-sex sexual activity is prohibited under the Penal Code 2004, which criminalises acts of 'sodomy' and 'sexual intercourse' between people of the same sex...Both men and women are criminalised under this law.

The Human Dignity Trust goes on to note:

The Constitution of Qatar designates Islam as the state religion, and Islamic law as the main source of legislation. As such, in addition to the Penal Code, Qatar operates an interpretation of Sharia law which criminalises sexual activity between men, under which it is possible that the death penalty can be imposed.

I know that the government of Qatar has argued that these things are not used in practice. Well, we know that is not the case because Human Rights Watch has reported on what has been occurring in Qatar as recently as October. Indeed, Human Rights Watch has revealed that the government of Qatar even goes as far as to monitor people's social media, their online activity, their behaviour on dating apps. They use this as a way to track and monitor LGBTI people, in particular gay men. It is reprehensible.

On 25 October, Reuters reported Human Rights Watch's concerns for the welfare of LGBTI Qataris in the lead-up to the World Cup. I quote from their article:

The organisation—

that is, Human Rights Watch—

said it had interviewed six LGBT Qataris, including four transgender women, one bisexual woman and one gay man, who reported being detained between 2019 and 2022 and subjected to verbal and physical abuse, including kicking and punching.

They were detained without charge in an underground prison in Doha, and one individual was held for two months in solitary confinement—two months. 'All six said that police had forced them to sign pledges indicating that they would cease immoral activity,' the article said, adding that transgender women detainees were mandated to attend conversion therapy sessions at government-sponsored clinics.

One of the transgender Qatari women interviewed by Human Rights Watch told Reuters on condition of anonymity that she was arrested several times, most recently this summer when she was held for weeks on end. Authorities stopped her due to her appearance or for possessing make-up, the woman said, adding that she had been beaten to the point of bleeding and was forced to have her head shaved—this shameful human rights abuse happening in Qatar in 2022.

Recently, Qatar's World Cup ambassador Khalid Salman referred to homosexuality as 'damage to the mind'. This is the view of Qatar's World Cup ambassador. It is hardly surprising, then, that LGBTI sportspeople around the world have spoken out against Qatar holding this event. SA's own out soccer player, Joshua Cavallo, whom the Hon. Ian Hunter and I have had the opportunity to meet with, has been outspoken in his critique. I certainly, like the Hon. Mr Hunter, support his comments.

As one of two out and proud gay men in this place, I want to add my voice to those opposing Qatar hosting the World Cup. I am appalled that LGBTI soccer players and fans are being put in this situation where their human rights are potentially at risk. I am appalled that a country with such an appalling, despicable human rights record is being given the honour of hosting this event and being given the opportunity for a social licence that comes with hosting an event of this nature.

I am appalled that so many workers have died, had their very basic human rights trampled, in an effort to host this event and to make money. Money has literally been made off the backs of some of the world's most desperate and vulnerable people. Surely, we have reached a point where the international community and international organisations like FIFA have to show some moral leadership.

We cannot simply turn our backs on these people. We cannot continue to condone what is despicable human rights abuse. I really do hope that FIFA reflect on their appalling lack of leadership. I hope that they reflect on what has been a despicable moral failure on their part and that they change their policies and processes to ensure that this kind of sportswashing is never allowed to happen again because it is truly despicable.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (18:02): I rise today as the lead speaker for the opposition on the motion of the Hon. Frank Pangallo and note the opposition's support for the amended motion. The FIFA World Cup is an iconic event and perhaps the biggest sporting event outside the Olympics given the global audience it attracts, with soccer a truly global sport.

The success of the Socceroos to qualify as one of the only 32 nations is an extraordinary achievement and one that deserves the dedicated recognition and congratulations of this chamber. We send our collective well wishes to the Australian men's football team ahead of their remaining fixture in the Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022. Tomorrow morning at 1.30am local time, the Socceroos will match up against a highly competitive Danish side in the hope of reaching the knockout stage of the tournament.

The Socceroos have contributed to some of our nation's finest sporting moments, whether it has been at the FIFA World Cup or in the qualification rounds. It only seems like yesterday when Adelaide's own John Aloisi stopped the nation when he stepped up to score a divisive penalty against Uruguay in 2005 to qualify for the World Cup after many years of heartbreak. It almost felt like *deja vu* when Graham Arnold entrusted Andrew Redmayne to write his chapter in our proud sporting history when his penalty shootout heroics guided Australia to this year's World Cup with a win against Peru. These moments epitomise the Australian fighting spirit and the pride in representing Australia on the international stage. Above all, the Socceroos encapsulate and reflect modern Australia.

Soccer is referred to as the world game, and the array of cultural backgrounds within our national team is an exemplary success of Australia's multiculturalism and our diverse migrant history. Our current Socceroos feature a rich tapestry of Bosnian, Croatian, Turkish Cypriot, South African, Scottish and South Sudanese backgrounds, and I could not be prouder to call each and every last member a fellow Australian.

I congratulate the Socceroos for their success in again qualifying for such a prestigious tournament and for breaking their 12-year drought of FIFA World Cup final games when they won last Saturday. Whatever the result against Denmark, we are all incredibly proud of the entire team, players, coaches and support staff, and the heights they have achieved.

I would also like to congratulate and send my best wishes to our fellow South Australians who grew up playing soccer in our state and are now creating history with the Socceroos: Thomas Deng of Adelaide Blue Eagles, Awer Mabil of St Augustines Soccer Club and South Australia's 2023 Young Australian of the Year, Riley McGree of Gawler Eagles Football Club, and Craig Goodwin of Munno Para City and now Adelaide United. Your inclusion in the Socceroos 26-man squad embodies the results of many years of hard work and sacrifice. You are all nothing short of an inspiration to the thousands who dream of wearing the green and gold at the FIFA World Cup, and the whole state is behind you.

Finally, with the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup to be hosted by Australia and New Zealand for the first time, the upcoming 12 months will be momentous for soccer in this country. Record investment in sporting infrastructure across South Australia by the former Liberal government helped Adelaide secure the Young Matildas training camp in the lead-up to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup and helped us attract four group stage fixtures and a round of 16 clash.

We invested more than \$86 million in football facilities and programs across South Australia, including \$53 million for much-needed upgrades to Hindmarsh Stadium and \$24 million in upgrading the State Centre of Football at Gepps Cross. With the FIFA Women's World Cup attracting the best female soccer players and a global television audience of more than one billion people, a lot of eyes will be cast on what our great state is capable of. We wish the Socceroos and the Matildas all the best with their respective tournaments as they chase success.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (18:07): I would like to thank my colleagues, the Hon. Ian Hunter, the Hon. Robert Simms and the Hon. Nicola Centofanti for their contributions. I understand and support the views of the Hon. Ian Hunter and the Hon. Robert Simms on the harsh same-sex laws. Let's hope that we do see meaningful progress and reforms in time, but of course it is a Muslim country.

I am also hearing criticism from members who have not been there, and I have. Qatar and FIFA have already publicly welcomed members of the LGBT+ community to the country. Hassan Al-Thawadi, the eloquent head of the Qatar Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, told broadcaster Piers Morgan only yesterday that Qatar is a safe place for gay people to live. He went on to say that public displays of affection, aside from holding hands, is not in their culture. For instance, touching or shaking hands with a Muslim woman in public is not appropriate. I respect that. He said that they were opposed to the wearing of rainbow armbands by teams because it appeared to specifically target the standards in Qatar.

I am unsure if any members in this chamber have spent some time in Qatar—perhaps the Hon. Laura Curran has; I am sorry, I do not have your new married name.

The Hon. L.A. Curran: I am Curran for probably another month.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Okay, thank you—apart from transiting or getting a proper understanding and perspective of this very young, tiny country that is being misunderstood—

The Hon. R.A. Simms: I would get locked up, Frank.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will bail you out—and made a pariah by moralising Western media, particularly the English, who strut around with a superiority complex when it comes to football. So that is what I wanted to do—see the place for myself, not just form an opinion based upon the opinions and conscious or unconscious bias of journalists, along with the hate and intolerance that is being spread on social media platforms. It truly smacks of racism, Islamophobia, and of Orientalism.

Last month, I went to Qatar where I had quite enlightened discussions, including with our ambassador, Jonathan Muir, the local organising committee of the World Cup, Eugene de Jongh, the business partner of South Australian company Peat's, that is doing amazing work in recycling waste that is being embraced by Qatar at the tournament.

I also looked at some of the stunning facilities at the World Cup, the incredible cities of Doha and Lusail, and the modern transport infrastructure that has sprung up because of winning the World Cup bid. I engaged with many local Qataris and foreigners living and working there. You cannot help but be impressed at what they have done and the genuine sense of pride the Qataris feel.

I want to address the hysterical and hypocritical level of criticism, much of it unfair, unbalanced and some mischievously misleading, being made against Qatar, not necessarily by honourable members here, but from countries which still have a lot to explain about their own human rights and labour abuses, as well as their own social flaws, and also correct some comments that have been made here today.

First, though, the purpose of my motion was to acknowledge Australia's performance at the tournament. I thank the Hon. Nicola Centofanti for doing that. In a few hours, as we know, the Socceroos' destiny will be determined when they face Denmark in the final group match. A draw will be sufficient to see the Australians through to round 16, something they have not done since 2006 in Germany which, in fact, I was actually fortunate to experience—against Italy in Kaiserslautern. Although we were beaten, nonetheless it shows that Australia can hold its own against the best in the world. We should be proud of this team and our coach Graham Arnold, who has made enormous personal sacrifices and put in an extraordinary effort to get us on to this global stage for a sixth time.

Arnie bleeds for his country. I saw that as a player and now as a coach and a leader, and Australia is right behind him and the Socceroos. The TV ratings have been huge for SBS. People are tuning into Qatar and not turning off. We have just passed the halfway stage of this World Cup and the football has been outstanding. While a clutch of teams have already booked their passage to the next round, every group is still open. The football is being celebrated by hundreds of thousands of fans who have made the journey. They are also enjoying the warm hospitality of the Qataris, as I did last month.

Just today I got this from Justin Brooks, a person I know who has just returned to Adelaide and who has never been to a World Cup before. He said that he and his son Cameron had the time of their lives being in the country and watching the Socceroos. The atmosphere was so euphoric that he said he did not need an alcoholic beer for the four hours that he was in the stadium. You only need to see the fan cutaways in the TV matches to see that they are all embracing the Arabic culture, like wearing those colourful Arabic-style headscarves. There have been no reports of serious misbehaviour or crime.

Qatar is a conservative Islamic state and we should be respectful of that, just as they would be respectful of our way of life. We live in a secular inclusive democracy but that was not always the case—even until quite recently, in 2017, when the Australian parliament historically passed gay marriage laws. It was illegal to be gay in many places in this country until the late 1970s. It took this nation a long time to enact many social reforms that we celebrate today. We actually had a White Australia policy here.

Qatar is not a secular democracy, it is an emirate, an hereditary monarchy under Sharia law, like many Arabic nations. It is also an emerging nation, barely 50 years in the making. It was once a speck in the desert on the Arabian Gulf dotted with Bedouin tents, and was primarily known for its pearl harvest. It struck riches through oil and gas, and its development has been rapid. There are nearly \$500 billion in its sovereign wealth fund.

Qatar has investments around the world. In Britain, for instance, it owns several landmarks and businesses, including luxury store Harrods, The Shard skyscraper, the Canary Wharf, it owns The Savoy and the Grosvenor House Hotel, and has a 20 per cent stake in Heathrow Airport, and 40 per cent in Sainsbury's, the second-largest supermarket group.

The British have been the loudest critics of Qatar, yet it has not stopped the likes of Harry Kane, Gary Lineker or Stan Collymore shopping in their stores, staying in their hotels, or flying out of their country on Qatar's national airline to hundreds of destinations. Meanwhile, the Mayor of London has banned advertising travel to Qatar on its public transport systems. There are double standards at play here.

England captain, Harry Kane, had a subtle poke at Qatar's anti same-sex laws by wearing a \$1 million rainbow Rolex as a moral halo in the place of the armband he could not wear. He has probably paid for that. Of course, when this World Cup ends, Harry and the rest of Britain will need stay warm this coming freezing English winter thanks to Britain's heavy reliance on the gulf nation's liquefied gas. The same goes for several other European nations who are at the World Cup, like Germany, as Russian gas has been turned off.

Qatar is the majority owner of the South Hook LNG terminal in Wales and the UK is eager to shore up supplies in a politically uncertain world. With energy security becoming a real challenge, many Asian countries are doing the same because Qatar is seen as friendly to the West. That is why all this virtue signalling and double standards in the relentless attacks by some of history's biggest human rights violators against Qatar needs to be called out.

Go through the list of countries at the World Cup lecturing Qatar and you will find many that have been guilty of far more serious human rights abuses in their history. Let's start in alphabetical order, for instance: A for Argentina. In 1978, when they hosted and won the World Cup, the brutal military junta was kidnapping and murdering thousands of young dissidents. Their bodies were never returned. Their mothers spent decades protesting outside the presidential palace. I saw no sign of the international community voicing their concerns or boycotting that tournament.

A for Australia: human rights abuses and racism against our First Nations people continue. It began with the British. Last Friday night, in a powerful address, the Attorney-General spoke about how they tried to eradicate and exterminate an entire race in colonial times, walking hundreds of Aborigines off cliffs to their deaths or drowning them in tidal pools. That was only 200 or so years ago.

B for Belgium: they had a brutal crackdown on Africans in the Congo. Estimates of up to 10 million died in famine, killings and disease under Belgian rule, which only ended in 1960. C for Croatia, S for Serbia, and the many thousands massacred in their civil war of independence 30 years ago. E for England: they were for centuries the biggest human rights abusers in countries they colonised, including Australia. They were the biggest slave traders, a cruel and abhorrent practice which is still being felt today.

Along with the United States, another country in Qatar, they illegally invaded Iraq under false claims, sparking decades of terror attacks in the West. In the year that England won the World Cup in 1966, being gay was illegal. Last year, when they hosted the European Football Championships, drunk and drug-addled English fans behaved appallingly. When one of their coloured players missed a decisive penalty in the decider against Italy, he and other members in the team were subjected to the most disgraceful racist taunts on social media—by their own.

France: you want to go there? Germany did not want, nor did they get reminding of the Holocaust when they hosted the World Cup in 1974 and again in 2006, along with the Munich Olympics. The Netherlands: colonising South Africa ultimately gave us apartheid. Spain, Portugal, Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Brazil all have questionable histories, recent and past, which have been forgiven or subjected to wilful blindness. The same applies for FIFA member nations Iraq, Israel, Syria, Bahrain, China, and North Korea. Where do you stop?

As for the United States, they will be one of the hosts at the next tournament. Will they be subjected to criticism for their ongoing civil rights abuses, racial profiling by their police, or the gun mentality that has seen thousands of innocent people and school students massacred? What about the abortion debate and the death penalty that still applies in many states? As FIFA boss Gianni Infantino said, for what Europeans have been doing for 3,000 years around the world, we should be apologising for the next 3,000 before giving moral lessons.

I will admit that my jaw dropped when Qatar won the right to host this World Cup over Australia and the US, Korea and Japan 12 years ago. There was much talk of corruption of FIFA in the bidding process. Qatar was cleared of paying bribes, although in 2015 several FIFA officials were indicted and convicted after being arrested by the FBI for corruption. It led to a clean-out of FIFA, a body that oversees more than 215 member nations. If large nations want to pull out of FIFA, good luck to them. There are plenty more that will take their place.

How could Qatar pull off such a monumental task for such a tiny country barely 40 years old? However, they have managed to do it. Doha is a spectacular metropolis, a modern oasis of impressive buildings, highways, an underground driverless metro system, eight fabulous stadiums, over 100 hotels, the best airport in the world, and the airline judged the best in the world. The people themselves are friendly, gentle, courteous and respectful. They are well-educated, they are proud of their culture and their heritage, and they want to share it with the world.

Qatar's wealth from oil and gas has helped considerably—Mr President, I am nearly winding up—but bear in mind that the country's population is 2.5 million, of which just 350,000 are Qataris. It had to rely on migrant labour, many poorly skilled, from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka who needed to work there. I just want to fact check one of the most negative comments about Qatar: the 6,500 migrant workers who died since Qatar won the World Cup. Some put it as high as 15,000. However, these figures refer merely to non-Qataris of different nationalities who died in the country between 2010 and 2019 from various causes.

Mr Al-Thawadi says 400 to 500 died on hectic construction sites and other work-related activities between 2014 and 2020. He says three died on actual stadium sites. Two Australian companies are actually the largest construction companies in Qatar. People die on construction sites and in workplaces daily around the world; three died building our new hospital, where working conditions are actually much stricter.

Qatar, like any other country, is not above criticism, but at least the Qataris have learned much from it. The scrutiny applied has led to significant labour reform laws and workers' welfare and health care, including the abolition of the kafala system of restrictive contract employment in 2021. They now pay minimum wages. Qatar is a benchmark for workers' welfare in the region and now produces annual welfare progress reports. I have one right here, and I will seek to table that. This comes out every year now. They have been pushed to do that, and they have done it quite freely. In closing, I do want to give them some credit.

The PRESIDENT: Do you wish to table that document?

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Yes, I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Few want to give them any credit for the rapid progress they are making and will continue to make, but they are a beacon in the region compared with regimes in Saudi Arabia. This government here has just done a deal with LIV for the golf. I have no objection to that, but the Saudi Arabians, seriously, are amongst the worst abusers there—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Israel. Did these same critics point the virtuous finger at China or Russia when they hosted the Olympics and a World Cup in 2018? I witnessed atrocious human rights violations when I covered the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. There was no real scrutiny of China's human rights record when I was at the Beijing Olympics.

What about the good that Qatar is doing in the world? Its philanthropy has educated 12 million underprivileged children and there are other global welfare programs it is assisting. The US and the UK have airbases there. During the pandemic, Qatar Airlines was the one airline that did not cease operating. It flew 100,000 Australians stranded overseas back home, outdoing the home-grown airline Qantas. It will fly into Adelaide daily from January.

The lesson for us is: let's stick to the joyous pleasures of football competition between nations and leave politics and religion behind. This attitude is typified by France's goalkeeper, Hugo Lloris, who commented why he chose not to wear the rainbow armband:

In France, when we welcome foreigners, we often want them to play by our rules and respect our culture and I will do the same when I go to Qatar.

Some final words from recently returned fan Justin Brooks:

Best experience of my life—to be part of a city which welcomed 32 different nations all at once.

I didn't miss having a beer...No one was drinking in the stadiums or on the streets but there were plenty of options elsewhere.

The Qataris were warm and welcoming. They reminded me of Fijians—just beautiful people. They knew they were hosting a world event, they knew they were on stage, and they were proud to show their country to the world. All I saw was peace, harmony, and inclusiveness.

I commend and congratulate Qatar and the progressive paths they are now taking. There was pressure put on them and they have responded to that. Let's hope it continues. I am particularly looking forward to the Women's World Cup coming to Australia next August where I hope our way of life will be celebrated and also respected.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.