



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair
Ms JM Bush MP
Mr TA James MP
Mr D Kempton MP (via videoconference)
Mr SR King MP
Mr BJ Mellish MP

Staff present:

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary
Ms R Duncan—Assistant Committee Secretary

PUBLIC PORTFOLIO BRIEFING—DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, RACING AND OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 5 February 2025

Brisbane

WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2025

The committee met at 2.01 pm.

BURTON, Mr Matthew, Executive Director, Sport and Recreation, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

HOPPER, Mr Andrew, Director-General, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

LAMPERD, Ms Kelli, Acting Deputy Director-General, Sport and Recreation, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

MURRAY, Mr Michael, Acting Executive Director, Olympic and Paralympic Games Office, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

PAPAS, Mr Ryan, Acting Executive Director, Office of the Director-General, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

VANDERSEE, Ms Sarah, Deputy Director-General, Cooperate Services, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games

CHAIR: I welcome the director-general and his team to the hearing this afternoon. Thank you for your written briefing; it was very informative. With me today are: Terry James, the member for Mulgrave; Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper; Bart Mellish, the member for Aspley; and Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah. David Kempton, the member for Cook, is appearing via videoconference. Director-General, if you would like to make an opening statement then the committee will have some questions for you.

Mr Hopper: I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay respects to elders past, present and emerging. I also thank the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee for inviting the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games to speak at today's briefing.

The Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games was formed following the November 2024 machinery-of-government changes. The department is responsible for the administration of five pieces of legislation, including: the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001; the Racing Act 2002 and parts of the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021. We are a small but significant department, delivering key services across the state that have genuine, lasting benefits to the lives of Queenslanders. We are dedicated to getting more Queenslanders involved in community sport, preparing our athletes for world-class success and maintaining a vibrant, sustainable racing industry. We also aim to ensure that every part of Queensland benefits from the Brisbane 2032 games and that the event delivers a statewide legacy of greater sports participation across Queensland for many years to come.

The department has a team of 465 employees working across more than 20 locations, with 154 staff working in regional offices located in Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay, Bundaberg, Emerald, Dalby and Toowoomba. We also have offices and recreation centres on the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Logan. The Queensland Academy of Sport has staff based at the Queensland Sport and Athletic Centre—commonly known as QSAC—and the Sleeman Sports Complex in Brisbane as well as on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast.

I would like to introduce our acting deputy director-general for sport and recreation, Ms Kelli Lamperd. Kelli looks after all things sport for the department. Kelli leads a team helping industry from grassroots to elite all the way over to managing key partnerships that drive our infrastructure work. Also with me today is Ms Sarah Vandersee, our deputy director-general of corporate services. Sarah and her team work across all areas of the department, ensuring our services flow and our people are supported to deliver amazing results. Finally, Mr Michael Murray is the acting executive director for the Olympic and Paralympic Games office. Michael's team provides key services to senior games governance groups as well as overseeing games planning responsibilities.

We work closely with our many delivery partners and stakeholders in our four portfolio statutory bodies. Stadiums Queensland, Racing Queensland, the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee and the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority are all key to what we do. While not within my purview, I will raise a few key points about the statutory bodies that support our overall work. Stadiums Queensland owns nine major venues, including: Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba, Cbus Super Stadium and People First Stadium on the Gold Coast, QSAC, Sleeman Sports Complex, Queensland Tennis Centre, Brisbane Entertainment Centre and Queensland Country Bank Stadium in Townsville. Racing Queensland provides a platform to service the racing industry across the three codes. Racing Queensland has set its sights on one million people attending race meetings this financial year while overseeing five iconic race events.

The Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee will drive the sponsorship and revenue for the games while organising the events, ceremonies, torch relay, accommodation and volunteers. The Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority is busy running the 100-day review that is underway into venues and transport for the games.

We own and manage venues like the Toowoomba Sports Ground; Sports House Brisbane; recreation centres on the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast; Gold Coast Performance Centre; and Townsville Sports Precinct, which recently had to be used as an evacuation centre for around 100 people during the floods. These venues offer a range of camp and school holiday programs, outdoor recreation opportunities, sport facility hire and event spaces for corporate functions. There are indoor halls and community fitness centres offering discounted memberships. The sport and recreation centres have a range of accommodation options to cater for students, community clubs and elite sporting teams.

Last financial year our venues catered to more than 700,000 people and provided more than \$1.4 million in subsidised services to help keep more people engaged in fun and physical activities. These venues play host to events such as the Toowoomba Marathon and Maroons fan day at Toowoomba Sports Ground, the Challenge Games in Townsville and the Turf Games at the Gold Coast Recreation Precinct. They also played host to a temporary training venue on the Gold Coast for the indoor streetscape before the Paris games. Recently we unveiled a \$1.3 million refurbishment of the tartan athletics track at Townsville Sports Precinct which will help to keep it recognised as a World Athletics certified venue.

We have a \$28 million capital works budget this year to fund ongoing improvements to the rec precincts on the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Townsville. We invest in programs and capital grants that enable participation in sport and physical activities, and we fund talent programs that enhance the prospects of our future champions. We manage the Queensland Academy of Sport, which supports more than 500 elite and emerging athletes with a laser-like focus on achieving podium success at the Olympics and Paralympics. Queensland athletes, as you may well know, won nine gold, 12 silver and seven bronze medals at the Paris Olympics, representing more than 50 per cent of the national total, while our Paralympians brought home an outstanding seven gold, five silver and 16 bronze medals. We honoured our Queensland Champions by bringing back the prestigious Queensland Academy of Sport awards where we saw athletes like Arisa Trew, Alexa Leary, Curtis McGrath, Korey Boddington, Mollie O'Callaghan, Kaylee McKeown, and Emma McKeon recognised for their achievements at a gala ceremony.

The QAS is also seeking our next generation of talented athletes with the YouFor2032 talent search. The YouFor2032 talent search is designed to match aspiring athletes and para athletes with the Olympic and Paralympic sports where they have the greatest potential for success. This unique program connects future athletes with coaching and support to help them succeed. The program has travelled the length and breadth of the state, most recently undertaking a regional tour at the end of 2024 travelling over 4,000 kilometres to test 450 young athletes aged 13 to 23 years over four weeks.

We recently announced that AusCycling's Action and Acceleration Centre of Excellence, a national high-performance hub, will now be based at the Anna Meares Velodrome at Chandler. Queensland has also secured 14 games as part of the Rugby World Cup in 2027, including 10 games in Brisbane and, importantly, four in Townsville. Together they are forecast to generate more than \$212 million for the Queensland economy.

Some of the key areas we are focused on right now in the department include the \$250 million Games On! program, which is delivering new or upgraded fields and courts, clubhouses, change rooms or lighting across Queensland in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032. Work is rapidly moving ahead in Rockhampton on the \$54 million stage 1 redevelopment of Browne Park, which will create a modern three-tier grandstand with 3,500 seats and broadcast facilities at the home of Central Queensland Rugby League.

The Youth Development Partnership Fund is an initiative delivered in partnership with the Queensland Police Service that we are particularly proud of, as it transforms the lives of at-risk youth by showing them the true power and joy of sport and recreation and providing opportunities for them to get skilled guidance from experts. The fund is making a genuine difference with programs such as Moonlight Hoops in Cairns, the Rugby League Helping the Community Program at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and REAP the Rewards in Logan, delivering results for their local communities.

Many at-risk young people have not experienced the benefits of team sport, and the Youth Development Partnership Fund is giving them this chance. A tangible example of the program's impact is Logan's REAP. REAP stands for response, effort, attitude and participation. The REAP the Rewards program teaches touch football skills to young people who are disengaged from education and undertaking offending behaviour, including several serious repeat offenders. In the program's pilot, 14 of the 15 young people reduced their offending during its eight-week delivery, while more than half stopped offending completely in the months following. One participant secured employment, another joined the NRL RISE program, and a third was referred to the Boxing After Dark program at the PCYC.

Soon we will become very focused on delivering the recommendations of the 100-day review to ensure the games drive economic growth and create a lasting legacy that all Queenslanders can be proud of. This is on top of our many other programs and initiatives that continue to deliver positive outcomes for Queenslanders, including our FairPlay and SwimStart vouchers, which will help more than 300,000 Queensland kids enjoy sport through covering the cost of joining clubs and taking swimming lessons. The voucher allocation for our most recent round was exhausted due to popular demand. We are now encouraging parents and carers to make sure they redeem their vouchers before 6 June this year.

The Active Industry Base Fund provides \$16.9 million over two years to 72 state sport and recreation organisations and two industry peak bodies so they can build and strength their effectiveness. The Active Clubs Initiative has funded more than 1,700 clubs to provide opportunities for physical activity. We have been boosting women and girls' participation in sport and recreation through the provision of more than \$14 million to over 1,700 organisations. The Emerging Athletes Pathway program covers the cost of travel for talented youth athletes seeking to compete at state, national or international events.

From a racing perspective, the infrastructure fund there is investing: \$44.15 million towards The Q, which will soon be the home of greyhound racing at Ipswich; \$7.8 million for new stabling at the Townsville Turf Club; and \$6 million for lighting upgrades at the Redcliffe Harness Racing & Sporting Club. We also have our popular sponsorship program that funds community sport and recreation events and dozens of innovative business ideas through our ActiveKIT program.

Unfortunately, disaster recovery has never been more evident right now than in North Queensland. As I mentioned earlier, over the weekend the Townsville Sports Precinct became an evacuation centre for families and pets displaced due to floodwaters in Townsville. Across the state the majority of the sport and active recreation facilities are typically built on low-lying land where development for other uses tends to be more difficult. As a result, these facilities are usually the first to be impacted by floods and significant rain events. Sport is a great vehicle for getting our communities to re-engage and socially connect back into normal life. Therefore, we know it is imperative to be involved quickly to support those impacted volunteer-driven, not-for-profit sport and active recreation organisations and councils to clean up, restore, repair, rebuild and make more resilient their local sporting facilities as soon as possible.

We have grants available up to \$5,000 through our Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program, which is a rolling funding program that assists with initial clean-up and repairs. As soon as it is safe to do so, we will have our staff on the ground in flood impacted communities in the coming weeks to undertake site visits, damage assessments and work with local clubs to chart a way forward. We have a long history of working with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and our partners to support industry to get back on the field. The jointly funded state and governments' Community and Recreational Assets Recovery and Resilience Program has supported clubs to rebuild across the state, and I am sure it will again.

The department holds a unique position within government, being afforded the scope to have full involvement and focus on sport in the state from grassroots through to elite participation. I thank the committee again for providing the department the opportunity to participate today. I look forward to working closely with the committee to deliver our key services for the people of Queensland. We are very happy to answer questions.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. We appreciate the briefing. As I said at the beginning of the public hearing today, this is about the committee understanding the scope of work that we face and the new machinery of government. As is customary, I will go to non-government members first and the member for Cooper.

Ms BUSH: Thanks, everybody, for coming. I have met some of you before and I have worked with some of you before. It is lovely to see you again. Thanks for your comprehensive briefing. Can I say that as the member for Cooper I have interacted with your office on numerous occasions and it has always been very positive and helpful, so thank you very much for everything that you offer us as local members.

I have lots of questions, and I know we do not have a lot of time so I am going to be extremely selfish and use the opportunity to raise something that is close to my heart. I represent an inner-city seat. One of the big issues that we have coming up—which is quite acute for us but probably not isolated just to the inner city—is the scarcity of space and resources. Most, if not all, of our clubs are maxed out and they are turning players away. That is conflated with council that obligates volunteer committees to do a lot of work. They have to put up with the funding and maintenance so you have volunteer mums and dads working overtime to maintain fields and manage demand pressures. Council also has a 'no net loss of green space' policy which means that, if a stadium wants to expand a bit to fit more courts in, they cannot because they are not allowed to.

Given that the Olympics is coming, there is such enthusiasm for community sport and we are densifying in the inner city, what can be done? Are you as a state department looking at working with and coordinating with councils around demand management, mapping and field management? What is the solution? How are we going to get to a solution? This comes up every week.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I will get Kelli Lamperd to talk in a bit more detail. I will not ask her to solve it, though.

Ms BUSH: Come on, Kelli! I believe in you! I just wanted to flag it.

Mr Hopper: Yes, it is a genuine problem and a significant one so it is not one to make light of. It is tricky because it involves multiple levels of government. We have certainly done a lot of work to map demand across the state, not just in the areas you are referring to, so that is one aspect of it. Obviously, we need to then coordinate with other government departments on what their planning looks like as well as the local councils and what they can or cannot bring to the table. Equally, we cannot forget the clubs and the point you made about volunteers and mums and dads. Again, we have a number of initiatives that also look to help clubs and people running clubs run those clubs more sustainably.

I might throw to Kelli to talk in a bit more detail. It is fair to say that there is no silver bullet to solve it, but I think the key is collaboration and multiple levels of government as well as helping clubs and state sporting organisations chart what they need and working with them. A lot of them have done a lot of work to map what they think their sports need, infrastructure wise. There has been a lot of good work done but it is now finding opportunities to knit that together. I will hand over to Kelli to talk in more detail.

Ms Lamperd: Just to add to what the director-general said, our front-facing staff in sport and rec are our key to be the connector, because it is about connecting with local councils as well as thinking a bit outside the square. Sometimes other sporting facilities or other codes have options or availability, and sometimes sports only think within their sport. It is really key for us to be part of those conversations. We have noticed especially in South-East Queensland, that corridor, how stuff is getting tighter. Some councils are already onto this and they are doing some master planning and analysis planning. We are very much connected with Brisbane City Council. We are kind of gridlocked in a number of our places and spaces. Again, it comes down to funding. There is only a limited bucket. It is about connecting all the people to the table at the same time, and that is what our front-facing staff do. It is really important that our sport and rec staff are there and at the table.

Ms BUSH: You mentioned funding. I do not want to jump on that, but what if there was unlimited funding, hypothetically? What is the issue with the funding? You cannot just magically create more space. Are you talking about strategic acquisition of properties to turn into fields? What do you mean by having more funding?

Ms Lamperd: The funding that the department offers versus how we can connect to other funding that is on offer. There is the community gambling fund, federal funding and other opportunities that our frontline staff are connected with which they could potentially package or they could put them in the right direction, depending on what they are trying to do. It is also connecting with the local council to potentially get their funding to certain aspects. It is that real dynamic and stakeholder engagement.

Mr Hopper: If I could add, we are working closely with the Department of Education on how we look at school facilities, which, again, is not easy and is typically a case-by-case proposition. Certainly, in other jurisdictions we have seen that be quite beneficial in unlocking space.

The other point that Kelli was making in relation to funding relates to the big one for us, being where we can get multiple sports utilising a similar facility. Again, it is not always as easy as that. It sounds easy but it is still tricky. Typically, if we are thinking of children's sport, the demand window is pretty consistent for all sports and that is tricky. As I say, there is no one thing. It is certainly our aim to try to find a range of mechanisms by which to address it. In certain pockets we have seen some success and we will just keep working at it. The other thing is that we are working with people who are willing to try these things, like schools, other groups and other sports. Where it is working, we will look to spread that through the broader state.

Ms BUSH: And if I can help in any way.

CHAIR: I will go to the member for Mulgrave for the next question.

Mr JAMES: Andrew, thank you for your comprehensive briefing. Is there any consideration for security upgrades when you are looking at all these sports facilities? Up our way, in Cairns, we have some beautiful multisport venues that are copping vandalism every weekend, and because of that we are losing volunteers because they get disheartened with everything that is going on. It is then up to the individual clubs to provide security and they cannot afford it. The cost of cameras is phenomenal, even for the local councils. Have you had a look at that as part your deliberations when you are looking at funding?

Mr Hopper: I am trying to remember in recent times if it has been a topic, but I do not think it has. Typically, the clubs or the sporting associations have picked up those elements and it is often in the design of how they prepare their precinct or their ovals. I know, for example, in Townsville there was one sport which was very active in placing large rocks to stop vehicles getting onto fields and other things. We have not typically done it ourselves, and then again it depends on who owns it and how they would like to address it. That is not to say that it cannot be considered moving forward. I suppose, from our perspective, our focus is making sure the facilities, first and foremost, are able to cater for all users—men, women, girls, boys, people with a disability—as best we can, and obviously there are other layers after that. Certainly, the \$250 million Games On! program is going to go a long way to addressing some of these aspects which will see a neat injection into infrastructure as that starts to roll out.

Mr JAMES: I think it is something that needs to be considered right at the very start and not be something that is tacked on at the end. If you could, that would be great. Also, have you got an update on Barlow Park and how it fits into Brisbane 2032 by any chance?

Mr Hopper: At this stage, the only thing I can say is that it is wrapped up in the 100-day review. I do not think that is an 'in or out' conversation; I just think it is part of the deliberations. Like many people, I am looking forward to seeing the outcome of the review and the recommendations. We would just like to start actioning things, and, again, we hope that will allow for legacy benefits to be realised much earlier than the games and then we can have that ongoing outcome. At this stage, it is all part of that review.

CHAIR: Thanks for that. I certainly think it is a good suggestion to have CCTV and other security aspects built into that design up-front. It is certainly something that I am mindful of if we are doing something.

Mr KING: Thank you all for coming in and for that comprehensive introduction. You sort of answered one of my questions but I will go to it anyway. You also mentioned something about particular sporting organisations and knowing about them. I have to commend Tennis Queensland. When I was first elected, they brought me what was essentially a portfolio of court usage, conditions of courts, the lighting of the courts and the list of privately owned and public courts in my electorate. If every sport could do that, it would make it so much easier for us. I do not know how much sway you have in encouraging them. It made it so easy to go to ministers and say, 'This is what we need. Here is the growth.'

My question is about the \$200 FairPlay vouchers. I am pleased to see the current round. Every weekend we have a new sign-on day for all my local sports and I am getting asked about this a lot. Will there be another round soon? I know that you said these ones have to be used before June or July. Will there be another round? That is the question I am getting asked everywhere.

Mr Hopper: Obviously, there is a budget process underway which will subsequently be announced by executive government in due course. As we sit here today, there is no doubt that those vouchers have been extremely successful. We need people to have redeemed them by 6 June. Typically, redemption is high leading into the winter sport period, so we are expecting that with the numbers that have been redeemed so far we will realise that full amount. As to the future of it, obviously there is a very long history of it. We are up to round 11 and it has been very popular. There have been various iterations of it, but what happens next is really a decision for executive government. Certainly, the success of them here and in other jurisdictions is well documented.

Mr KING: Particularly in our low socio-economic areas. We want kids playing sport. A little rhyme our mayor used to say was 'every kid in sport is one less in court'. Thank you for the answer. I appreciate it.

Mr Hopper: I will just add to your comment around sports and their relative organisation of their needs. I do not know that we have to encourage them because they are all getting much better at it. We are seeing that increase every day with big reports that are very practical. It is fantastic.

Mr KING: Thank you.

Mr KEMPTON: There are two parts to my question. With all the emphasis on the Olympic Games and obviously in the south-east corner, can you outline initiatives that your department is undertaking to achieve its objectives in the Cook electorate? Secondly and more importantly, for generations country racing has been the social and financial cornerstone of regional Queensland, in particular in my seat of Cook. Will the department do more to work with country racing to provide support by way of funds or even things like rescheduling racing so that events are not competing with large regional centres like Townsville for jockeys on race days?

Mr Hopper: I might deal with the racing one first and then I will loop back to the regional benefits. I will then hand to the team to talk specifically about the electorate of Cook to give them some time to prepare for that.

In terms of the racing, I suppose, first and foremost, as you would all be aware, there has been a commitment to a review of the racing industry, and that will be a very comprehensive review. One of the key cornerstones—and it is in our minister's charter letter—is the notion of regional racing and the importance of it to the community. Where it occurs is certainly at the forefront of our mind as we look to move towards that review. I think it will be absolutely contemplated but contemplated in the racing ecosystem in totality. Previous reviews have often dealt with components of racing—whether that be integrity or animal welfare—but this will be a comprehensive review. Rest assured, member, that country racing will be absolutely considered in terms of how that is best addressed.

Obviously, Racing Queensland ultimately are responsible for the calendar and when those race meets occur. However, for the industry to be sustainable, it needs to be able to coexist in the metro areas and also obviously in the regional areas. That is across all three codes, not just necessarily thoroughbred. Rest assured that will be dealt with there.

In terms of regional opportunities, there is no doubt that the forecast that was done in the lead-up to bidding for the games was that it would be a \$4.6 billion uplift in tourism and trade for Queensland, and 50 per cent of the international visitors drawn to the games are likely to disperse to our regions, really adding to that economic uplift. The team will talk to the sporting infrastructure shortly. We are certainly very focused on ensuring that, in all of our communities that we deal with, their desires around understanding what they seek out of legacy, that they can communicate that to us so we can shape how we engage with them. I think that is an important part. We do not want to be telling regions what legacy should be for them. I have fortunately previously been involved in the development of the Elevate 2042 Legacy Strategy. A bit like sports, there were regions which absolutely knew what legacy meant for them and there were regions still working through that. However, there is no doubt that there will be benefits and they will be varied. Some of it will be related to supply chain, some of it will be related to training camps in the lead-up and everything in between. I think there will be huge opportunity there. In relation to Cook specifically, I will hand over to Ms Lamperd.

Ms Lamperd: For the area of Cook, since July 2021 and as at December 2024, \$13.6 million has been approved to support the sporting organisations in the electorate of Cook. This is broken down into \$6.78 million in capital grants and \$6.589 in non-capital grants. There has also been an injection of \$274,963 in individual grants. In addition to the above, we have invested \$156,000 into sponsorship initiatives in the electorate of Cook. Also approved is \$191,000 for the jointly funded program for disaster recovery arrangements. This is based on really good connections with our Far North Queensland staff and the sporting clubs and local governments in your electorate.

Especially when Cyclone Jasper hit, those good working relationships yielded the recovery efforts and achieved two funding applications that commenced in the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council to the value of \$14 million. Also in your electorate, the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council was approved funding for \$632,000 in July 2023, under a special initiative out-of-round funding to extend and upgrade change rooms and amenities to improve the quality of Rugby League facilities. We continue to work with the council to deliver this project today. Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council was approved \$415,000 in March 2024 under the Minor Infrastructure and Inclusive Facilities Fund to upgrade lighting to support Rugby League at Kowanyama. This project is in pre-construction phase with the development approval still to be completed. Our staff continue to work with council and the Department of Education to deliver this project.

Mr MELLISH: Director-General, you mentioned this in answer a little earlier, but I am keen to explore it a bit more. In my area, we have some great school facilities, recently opened or close to opening, and I have some really good principals who are supportive of getting community sport use in them, but I am concerned, looking to the future, about what happens if those principals retire or go elsewhere. I have sometimes seen in the past where a new principal might like a different code or they might not be as locked into sport as the previous one was, and you almost have to re-prosecute your whole argument, and you have probably had the same problem that local MPs do trying to re-prosecute that same argument. Is there any way to, not necessarily tie principals' hands, but lock schools into having this great community sport infrastructure used into the future?

Mr Hopper: You have definitely touched on some of the challenges. I think, at this point in time, we are trying to work very closely with the Department of Education and then principals—we have to start with the willing—to show the benefits of that. I think at this stage there is not a clear, formalised way to tackle that and, in effect, bind schools; not necessarily just the principals but the schools. Matt, do you want to add anything to that? For me, the challenge is we have to prove that it is actually feasible and realistic. There are also some myths out there about what the use of a school looks like after hours. That is a piece of work as well. I will pass to Matthew Burton to add some information to that.

Mr Burton: We have a long history and I think it is quite targeted. You suggested before, member, that it is probably very heavily driven by principals. There have been great examples. We worked on the one at Craigslea State High School which we opened today. Community access is already seven days a week with two indoor courts being built. We work very closely, as the DG said, with the Department of Education and reviewing schools' policies and how that can enable more community access and grant more community access. The view of our department is that they are great community assets and we need to keep exploring ways to open them up to better utilise them. That comes with the need to work with Education when they build multipurpose indoor courts and sporting facilities to make sure they are fit for purpose for sport as well, not just for school activities. There are challenges there with ensuring adequate amenities, adequate security, and all that sort of thing.

We know that activating parks and school grounds actually helps lower poor behaviour in community as well. One of the initiatives we are looking at is to showcase those exemplar projects like that at Craigslea State High School. We did a project at Ipswich State High School a few years back with a synthetic surface. We wish to showcase that and broadcast that to the education network that it can work. We saw last year there was nearly \$100 million put towards the Go for Gold program around Queensland. We will continue to use that and continue to push that agenda. We spoke before about the schools, especially inner-city South-East Queensland, where there are spaces that we need to maximise use of and this will again continue to be a topic of conversation as we do come across challenges with space availability.

CHAIR: With regard to the volunteers, \$431 million is your budget. We really rely on the volunteers out there in whatever the sport is. You mentioned \$5,000 grants. Can you talk to us about that, but also how you are capturing the data on volunteers and the growth of volunteers or what we are doing to support the growth of volunteers in helping those sports out there exist?

Mr Hopper: Absolutely. Again, I will hand over to Kelli to speak in a little more detail about volunteers, but it is fair to say that Australians are well regarded from a volunteering perspective generally, but it is somewhat challenging. The challenge in our space comes from sports with overlapping seasons. You will have a parent who is a volunteer at potentially three different sports in one term, or more, and that can be difficult. Again, we are working hard on reinforcing the benefits of volunteering. Also, through one of our programs, we are very focused on helping clubs and associations run better and, therefore, be a more attractive proposition for a volunteer.

I think some of the feedback we hear also is that at times volunteers do not necessarily enjoy the environment that they are in through a whole range of governance and other matters. Again, whilst they are volunteers, the people running the committees are volunteers, so it is a tricky space and everyone is doing their best. I will get Kelli to talk in a little more detail about the volunteer piece. On the \$5,000, that was in response to the rolling funding we provide to help with that initial response to disaster. That is what that reference was.

Ms Lamperd: ClubIQ is what our Director-General was referencing. ClubIQ is a new service that we are offering, and it offers free and easy-to-use resources for Queensland sporting clubs. It is about helping the committees and volunteers deliver quality services and making sure they are adhering to their legislative requirements. At the moment, ClubIQ offers and focuses on four main pillars being governance, financial management, planning and volunteering. It is part of our offering and it is free to all clubs. We are also running webinars. As part of those pillars, we encourage sporting clubs to come and join online and hear a bit more about those topics, and we are looking at our next phase of what that might be, just to support the clubs. This was raised as part of the feedback from our frontline staff that clubs were struggling, meeting their needs and obligations under their respective legislative requirements. This is really set up to help them. It is really easy to use: it has templates; it has links to the Office of Fair Trading or to the federal government, depending on what they are looking for; and it has a financial management plan. It is a really good toolkit for clubs. I encourage you to have a look on our website, but also to refer your constituents to it as it is beneficial. That will also help clubs be better equipped to apply for grant funding and be more competitive in what is a very hot-demand area. It does also touch on that.

Ms BUSH: The other area I am very keen on is the legacy component of the Olympics and particularly in relation to inclusion and disability. We are fortunate to have Sporting Wheelies in Milton. They are absolutely phenomenal. My daughter, who is 10, has been going down and training with their wheelchair basketball team because they need numbers. So, it really started to dawn on me the struggles they have, not just in terms of the hard but the soft infrastructure. There are people coming from Toowoomba, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast on a Tuesday night to train. The goal, I think, is 500,000 athletes; is that right? Is it 500,000 Australians involved—

Mr Hopper: Participants.

Ms BUSH: Participants, correct. I am keen to hear what we are doing in that space and if everything is on track. What are the governance arrangements around it? I know we have some fantastic peak bodies that are really keen to make sure we maximise the Olympics for people with a disability.

Mr Hopper: I am just looking it up on my phone because I was literally in a meeting yesterday discussing this.

Ms BUSH: Great.

Mr Hopper: First and foremost, accessibility and inclusion underpins so much of the work we do, automatically. Legacy and as it relates to the games, of course, is wrapped up in the 100-day review, so what comes of that will come in due course, but clearly accessibility and inclusion will be pillars in there somewhere in some form, I am sure, because they are pillars in what we do today. What was announced by the former government, if I may, was a partnership with JTI to deliver a research project as an early legacy initiative of the games. This is obviously pre the review. The research project is looking at effectively comprehensively mapping Queenslanders with a disability, providing evidence-based strategies to foster inclusive physical activity participation and ultimately delivering a final report on those data findings and providing recommendations and strategies that will increase participation for people with a disability and physical activity across the state. That obviously could lead into high performance, but, more importantly, just general participation and making sport accessible for all. That is, I suppose, an example.

Interestingly, the first Queensland government money committed to a legacy project is for a disability-based research project, which is really pleasing. Again, as I said, I was fortunate to be in a meeting, just in the last 24 hours, with the group that are driving that, and they have a very close association with Sporting Wheelies and others. One of the big questions we have—and we are doing some work on this ourselves—is mapping all these different groups representing people with a disability with a desire to be involved in sport and recreation, and then how do we work with them collectively. You probably get approached by individual groups, but the reality is, as you would appreciate, that there is a range of them, which is fantastic, representing a whole range of people with disability. How we work collaboratively with them is something we are really focused on as well.

Ms BUSH: For my interest, there is a review that JTI will make public, but that is not feeding into the 100-day review; that is a separate issue. So, the JTI review will be published at some point and I will be able to get my hands on it publically?

Mr Hopper: I am not sure at this stage what the end result is in terms of the output, but certainly they are looking to do a research project. They are working with multiple universities; they have not started it yet but the funding is committed. That company is JTI. Again, we will work with them and we will have a group within government as well that will form the basis of a government steering group to interact. This is a great example of the public and private sectors working together, including the tertiary institutions, to undertake research. Again, we did not come up with the idea; this has come from a group of people who are really passionate in this space. One of the key folks who we dealt with the chief executive from Queenslanders with Disability Network. There is a great group of passionate people driving this project with the idea of bringing it to government. It is very exciting to see where it goes. Equally, how we dovetail our work into that will be pleasing.

Mr JAMES: Could you give us an idea of any partnerships that might be coming up with local government in the future, or what you are currently doing with local government?

Mr Hopper: We have a range of different partnerships with local government. We really value working with local government. Certainly we have done a lot with Cairns Regional Council and in other places over the years. I will hand over to Kelli to talk about some of the ones we have on foot at the moment.

Ms Lampard: The one I can speak to right now is the recent disaster, where we worked with Townsville City Council to stand up the evacuation centre. Within six hours, I think, we pivoted from shutting our sports precinct to receiving guests, but that could not have happened without the existing relationships that we had with the Townsville City Council. It was simply a phone call. Because of our working relationship, we were able to deliver that. It was seamless, to be completely honest. We were able to receive people immediately and they were safe and secure. This happens across all of the areas where we have our staff on foot. They try to have relationships and connections with local council to ensure we are connected up and that we do work together because many of them have sport and recreation officers within council. Our staff also engage with all of the clubs in those local council areas, so it is important that we continue that.

In our discrete communities, we have partnered with Health and Wellbeing Queensland. We are providing councils with money to help them with planning in their own areas. This planning is from a health and wellbeing perspective. It could be about a sporting outcome, so identifying sporting facilities or community priorities that they want to focus on. Again, it is a master plan for those discrete communities that will set them up well for any funding that they then need to apply for.

Mr KING: Lake Kurwongbah should be the rowing venue for the Olympics—I am just saying! I want to return to the FairPlay vouchers. Has there ever been any analysis in terms of the return on investment for every voucher and the growth of community sport? It may be that individual sports have that data. It is a fantastic initiative and it obviously does grow sport, but is there any analysis of that? I apologise if I have put you on the spot.

Mr Hopper: I am checking our material to look at the data we have. If it pleases the committee, we can come back to you with that information. We do that have that information; we just do not have it immediately to hand, but we are happy to share that.

CHAIR: There are a lot of councils out there with sport and recreation officers. I think that started from a funding source that came from government. What is the future of the capacity of those sport and recreation officers and their relationship with the department?

Mr Hopper: I am not entirely across how they are funded today, but obviously councils are appointing them. The key for us is that we want to have a working relationship with all of those officers. In the main—I am happy to be corrected—we do. Those can be from the metropolitan areas all the way out to more regional areas. We really pride ourselves on being available. Prior to Christmas, I was up in Proserpine and met with council representatives there. They have master plans for a sporting precinct in a certain area and they were interested in my views, which is lovely, but, ultimately, the team have all the expertise.

The offer was made to them to share it with us early: 'Let's talk about what we know about demand. Let's talk about what we know is realistic and achievable.' For example, pickleball as a sport is through the roof in terms of demand; you could probably build indoor courts based on pickleball at the moment. They were looking at outdoor pickleball courts. Without putting anyone in a box, there is a more mature clientele in the pickleball market—albeit balanced—so the notion of an outdoor court

in a warmer environment might make sense if you popped a roof over it, for example. That plan did not initially have that in its thinking. Again, that is a very minor addition by me, but they are the sorts of things we like to try to bring to the table as these plans are being shaped. Typically, local government then brings it to the state and federal government, so the more formed up it is, the more realistic it is and the more it is based on fact, the better. It does not necessarily guarantee funding. We were keen to work with all local governments in that regard in our previous iteration, and in our new iteration I hope that continues. The LGAQ and others are all people we engage with and long may that continue. Again, when councils know exactly what they want—they have done the work; they have mapped it out with their communities—it makes our job even easier, because the work usually overlays neatly and provides good data-driven decisions.

CHAIR: It is certainly very good planning. In your opening briefing you mentioned the preventive nature of sport. For the committee's understanding, can you expand on the preventive nature of sport and the importance of it?

Mr Hopper: Having spent a lot of time in sport and around sport, there is no doubt that not only the physical but also the mental benefits are significant. For every dollar that is spent on sport, I think the benefit to the health system is something like \$6 or \$7. From a return-on-investment perspective, it is very good. That is before you get to things like the youth development partnership program and PCYCs. It is a bit like the conversation we had earlier: there is no one solution to any of this; it is very much a combined effort. The work we have done with the Queensland Police Service and other departments has been exceptional in that regard.

Again, we work very closely with Health and Wellbeing Queensland, which is a wonderful statutory body. They do great work in this space. We partner with them on their programs. We try to take a 'whole of human' look at it. It is about not just healthy lungs but also healthy minds. I am sure we all know people who do not mind a little bit of screen time, but certainly getting around in fresh air and having a run around and burning off all of that energy is really positive. We will keep on looking at programs that fundamentally support clubs to continue to do what they do and support recreational organisations being able to do what they do. Not everybody wants to go to a sporting club; some people want a different experience of active recreation. We will keep looking at supporting infrastructure as best we can where there are funds available—getting best use out of those—and then partnering with local government, schools, other government departments, QPS and so on to bring the best benefit for all Queenslanders.

CHAIR: We might be able to help you fight for a bigger slice of that health budget for sport and recreation.

Ms BUSH: I saw Kelli's eyes light up there! I am with you, and I will give a plug for TRAQ, the Trail Running Association of Queensland, who are doing great work at the moment in advocating to see whether they can be recognised within the Olympics portfolio. They are doing fantastic work in our community.

I was intrigued by the statement in your written briefing that one of your strategic challenges may be about attracting appropriate investment into Queensland within the current economic climate. I want to understand what was meant by that. To help me conceptualise the statement a bit, do you have examples of where you had some challenges? I am referring to point 10, 'Strategic Challenges'.

Mr Hopper: I suppose there are a couple of parts to it. The situation is linked a little bit to the cost-of-living pressures. If we start at a governmental level, all levels of governments are being challenged with how to address cost-of-living pressures. That is obviously a trade-off in terms of the availability of public funds. Equally, sports have to look at what their bottom line looks like. Whilst I do not have a specific example as it relates to sports, the reality is that all sports need a level of public funding to support them—some much less than others, but it is a reality. I think all of those things create an environment that can be challenging.

Ultimately, our job is to make strong recommendations on the best return on investment or the meeting of the priorities of the government of the day. Certainly, we are well attuned to the new government's focus on driving grassroots sports and recreation participation across the state. There is still a component around developing elite athletes and how to ensure that happens across Queensland. Queensland is a big, diversified state, as you all know. All of those are challenges. For us as members of the public sector, the first part of that is the natural tension on available funds and where they can go. That is probably the biggest challenge, but it has a natural trickle effect into lots of different places.

There is also associations' capacity to invest funding. If we run programs where there is a level of matched funding or a level of funding commitment required, the strength of that sport, club or association can have a bearing on their ability to do that and that can link back to the ability to generate memberships and fees. It is no one thing. Again, it all joins up.

Ms BUSH: I read it as maybe the economic conditions in Queensland were not conducive to encouraging international games, or something was happening at a more macro level, but I do not think that is what you are saying. I think you are speaking generally.

Mr Hopper: It is not just Queensland, either.

Ms BUSH: Yes, understood.

Mr Hopper: Certainly, the state's ability to recently secure the Men's Rugby World Cup 2027 says that that is not the challenge. It is the broader economic environment, which we are not alone on.

CHAIR: Director-General, can you talk to us about the grant programs that the department has for different sporting groups?

Mr Hopper: I can. I did touch on some of them in the opening, but I will recap a couple. Obviously, the most recent announcement is the \$250 million through the Games On! program. That will deliver new or upgraded fields, courts, clubhouses, changing rooms and lighting across Queensland in the lead-up to the games. We have talked about the Youth Development Partnership Fund as one small example but, in terms of grant funds, the Active Industry Base Fund will provide \$16.9 million over two years to 72 state sport and recreation organisations and two industry peak bodies. Again, that is to build and strengthen organisational capability. We have ActiveKIT, which supports active industry startups or small-to-medium businesses to develop, trial or implement new and innovative solutions that respond to a sport and active recreation challenge. So far we have seen 47 innovative solutions funded, which has been fantastic.

We also have the Active Industry Project Fund Super Round. That aims to increase participation and enhance athlete pathways. That was \$5 million over two years to deliver 75 projects across participation, providing diverse, inclusive and responsive opportunities to grow participation from a pathways perspective, enhancing pathways and addressing pathway inequalities for Queensland athletes. We have talked about the FairPlay vouchers and Active Clubs, which is where we support over 1,700 local and regional sport and active recreation organisations to support volunteers and provide flexible and safe physical activities and opportunities to increase sport and active recreation.

One that I am really proud of and is close to my heart is Active Women and Girls. We supported nearly 1,750 organisations including grassroots clubs and active recreation organisations, local governments and state level organisations to boost sport and active recreation opportunities for women and girls by creating quality and inclusive environments, which is fantastic.

We have a broader capital grants program in 2024-25. It is nearly \$170 million. It is supporting more than 400 active projects statewide, which is supporting jobs in building Queensland and growing our regions. There is the Community and Recreational Assets Recovery Resilience Program to repair and rebuild after significant disaster events all the way through to PCYC developments across the state. That is before we talk about our own rec centres and how we turn them on across the state. There is a range of different grant programs that are all live this financial year in various forms that are all providing great outcomes for Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Director-General and team. This concludes the briefing and these proceedings. We do have one question on notice about the return on investment for the FairPlay vouchers.

Ms Lamperd: I want to round that out. Basically, we did undertake an evaluation. Some of the recommendations include extending the eligibility and increasing the voucher amounts. We went from \$150 to \$200. As a result, that is what this round did: we went to \$200.

Mr Hopper: On that last fact, about 73 per cent of respondents reported increased participation levels in 2023, up from 70 per cent in 2022. So it was definitely an uptake.

Mr KING: I am very happy with that answer. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for the information that you have all provided today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters and broadcast staff. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public briefing closed. We will recommence at 3.15 pm with a public briefing from the Night-Life Economy Commissioner.

The committee adjourned at 3.02 pm.