



Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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SOUTHERN CORRIDOR SPORT AND RECREATION TASK FORCE

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (7.57 pm): An integrated and coordinated approach to planning for sport and recreation is essential between state and local government. The best way to progress sporting facilities in the fast-growing southern corridor of Cairns is for stakeholders to work together sharing thinking, resources and processes, and utilising each other's strengths.

With this in mind, I have formed the Southern Corridor Sport and Recreation Task Force. To date, the group consists of Peter Narducci, Kevin Maher, Matt Bolton, Jeff King Koi, Richie Bates, Gary Young and Kathy Bortolanza. All are community minded people who not only have a depth of experience as administrators but also have a passion for sport and recreation. Selected Cairns regional councillors will also be invited to participate.

I am very aware that representatives from sports and community groups have already been widely consulted to inform Cairns Regional Council's Park and Recreation Strategic Plan 2010-15. While the task force will be a mechanism by which all groups can have a say, the aim of this task force is not to repeat the exercise. It will focus specifically on the southern suburbs of Cairns and aim to prioritise and progress planning for facilities and activities.

With the recent announcement by the state government of a raft of sports funding packages over the next three years, it is vital that we pull together multiuser funding bids when applying for funding for this fast-growing area. Simply put, the task force is about reducing duplication, removing blockages and seeking to get the best bang for the buck in terms of usable land and spending of public money. Cairns Regional Council should be congratulated for its more than \$13 million to safeguard land near Isabella State School at Edmonton and the expansion to the Alley Park precinct at Gordonvale.

But it is not only about planning for the future. There are problems right now that need to be addressed. Both levels of government are already struggling to meet the high demand for sporting facilities, in particular green space for sport and recreation which is at a premium in the southern corridor. For example, Edmonton Storm Senior Rugby League play their games at Barlow Park in Cairns and have several different training venues. I am the patron of the junior feed-in club, which is based at Petersen Park and is already bursting at the seams. A permanent home must be found for the senior club, and another rectangular field option would also support the needs of Southern Crusaders Rugby Union Club. Through the task force I am putting the case to the government to consider the parcel of land adjacent to Petersen Park—previously set aside Education Queensland land. It would allow the Edmonton Storm to actually play in Edmonton and would relieve the pressure being faced in the southern corridor enormously.

The recent closure of the iconic Sugarworld Waterslides highlighted the limited affordable recreational options in the southern corridor to keep the younger population active and engaged. Local facilities like the Edmonton swimming pool have served the community well but need to be upgraded. I know that council is well advanced in its planning for an Edmonton indoor sports and aquatic facility. While the sport of tennis will be boosted enormously by the completion of the \$5.2 million regional tennis centre

at North Cairns, plans for an upgrade to suburban courts at Edmonton need to be brought on-stream as soon as possible.

I do not claim that the Southern Corridor Sport and Recreation Task Force will work miracles, but I do know that its members will work together for the good of our local area. I look forward to the challenges ahead.