




Speech by
Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

FITZROY RIVER, WATER SPORTS

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (9.09 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the existence of an incredible watercraft venue located in Rockhampton above the Fitzroy River barrage. Without question, the Fitzroy River provides one of the most spectacular locations for still-water water sports in Queensland. In recent years the location has hosted many events. The Fitzroy River played host to both the Australian and Canadian rowing teams, which used the river as preparatory training for major competitions. The New Zealand and Australian kayak teams have also used the location for training.

Last Christmas I received the T-shirt; stencilled across the back was the term 'Boat Bitch'. As a young woman my bride was a national champion and an Australian rowing representative. In recent years she has returned to the sport as both a masters competitor and a coach, hence my T-shirt reflecting her and her crew's expectations of my support. On the weekend of 23 and 24 June, the Fitzroy will host the Central Queensland Schools Championship Regatta. Approximately 340 students will compete. They come from many central Queensland schools such as the Cathedral College, Rockhampton Grammar School, Rockhampton Girls Grammar, Emmaus College and North Rockhampton State High School. Within the sport the male to female ratio is 50 to 50. All told, 21 schools from across the state are expected to compete.

In recent years the Fitzroy has hosted major regattas, including the Australian Masters Rowing Championships in 2005 and 2009 as well as the Queensland Schools Rowing Championships in 2006, 2008 and 2011. The Fitzroy is a unique location boasting excellent still-water rowing conditions and the ability to row upstream for at least 40 kilometres. If any members of this House are interested in a quick 80-kilometre row, just give me a call.

The Central Queensland Schools Championship will be run entirely by members and supporters of the Rockhampton Fitzroy Rowing Club, which was formed only in September 2006. In Central Queensland, interest in rowing is growing rapidly. On 23 and 24 June I will be there, with my T-shirt, and I invite all members to visit Central Queensland and join me at this fantastic youth sporting event.