




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Local Government, Public Outdoor Fitness Equipment

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (11.17 am): During question time I mentioned that local government is so much more than roads, rates and rubbish and I talked about the push into areas such as community safety through CCTV. I want to talk about another thing that I have seen that is changing the face of councils, which is a push into getting their communities fitter and healthier. This is something that we should all take a huge interest in. Year on year, the demand on our health system increases and time and time again our communities deal with issues associated with being overweight. This is something that every level of government needs to take a good long hard look at, to see what each of us can do in that regard.

Over the course of the last couple of decades, increasingly councils have been working to install footpaths and upgrade parks, and that has been tremendously helpful in getting people active. I want to see a move to the next generation—that is, public outdoor fitness equipment. It is my wish that every single one of our 77 local government areas has at least one piece of public fitness equipment for people to use; at least one piece of equipment in each of the 77 areas. I have a fundamental belief that it does not matter if you are rich or poor or if you are black or white; whatever your background, you deserve the right to have the best opportunity to be healthy. It is up to all of us to provide facilities to enable that to occur.

It is with a heavy heart that I inform the House that more than 20 local government areas do not have some form of public outdoor fitness equipment, including many of our Indigenous communities. We must change that. It is not just those Indigenous communities but also some of our larger communities that do not have such facilities. For example, the Whitsundays is a beautiful part of the state where exercise should be second nature, but there are no outdoor fitness equipment parks in the Whitsundays or the North Burnett area. I say to those councils that we are ready, willing and able to partner with you to make that happen.

I have seen firsthand the benefit of this exercise equipment. In my home city of Townsville there are few of these. There are two in my electorate. One is in Sherriff Park, Mundingburra. The second was only recently installed in Riverside Park in the suburb of Douglas, which is where I live.

In the short time that that has been constructed I have seen a march of people using it. It has not just been fit, able-bodied people but young kids and older residents. They are making the most of what is a beautiful outdoor area. We combined it with a dog off-leash area. There is something for everyone. People can go in and make the most of it.

It came about as a result of an idea raised by the local Neighbourhood Watch group. They said, 'Wouldn't it be great if there were a way to engage people, get them to know their neighbours and, at

the same time, get them fit and healthy.' I teamed up with local councillor, Trevor Roberts. There was a contribution from the state and the council and it is now a reality.

The other day I was with the member for Pumicestone at Bongaree. There is a wonderful project going on there. We have created a much stronger foreshore. We were discussing what a beautiful area it is but that it lacked fitness equipment. To her great credit, the member for Pumicestone immediately engaged with her council and suggested that it would be in their interests to put in an application. It is very difficult to say no when there is a persistent local member and a council that is engaged enough to put in an application. The result is a contribution of \$40,000 for that project. It will be delivered this financial year. That is action on the ground and it will help our communities become fitter.

I want to finish where I started and say clearly that I will not rest until every person in this state has an ability to be able to exercise at free, safe, accessible fitness equipment in their local area. It does not have to be advanced. It can be as simple as a few static bars where people of different fitness levels can get in and do some form of activity. We must do better in this regard.

I put the challenge to councils: if councils do not have exercise equipment then they should have a look where they can put it. If they have basic equipment then they should have a look where they can take it to the next level. If they have equipment that is of a high level then they should see where they can install some in another part of their city or region to enable everyone to have access. It does not matter what level of government, we all have a role in promoting fitter, healthier communities.

(Time expired)