




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Cowboys Rugby League Team; Intrust Super Cup

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.56 pm): It is very rare for me to stand in this place to speak solely about sport, but what I am going to talk about is far more than one game of rugby league. This Saturday night many members would know that the Cowboys are playing the Broncos in Townsville. Whilst we are all very proud Queenslanders, I am an extremely proud North Queensland and I wish nothing but great things for my home team on home soil.

The reason I want to raise this issue today, though, is that I want to outline to the House how important economically this game and this team is for not only my home city of Townsville but also North Queensland as a whole. When the Cowboys are performing well, the town is in a good place mentally. Those who are not passionate about rugby league may think that that is a bit of an overreach. It is not. A successful Cowboys side leads to the community having a real vibe about it, a real buzz. That is what is happening at the moment.

As of today, over 20,000 tickets to the game have been sold already. That is leaving some extra capacity. I can confirm to the House that all of the major hotel chains are fully booked, but there is still some spare capacity for some of the smaller operators. I urge people to support them. The flow-on effects of this game are incredible for the restaurants, the pubs and for the everyday attractions. People come to the city and they stay longer. The Cowboys are not just Townsville's team; they are regional Queensland's team. We are passionate about them and we want to see them do well.

I remember well in 2005 when we made our one and only grand final. I remember the parade where we farewelled our boys off to Sydney. There were people lining the streets from Thuringowa into town. I was a young first-term councillor and I remember being in one of the streets in my area in Cranbrook, standing shoulder to shoulder with an army of community members. People who were not even supportive of rugby league turned up that day because we are proud North Queenslanders and we want to see our side do well. For many years we have been unfairly the butt of Sydney's jokes.

Mr Johnson: Poor refereeing.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Our success on and off the field has proven those people wrong. The member for Gregory has mentioned poor refereeing. I will not engage in that, because inevitably I will end up sledging one of my colleagues who I like very much. I will not embark on that journey. Needless to say, this is a big moment for the Cowboys.

I also want to take the remaining time to congratulate the announcement of the decision by the Intrust Super Cup that from next year there will be a Townsville side in that competition. That is a great competition—a competition that has proven that it is bigger than Brisbane. It has gone into regional Queensland. Already it has a proud association with Mackay and Cairns through the Cowboys. This decision will give Townsville a side in that competition. It is the feeder side for our next generation of stars. This is the year of the Cowboys.