




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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ADJOURNMENT

Central Queensland, National Rugby League Team

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (5.22 pm): The communities of Central Queensland are united in a bid for a National Rugby League team. Every community within the vast Central Queensland region—from Bundaberg in the south to Mackay in the north and west to the border—is standing as one to make a concerted bid for a Central Queensland based National Rugby League team. Not only are the NRL fanatics in the region keen to see a Central Queensland team represented in the national competition but also business and community leaders are encouraging the bid to promote the Central Queensland region as an economic powerhouse sustaining the most exciting and liveable region in Australia. This bid brings together a focus and a vision for the future and the whole region is uniting as one for the CQ NRL bid.

Central Queensland enjoys a proud heritage in Rugby League, with notable Rugby League legends such as Gary Larson, Jason Hetherington, Dave Taylor, PJ Marsh, Reece Wesser, Steven Bell, Matt Sing, Alan McIndoe, Julian O’Neil and the great Mal Meninga, to name just a few. There are many more.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mr BUTCHER: I thank the member for that.

A government member: What about Rod Reddy?

Mr BUTCHER: And Rod Reddy. Those players have made a significant contribution to the game in the past and the present and will in the future.

This bid is proudly supported by business, community and sporting leaders throughout the region. The bid team is working as one with a common vision, proudly representing major provincial cities, regional towns and rural communities with one goal: a Central Queensland based NRL team. Support is also being sourced from some of the largest corporate names in Australia, largely possible because of the region’s special status as the engine room of Queensland. Currently, more than 40 CQ players are registered in the NRL and countless numbers in the Intrust Super Cup and the under-20s Holden Cup competitions.

On the day of the most recent NRL grand final, four CQ boys were playing: Matt Scott and Jake Granville for the Cowboys and Ben Hunt and Corey Oakes for the Broncos. In addition, currently Melbourne Storm alone has three CQ players playing for them in their A-grade side: Cameron Munster, Tom Glasby and Kurt Mann. Melbourne Storm’s CEO and football manager are also Central Queenslanders.

This year alone, 10 under-15 Central Queensland boys were selected in the Queensland team and the under-15 Capricornia schoolboys won the state title. Cathedral College, Emmaus College and

St Brendan's College are constantly in the top five most successful football-playing schools in Queensland year in, year out.

Central Queensland badly needs a CQ NRL team so that the communities in the area can retain their players so that they can live, work and play in front of their families, friends and local supporters. The current Q Cup team, the CQ Capras, are struggling owing to players being poached by Brisbane clubs. I plead to the NRL to please give Central Queensland its own National Rugby League team.