




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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ADJOURNMENT

Women's Rugby League, Maroons

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (11.05 pm): In this House the Queensland Maroons can always be counted on to create a bit of bipartisan support. Their most recent win in Origin 1 brings a smile to any Queenslanders' face. The state as a whole lifts following a Maroons win, particularly on home ground. I proudly wear my Rugby League passion on my sleeve, but there is another Queensland Maroons team that I would like to see mentioned just as regularly in this House: the Queensland Maroons women's team.

By this time next week the female Maroons will have taken the field at North Sydney Oval to take on our old nemesis, the Blues. If anyone takes exception to the fact that there is only one State of Origin match in Queensland this year, they should spare a thought for the women's team, which is playing their third origin game in a row in New South Wales. I am not ashamed to say that I have constantly beaten down the sports minister's door, demanding that our women get a chance to play in front of a Queensland crowd.

This year's women's origin team has been named. I can report to the House that they will be capably lead by Captain Ally Briginshaw and the experienced team of Chelsea Baker, Annette Brander, Brittany Breayley, Karina Brown, Tamzin Gray and Logan's own Sportswoman of the Year, Tallisha Harden. I also congratulate four new Maroons debutantes. I am particularly excited to see that the game's most experienced front rowers, Steph Hancock and Heather Ballinger, have delayed retirement for one more year to have a crack at beating the Blues on their turf. I had the privilege of playing with and against those two players. While I look at the team on paper and am quietly confident, one cannot underestimate the team that the Blues will put on the paddock.

Last year I was at North Sydney Oval for the first-ever official women's State of Origin match and I watched a packed crowd at the old ground roar for the teams as they ran out. I could not help but recall the almost two decades of hard graft that women's teams faced to be able to play an interstate match. For decades the women's team was known as the Queensland Brolgas. While we sent the best team we could, it was restricted by those who could afford to pay to play. To represent Queensland, players and staff alike had to pay for their own uniforms, travel and accommodation.

As former players we acknowledge how much the women's game has changed, how far it has come and the opportunities that are on offer for players now. I can only smile. I consider it this way: my daughter regularly watches representative women's footy on the TV or live at the ground. While she acknowledges that watching mummy play at the local Beenleigh oval does not constitute top-level footy, she has only ever watched the Queensland side or the Jillaroos play out of Cbus Stadium or Suncorp Stadium. As far as she knows, women's footy belongs on the television and is played at quality stadiums in front of packed crowds, which is as it should be. I wish the Maroons, both male and female, well for next week. Go Queensland!