




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.43 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill. When I started to write down some notes on this bill, it brought my mind to a great community member and Paralympian of my electorate, Darren Thrupp. Darren was born in Queensland in the town of Kilcoy, which is in the member for Nanango's electorate. He acquired a brain injury in a car accident on a dusty Queensland road in February 1985 on the way home from a cricket match against Surat. The accident affected the right side of his body and before the accident he was involved in running, cricket and playing A-grade Rugby League for the Wallumbilla Herefords. The people of Roma encouraged him to take up athletics.

In 1987 he attended the Sporting Wheelies Come and Try Day and his times qualified him for the 1988 Seoul games. Darren then went on to win a gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona games, and he attributes his success to the support of the Wallumbilla and Roma communities who helped him attend many international competitions. I regularly see Darren in the community and I hope that his tenacity, his story and his achievement is an inspiration to many others who aspire to Olympic and Paralympic competition.

Hosting the 2032 games can be a catalyst for generational benefits which all Queenslanders can enjoy. To this end, it is imperative that Queensland capitalise on this once-in-a-generation opportunity. To do so, our state has to build the infrastructure required to deliver the games which can leave a lasting legacy for all Queenslanders. It is critical that Queensland's investment leaves a lasting and meaningful infrastructure footprint right across this state. That infrastructure should not just be in the south-east corner; there are regional communities that are absolutely champing at the bit and keen to get involved with the Brisbane games. I say to the Labor government: they are willing to be part of the Brisbane games, but that planning to involve them and engage them needs to start now. They are keen to have their infrastructure in regional Queensland Brisbane-games ready. Regional communities across the state are keen to be involved. They, too, can capitalise on this great opportunity.

There will also be an opportunity to skill and train Queensland's workforce. Our state will need construction, hospitality and tourism jobs along with other key industries. Upskilling the local Queensland workforce should be an important facet of our preparation for the games. Not only will the Brisbane games need a workforce; the Brisbane games will need volunteers, and lots of them. Volunteers are an important part of any games, and we saw that in Sydney. There were some 43,000 volunteers who helped out at the Olympics in Sydney, and the Brisbane games are a great opportunity to embrace volunteers and volunteering.

It is also important to embrace the tourism attractions that so many visitors who come for the games will be able to enjoy. We do need to see that 20-year tourism plan which can benefit the width and breadth of our entire state. There are plenty of attractions in the south-west in my electorate of Warrego. Visitors can enjoy signature tourism attractions like the Big Rig in Roma, the Eromanga Natural History Museum, the Charleville Cosmos Centre, the GrainCorp silos, the Nindigully boomerangs, the secret World War II base and the bilbies in Charleville, or they can go all the way to

the historic Noccundra Hotel, the Eulo Queen or the opal fields at Yowah. That is just a sample of some of the outstanding tourism attractions across the south-west and in my electorate. There is plenty on offer and Queensland should be working at unlocking and expanding these world-class tourism products so they are ready before, during and after 2032.

I do wish to thank someone who is often not mentioned when it comes to the Brisbane games, and that is former lord mayor Graham Quirk.

Government members interjected.

Ms LEAHY: He often does not rate a mention.

Mr Mickelberg: Father of the games.

Ms LEAHY: I take that interjection from the member for Buderim: he is the father of the games. Former lord mayor Graham Quirk was a tireless supporter. He started the ball rolling in 2015. He convinced the SEQ Council of Mayors and commissioned the original feasibility study. I also wish to thank the SEQ Council of Mayors who joined with him to support him in this bid. It shows their foresight for the region and for the future in doing so.

The Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games have also sparked the interest of regional Queensland, and I refer to my colleague the member for Gregory who raised the issue of new sports in the games, and members will like this one. He is looking for rodeo and bull riding to be incorporated as a sport. I have been approached to have sheep shearing included as an Olympic sport. Will Roberts from Victoria Downs has asked how this could occur and he is pursuing that through, and that would be a great boost to the sheep and wool industry. The competition could be held in the regions in places like Charleville and Cunnamulla. That would give great exposure to a wonderful industry in Queensland. I am sure that the Mayor of the Blackall-Tambo shire, Andrew Martin, would like to see the profile of the sheep and wool industry raised in the Brisbane games and showcased as it will complement the proposed end-to-end wool processing plant in Blackall.

This next suggestion will interest members opposite, and it is made with a little bit of Christmas cheer: perhaps the Labor government would even give consideration to having some of those shearing finals out in Barcaldine. That would really showcase the industry, and I am sure those opposite would be interested in that going back to the Shearers' Strike in Barcaldine. I ask members opposite in the government to please give that some consideration.