




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

### **BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.40 pm): I rise to express my support for this bill which puts in place the legislative framework that will allow preparations to commence for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. This will be a transformative opportunity and I am pleased that the Premier has said that the opportunity and privileges due to the host will be shared by all Queensland not just Brisbane or the south-east corner. I would like to contribute a few comments regarding issues on behalf of regional and rural Queenslanders. One of the most exciting privileges of hosting the Olympics is the increased opportunity for our athletes to compete at an Olympics—and to compete at an Olympics on home ground.

When I leave here this week I will be heading to a little outback town called Stonehenge to celebrate the end of the school year with students and their parents and teachers. I would like to think that I can look those children in the eye and tell them that the only thing standing between them and the chance to compete in the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games is their talent and hard work. As things stand, this is a bit of a fairytale. Gregory is full of talented young athletes, but they have poorer training and playing facilities than children in the south-east corner or in the coastal cities. Despite this, our parents pay the same fees to the state sporting bodies as parents in the south-east corner. Our parents are all too likely to discover that the state body has allocated one development officer to cover an area from Goondiwindi to Moranbah and all points west. It is no surprise that the children never receive professional coaching or a masterclass under a system like this, a system that acts as if Queensland is the size of Victoria.

Gregory parents spend weekend after weekend in the season driving children to compete in other towns and cities. They have to devote the time and find the money for transport, accommodation and supervision as their children travel long distances to compete against competitors who have not left home. In Emerald we have an extremely talented group of female weightlifters who are doing very well at the higher level of competition in the sport. I have heard of the dedication it takes from their parents and their coach to get them to competitions. Virtually every school holiday for the last year has been taken up this way. If the Premier and the Minister for Sport are sincere in saying that the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games are for all Queensland, I ask them to put in place a 10-year program to support regional and rural athletes in a journey of development towards competing at the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. I would love to see not just a record number of Queenslanders in the Australian team but a record number from rural and regional Queensland. This is an opportunity for a statewide revolution in how Queensland conducts sporting development and competition for the permanent benefit of all Queensland children.

I note in their statement of reservation to the committee report the LNP committee members stated that if Queensland is to capitalise on this once-in-a-generation opportunity we need to start work now on developing world-class tourism products. For a long time I have called for the expansion of the tourism air packages that can combine the wonders of the reef with the wonders of the outback. We must have this in place in time for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. Outback tourism now boasts major attractions and events.

A lot of work has been done to develop both the capacity and the product. That work can be seen in what happened on Tuesday when the Mount Isa rodeo came to Parliament House where we launched the Road to Rodeo, which will be staged in Longreach at the end of April and 1 May. This is a great opportunity. I have put on notice to the minister that I am going to advocate that rodeo goes into the Olympics and we can hold it in Mount Isa and Longreach. There would be nothing I would be more proud of than seeing some of those bull riders wearing a gold medal around their neck. They are absolutely professional sportsmen. They work hard and they deserve an opportunity. If you can have synchronised swimming in the Olympics, I think you can have rodeo—and, of course, I have nothing against synchronised swimming.

The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games offers an opportunity to take this to the next level. I urge the Palaszczuk government to action this now. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide major infrastructure opportunities in the south-east corner. Rural and regional Queenslanders need to be a part of this. I urge the government to be aware that good transport links to the regions will also need to be fixed. We need to reap those benefits to increase tourism in 2032 and the decades that follow. At all stages in this effort I urge the state government to lift its gaze and not become solely fixated on the needs of the south-east corner when it comes to these games. I urge the government to put together a top-level tourism task force now to ensure Queensland regions receive the full benefit of this opportunity.

One of the key needs will be the training and skilling of the workers in our tourism industry, from IT to interpreters to frontline workers such as guides, receptionists, cooks and wait staff. I was delighted that the Minister for Education, Grace Grace, was able to fund the Big Red Truck that provides vocational hospitality training at five western high schools. I urge the government to consider expanding these programs right across the state. The students who are starting as waiters and apprentices today will be our hospitality industry workforce team leaders by the time the Olympics comes around. If the loss of the backpacker workforce due to the COVID-19 border closure has taught us nothing else, it is that we must train our own skilled workers. I urge Minister Grace and Minister Farmer to work together on this for the benefit of the whole state. We must have a high level of competency so that we can staff the south-east corner and our key tourism regions as well.

This bill represents the starter's pistol for what should be an effort that unites and delights all Queenslanders. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a game changer for the state. There must be a governance framework, which is what this legislation implements. It is a shame that it falls to the opposition to highlight two major flaws in the legislation. The first concern is in relation to a provision that exempts documentation from the Right to Information Act 2009. In such a major undertaking there are legitimate reasons to grant specific exemptions. I understand that. For instance, it would be sensible to exempt documents relating to the security and safety arrangements pertaining to every aspect of the games—athletes, officials and spectators. I can see there may even be a need for specific exemptions to be granted to cover certain strict commercial arrangements, but these should be carved out in specific exemptions. It does not require a cloak of secrecy to be thrown over every aspect of the committee's dealings and arrangements.

In a democracy the right to information is the foundation of an honest government. Transparency is not just about making corruption less likely, it is about improving outcomes. Everyone involved in the organising of these games will be on a major learning curve because every games is unique. Transparency will ensure that Queenslanders can learn and improve as we go, just as honest consultation with stakeholders always leads to better legislative and policy outcomes.

While there can be exceptions to the right-to-information laws, there should be few and there should be a clear explanation given to Queenslanders about why such an exemption is being made. This makes clause 65 very disappointing. It essentially drops a cloud of secrecy over all. This is not in keeping with the Olympic spirit, nor is it in the interests of Queenslanders. Queenslanders must be able to have full confidence that the organising committee is competent and proficient at carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to it. Transparency is fundamental to both public confidence and the outcomes of the committee's efforts.

For similar reasons I hold reservations with respect to the management of conflicts of interest as laid down in this bill. Having appropriate mechanisms in place to manage the inevitable conflicts of interest that will arise should have been a key consideration for the state government. Having said that, the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games offer Queensland a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shine and to grow. We have some great people in Western Queensland who are doing a fantastic job preparing those athletes who will hopefully be at the 2032 games.

I want to pay tribute to a bloke called John Palmer. John Palmer owns the BP in Longreach. He is involved in the Longreach Athletics Clubs. If he is not doing something with the athletics club, he is doing something with the Scout group. John is one of those key people in a community that every

community needs. His children and grandchildren have benefited from that passion for athletics, as has the whole community. They are very good at their sport. I am hoping to see some track runners and swimming stars coming from regional and rural Queensland. We have great clay shooters in regional Queensland. Blackall has a fantastic facility. I hope that the Queensland government considers the clay shooting facility at Blackall as a great training area to be used prior to the Olympics so that teams from overseas can experience a bit of the outback and also experience the great infrastructure that we have.

The Olympics will be a real game changer for Queensland. I am very excited and happy to support this bill and I am excited and happy to support the Brisbane Olympics. People in regional and rural Queensland have said that the Olympics will not do anything for them, but I say that is wrong. It will be an opportunity for us to promote rural and regional Queensland. People will be heading to Brisbane for the Olympics and the media, especially the international media, will undoubtedly want to spotlight outback Queensland. We will be happy to host them whether in Winton, Longreach or even Birdsville. Come to Brisbane for the Olympics but make sure that you stay a lot longer and spend your money in rural and regional Queensland. We are ready for you. I say to the minister that we have to get bull riding to the IOC and hopefully we will see a gold medal come out of Queensland.