




Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.31 pm): Sailing, 100-metre freestyle, rowing, BMX and kayaking—these are just some of the events that Australia won gold in at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics earlier this year. This is what we here in Queensland have to look forward to in 2032 when we host the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. I want to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to the Olympic and Paralympic athletes whom I have the pleasure of representing in the Currumbin electorate: Matt Belcher, Alyce and Jordan Wood, Bernadette Wallace, Katie Hayward, Ellie Beer, Dani Stevens, Aivi Luik, Brandon Wakeling and Thomas Gallagher. Thank you to each and every one of you for the time and dedication you have put into training, representing not only Australia but also our local Gold Coast community.

Currumbin really is the best place to live and Queensland really is home to sporting champions, and our electorate highlights just that. Our Currumbin community is so excited for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and they have been writing to me with many suggestions. Here are just a few: surfing in Currumbin! I want to be on the record in this House supporting surfing as an Olympic sport. Further, I do not think anyone in this House can deny that the electorate of Currumbin has some of the best surf breaks in the world—not just Queensland: the whole world! Minister, I think there would be no better place than the beautiful beaches of Currumbin to host surfing in 2032. In fact, you would be spoiled for choice in trying to choose a beach. Minister, please make sure you let the Premier and her media team know that D-Bah is not actually a beach in Queensland. Make sure you choose a beach that is actually in Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Through the chair, please, member.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Everybody back on the beach, please.

Mrs GERBER: My community is also a massive fan of the inclusion of BMX as an Olympic sport. Excitingly, this year we saw the Gold Coast's very own Logan Martin take home an Olympic first freestyle BMX gold medal. Currumbin constituents, including Level Up Skatepark & Training Facility in Currumbin Waters, think it would be incredible for Gold Coast youth to be able to perfect their BMX tricks in a purpose-built course in Currumbin. Minister, I would be very pleased to work with you on that project also.

Further, our local Gold Coast community has some of the state's most beautiful and natural cycling roads. Unfortunately, some concerns have been raised by local cyclists because these tracks can be quite dangerous. I am calling on the state government to commit to upgrading cycling infrastructure and roads to support cycling on the Gold Coast ahead of 2032. With improved cycling infrastructure, the Gold Coast would also be the perfect place for an Olympic triathlon event. Also, my community is very excited to see a true Australian sport, beach volleyball, up close. Where better to host this iconic sport than the pristine and beautiful sandy Gold Coast.

As you can see, we in Currumbin are very excited for what the games could bring not just to Brisbane but the whole of Queensland. We have been presented with a unique opportunity to capitalise on this once-in-a-generation opportunity. It must be acknowledged that the reason the whole of Queensland and the regions, as well as the South-East Queensland corner that I represent, has an opportunity to be part of the games is because of the foresight of Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, who not only believed in the games but also got the ball rolling on securing these games for us as a whole-of-Queensland event, not just Brisbane.

Mr Minnikin: And Sallyanne Atkinson before him.

Mrs GERBER: I will take that interjection; thank you, member for Chatsworth. Thanks must also go to the South East Queensland Council of Mayors, led by Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner, who has also been an ardent supporter of these games right from the beginning. This is not just a one-stop event but a generationally beneficial opportunity for infrastructure and a golden opportunity for tourism if it is done right. Yesterday we heard the Leader of the Opposition call for a 20-year tourism plan for Queensland. This is what we need to ensure the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games receive the best possible result for Queenslanders.

In Currumbin I will fight to see our home benefit from infrastructure funding, transport improvements and an increase in both domestic and international tourism. Since my first speech in this House last year I have consistently called on the government to improve our public transport capacity by connecting our community to the heavy rail network. Despite our community's persistent advocating, the past five years have seen capacity building on the Gold Coast heavy rail network neglected. This cannot be allowed to continue. Ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games I will continue to fight to see a heavy rail station at Elanora secured for our Gold Coast community and the preservation of that corridor to the airport. Quite frankly, the lack of progression by the state Labor government in connecting the Gold Coast Airport to rail transport shows a government out of touch with the needs of the local community.

Mr Minnikin: Pretty hopeless.

Mrs GERBER: Yes, I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth. Before COVID-19 international lockdowns the Gold Coast Airport was the sixth busiest airport in the country. It welcomed over 6.5 million passengers annually. I fully expect that once international travel resumes it will do this again. It is simply archaic that the Gold Coast Airport is not connected to heavy rail. It is indicative of an out-of-touch government.

The LNP has, and will continue to, provide bipartisan support for Queensland hosting the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We will continue to call for these games to be delivered in a way that creates a lasting and meaningful legacy, including building key infrastructure in a way that will support Queenslanders long after the games are finished and to ensure that Queensland's workforce is appropriately trained and upskilled.

This is also an opportunity to support local Queensland businesses across the state, with the potential for Queensland and small and family businesses to become Olympic and Paralympic suppliers. These 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are an excellent opportunity to showcase the width and breadth of our entire state, driving tourism numbers and capitalising on this unique opportunity. I know that many small and family business operators in Currumbin are very excited for this opportunity and for the subsequent increase in tourism. Right now it is this government's responsibility to ensure work for the development and delivery of world-class tourism products for both the immediate games period and the aftermath of the games. They need to ensure this is underway now. I know that there are local tradies and apprentices in the Currumbin electorate who are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to be part of this great event.

I will address two things in relation to the bill itself. Firstly, the bill establishes a Brisbane organising committee, which will play an essential role in undertaking and facilitating the organisation, conduct, promotion, and commercial and financial management of the games. This is an important role. As legislators, we have a duty to ensure it will work efficiently to reap the best opportunities for Queensland. The make-up of the board of directors of the corporation established under this bill—I will not go into specific details of the proposed board representatives as I know it has already been canvassed by a number of members in this chamber—has attracted some debate.

Of particular concern are the right to information and conflict of interest provisions. This bill means that the board will be exempt from the Right to Information Act, and this is concerning to me and my community. It creates an opportunity for the government to prevent public access to documents that will affect all Queenslanders. Regular Queenslanders deserve access to many of the documents the board will deal with, they deserve to be able to analyse it and they deserve to be able to question the relevant costings.

I am concerned that this government is creating a culture where ministers are prepared to spend taxpayer dollars but are not prepared to share the relevant information with the Queensland public. My constituents in Currumbin, and Queenslanders alike, deserve better than this. They deserve transparency. For a government that promised Queensland voters openness and transparency, they are breaking this promise yet again with this bill.

The other major concern raised by stakeholders relates to the conflict of interest provisions. As the bill stands, it proposes to carve out duties owed by elected officials as a result of their elected office from the requirements regarding conflicts of interest. The CCC has commented that this poses a corruption risk. This committee will be responsible for an event a decade in the making. They will spearhead a decade's worth of infrastructure and service spending. The public expects that their conduct be beyond reproach—and rightfully so. It is imperative that the organising committee are subject to the necessary checks and balances and that there are appropriate mechanisms for managing conflicts of interest. They must be declared and they must be managed.

Lastly, despite these concerns with this bill, as I have said, the LNP will always give bipartisan support to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032 because it is very exciting. I personally am very excited to be able to speak on the first bill relating to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I know my community is very excited to see the potential that this might bring for infrastructure and for the sporting events that we might be able to host. Surfing is definitely something that the minister should look at, and there is no better place than the Currumbin electorate to hold a surfing competition. We have Snapper Rocks; in fact, we have a number of breaks that are iconic. Cycling is another sport I would like to see on the agenda for the Currumbin electorate for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This would entail some road upgrades.

Most importantly for our community, particularly at this time, we would like to see a government commitment to focus on connecting the heavy rail to the airport. That has been lacking and our community has been crying out for this for years. It is really quite archaic that our airport is not connected to the heavy rail. With the Olympics approaching, it is a perfect opportunity for this state government to invest in that and provide us with heavy rail to the airport.