




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021. The LNP will not be opposing this bill and continue to offer bipartisan support for our great state of Queensland hosting the 2032 games. The primary objectives of the bill are to establish the Brisbane Organising Committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to undertake and facilitate the organisation, conduct, promotion and commercial and financial management of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; and to establish a board of directors of the corporation to ensure the corporation performs its functions in a proper, effective and efficient way.

The opposition does hold some reservations with respect to the management of the conflict-of-interest issues outlined in the bill. It is important that the behaviour and actions of the Brisbane Organising Committee for the 2032 games are beyond reproach. Over the years we have seen some international sporting events mired in controversy and scandal which has done enormous damage to reputations. Several World Cup soccer events spring to mind. International cricket tournaments have also had their moments. There are other examples. The Queensland public must have and deserve to have complete confidence that the organising committee is subject to a rigorous and robust process, with the necessary checks and balances in place. Guaranteeing appropriate mechanisms for managing conflict-of-interest matters are accomplished effectively should be a key consideration of the state government.

There are some concerns with the provisions of the bill which exempt documentation from the Right to Information Act 2009. These were identified in a number of submissions to the committee, and the opposition does share some of these concerns. Exemptions to the Right to Information Act 2009 should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Clause 65 of this bill should not be used to shroud in secrecy information which would otherwise be freely available to the public.

There are many potential benefits to Queensland from hosting the 2032 games, and hopefully these benefits will last for decades, not moments. There needs to be a strong focus on an infrastructure, tourism and economic plan to allow Queensland to capitalise on this opportunity. The infrastructure required will be substantial, and it is critical that the capital investment in this infrastructure ensures a lasting legacy is left for our state and not just for Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast or the Gold Coast. I would envisage and hope for significant infrastructure in our regional areas.

I am aware and absolutely supportive of the campaigning by Toowoomba Regional Council and the local business community for fast rail to be advanced to link with Brisbane ahead of the games. This infrastructure project would be welcomed by many people who commute on a daily basis and would allow regional Queenslanders to be part of the crowd cheering on our athletes in the 2032 games.

The Toowoomba Regional Council is supporting the development of a sports precinct at Charlton which would have the capacity to host a range of sporting activities. Whilst the athletic oval, or Clive Berghofer Stadium as it is now known, has served the Toowoomba city well over many years, its

location makes expansion very challenging. The Charlton land would provide a greenfield site that could be constructed on to meet the growing needs of the Toowoomba city area and the Condamine electorate as the population increases.

The 2032 games should be an opportunity to reskill and retrain our workforce, with key positions being required in the construction, hospitality and tourism industries. This has the potential to enhance employment opportunities and prepare us for what hopefully will be an influx of tourists to Queensland for years to come, long after the games are over, and to all parts of our state, not just the south-east corner.

The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games coming to Queensland has the potential to encourage us all to live healthier and more active lives, with our athletes leading the way. Any reduction in chronic illness associated with a sedentary lifestyle is welcome to take the pressure off our ailing health system.

As the member for Condamine, an electorate only two hours from Brisbane, I would encourage investment over the range for all of the potential benefits mentioned earlier—infrastructure, tourism, employment and of course the bottom line, our economy. Our regions need investment to enable us to grow and to provide the necessary services and facilities that urban areas have at their fingertips. Many athletes are from rural and regional areas. Having facilities to train and compete at would encourage our younger generation to remain in their local community for as long as possible without having to relocate, taking them away from their support base, family and friends. Importantly, the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games should be for all Queenslanders, not just a few parts of our state. Hosting the games will be a great honour. It will be an opportunity to showcase Queensland and leave a lasting legacy that endures for generations to come.

I cannot conclude my contribution without acknowledging the work done by former lord mayor Graham Quirk. The first briefing that I received on this games was from Graham. Graham had a vision for a games that would be region-wide and different from the mould of traditional games which had cost various cities around the world a lot of money and left them with a debt burden. It is fair to say that Graham's proposal met with some opposition from the government at the time but he continued, and together with the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors that vision has been realised. When we talk about these games, there will be a lot of people who will play a large part in the development and the running of these games, but the contribution by Graham Quirk should not be understated and should be recognised and congratulated.