




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Townsville, State of Origin

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.03 pm): I rise tonight to talk about the sea of maroon that flooded Townsville for our tropical State of Origin just last week. The streets were absolutely chockers, our hotel operators were full and businesses said it was one of the best weeks they had ever had despite some of our COVID restrictions impacting them. Just ask anyone who was in the events capital of North Queensland and North Australia last Wednesday and they will tell you how fantastic an event State of Origin was.

The Palaszczuk government built the Queensland Country Bank Stadium—built by locals for locals—to attract world-class events, which helped so many businesses, particularly during our economic recovery from COVID-19. It was the Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, who went to the 2015 election; the stadium was the only infrastructure build that she had committed to and that was in Townsville. Now we have the Origin.

Origin was the biggest thing Townsville had ever seen and the whole town worked hard together to make it an unforgettable event. Normally we come together when there are cyclones and floods. This is where we came together as a great city. What an unforgettable event it was. It injected around \$7 million into the local economy and highlighted Townsville on the national stage, which is an important thing to bring new people to the capital of North Queensland, certainly into the future. Hotels were booked out, pubs were full and the phones are all ringing hot at tourism businesses throughout North Queensland with so many footy fans keen to extend their stay in Townsville. Time and again we have proven that we can safely host major events and deliver strong benefits for local businesses.

Despite the result that I do not think anyone in the House wants to talk about, it was one of the greatest football spectacles North Queensland has ever seen. We will not stop at State of Origin though. In Townsville we have the Oceania Rugby Sevens challenge coming up at the Queensland Country Bank Stadium later this month as well as Tones and I playing at the stadium as part of the North Australia Festival of Arts. Plus we have the Supercars hitting the streets of Townsville just next month and, of course, at the end of the year we have that great rock band Kiss. I invite all honourable members to come along and see Kiss at our Queensland Country Bank Stadium.

Backing events is important for our economy. It creates jobs and it is an essential part of our economic recovery plan as well. Townsville is the events capital of North Australia because this government knows how important events like Origin are for business operators who have been hard hit by this global pandemic. Although the Maroons may have not gotten over the line in Origin 1, Townsville was certainly the winner.