




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (11.49 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill. The primary objective of the bill is 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.

I want to say that I love the Olympics. Back in 1972, I was six years old and living in the coalmining town of Collinsville when Shane Gould won three medals. I took an interest because she had the same name as me. The people from regional and rural Queensland were very competitive, but we had crappy sports stadiums and fields and we could not believe it when we came down here and played against Brisbane—and beat them—and there were beautiful sports stadiums with grass fields. A lot of the fields we played on up there were dirt. People who live in rural and regional Queensland are very good at sports. They are looking forward to the Olympics as well, but they have crappy stadiums.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Hill, I ask you to refrain from that. I think it is unparliamentary language, even in that context. Could you withdraw, please?

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw. While I acknowledge the effort and the work put in by our Olympic and Paralympic athletes and the opportunity to be able to compete at home, I question the impact this will have on regional Queensland for the next decade. In regional Queensland, health services are disappearing, roads are falling apart and much needed water infrastructure and major transport infrastructure projects are still being ignored. Billions of dollars are required, and it will be pumped into sporting stadiums, roads and building infrastructure in the south-east of the state at the expense of rural and regional Queensland.

The Premier and the government cannot honestly stand in the House with their hands on their hearts and declare that expenditure on the Olympics in the south-east will not affect spending in regional Queensland and that all of Queensland will benefit. I believe this is misleading people in rural and regional Queensland. The money has to come from somewhere.

If the government are truly serious that regional Queensland will not miss out, then they should announce investment into shovel-ready projects, such as the North Johnston transfer scheme, Ootann Road or the Silkwood Japoon Road. The state government can also appoint to the board of directors and management committee of the games representatives who are based in regional Queensland, who are not puppets of the government and who can ensure that regional Queenslanders are represented and do not miss out on the funding or any opportunities the games could bring.

For example, it is vital we identify immediately what sporting venues in regional Queensland require upgrading to give our youth in regional centres an equal opportunity to represent our nation at the Olympics in 11 years time. I know of two venues in my electorate alone which require urgent upgrades that could make them viable to host international teams or games during the Olympics. I do not want to see sporting venue upgrades fall behind in regional centres at the expense of major stadiums in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Representation on the board and organising committee from regional Queensland should be included as part of the selection and nomination process. I know that I and many other regional MPs in the House today will be watching closely whether vital sporting or infrastructure projects we are seeking funding for will be granted or will be put aside in favour of South-East Queensland projects.

If the government were serious about ensuring the wealth is spread across the state, then the first step needs to be regional appointments on the board and organising committee. The next step is writing to all regional MPs requesting their input into what valuable sporting and state building projects they wish to identify that require priority funding and that have the potential to be used for the Olympics. I want to bring that to the attention of the House.