




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ADJOURNMENT

Olympic and Paralympic Games, Kitesurfing

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (6.09 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope you have heard the rumblings coming out of the Burnett. We have some exciting news: the Burnett has put in our bid to host the kitesurfing events at Elliott Heads for the 2032 Olympics. I am getting in early and giving all members notice that Olympic kitesurfing is coming to Elliott Heads.

I can tell you now that the world will quite literally be 'blown away' when they see the Burnett's pristine kitesurfing location. Today I would love to share with the House our plan to host the Olympic kitesurfing fraternity from across the globe, and I hope by the time I am finished members will be just as excited as many people in my electorate are.

Elliott Heads has some of the best conditions, the best terrain and the best location for the sport, and it is time we shared it with the rest of the world. Over recent months, I joined forces with Wind Slasher legend Peter Higgins to 'power up' our bid. A big thanks goes to Mr Higgins and his team at Driftwood cafe for their support in making this dream a reality.

So why Elliott Heads? In terms of coastal topography, you could not pick a more perfect spot to host a kitesurfing event. We have the rare good fortune of both ocean and river conditions all in the one place. There is a huge amount of kitesurfing real estate already there, plenty of spectator positions and ideal weather patterns. Do not just take my word for it. Our annual Wind Slasher event attracts competitors from all over the country and globe. They all say the same thing: Elliott Heads is simply the best place when it comes to kitesurfing.

Bringing an Olympic sport to our region, as we know, would be a tremendous boost for the Wide Bay economically, socially and culturally, so today I am asking for the support of the House. Our region is already well established in regard to infrastructure. When it comes to tourism, the Burnett region and its operators are truly experts in their field.

Tourism is an important part of our economy and, despite the trials faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were still proud to welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors to the region in 2019 and 2020. Tourism Research Australia has reported well over two million visitor nights in the Bundaberg Regional Council area alone. The Bundaberg region is secure in its tourism, hospitality, industrial and cultural sectors and, in my opinion, would successfully host a wonderful Olympic event to meet international standards.

We have written to the Minister for Sport, the Queensland Olympic Council and the Bundaberg Regional Council. Tonight I am giving notice to each and every member of parliament so they can spread the word about bringing the Olympic sport of kitesurfing to Elliott Heads. In the words of Mr Higgins, 'We are truly blessed by having one of Australia's premier locations for kiting with Elliott Heads fast becoming a bucket list location for kites around the globe.' So let's share our piece of paradise.

Kitesurfing will be an Olympic demonstration sport in Tokyo next month—we hope—and it will be an Olympic sport in Paris in 2024. Only eight short years after that, the Olympics, which we hope will come to Queensland, will allow a real and tangible opportunity to have kitesurfing right here in Queensland, in the Burnett electorate. It is the best location, with the best people, providing the best opportunity for Queensland to shine in the 2032 Olympics.