




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2021

BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (12.17 pm): I am immensely pleased and proud to speak on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021. If I may briefly take this opportunity, before I speak on the elements of the bill, to wish members of parliament and their families and the parliamentary support staff the compliments of the season. I look forward to resuming stumps next year.

Like many members in this chamber, I too have witnessed many milestones in the evolution of Brisbane from a sleepy river town to what will become an Olympic city on the world stage in 11 years time. I too can recall using the dreaded outhouse until Brisbane was sewerred by the Clem Jones City Hall administration, catching one of the last trams in 1969, the Brisbane flood of 1974, attending—like many claim to but I was there—the first State of Origin match in 1980, the Commonwealth Games in 1982 when we thought it was a big deal when Matilda gave us that wink and we thought we had made it on the big stage.

Mr Stewart: Joeys came out!

Mr MINNIKIN: They did. Joeys came out of the pouch, from memory. I take that interjection. And who could forget World Expo in 1988 and for me, as a cricket tragic, one of my all-time favourite Brisbane memories, attending the inaugural Sheffield Shield win in 1995 at the famous Gabba.

The first Olympic Games memory that I really have was in 1974. I was a member of Laurie Lawrence's swimming squad at the Carina pool. Lanes 7 and 8 were roped off. We would get there after school at circa 3.30 and we would train for a couple of hours. We were expressly told that under no circumstance were we to interrupt—dive under the ropes into—lanes 7 and 8 because there was one Steve Holland who was training for the 1976 Montreal Olympics. In that two hours that we trained, we never saw him come up for air. He was up and down those lanes.

Even as a young boy I recognised the amount of dedication that such athletes, regardless of their chosen sport, are required to have if they aspire to be an Olympian. In fact, I admire anyone—forget about gold, silver or bronze—who can lay claim being an Olympian. I absolutely 'dips me lid' to each and every one of them.

I note that the speaking list for this bill is a very full docket, which I think goes to the very heart of the bipartisan spirit that has been shown and should continue to be shown. While in a robust democracy, we can all agree on a final outcome—we have to have checks and balances. At the end of the day, when our parliamentary careers have faded into oblivion and the games are on, I hope that we can all say that we played some role in making sure that they will be—and I am very confident that they will be—the best games ever delivered. As a few other speakers have done, I acknowledge the great efforts of former lord mayor Sallyanne Atkinson, the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors and, in particular, Graham Quirk who drove the genesis behind making sure that the flame and the ideal of holding these Olympics has come to fruition.

I note that the explanatory notes state that the primary objectives of the bill are to—

- establish the Brisbane Organising Committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (the Corporation) to undertake and facilitate the organisation, conduct, promotion and commercial and financial management of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; and—

and this is the essence of the bill—

- establish a board of directors of the Corporation (the Board) to ensure the Corporation performs its functions in a proper, effective and efficient way.

It needs to be repeated that the LNP absolutely supports the bill. A couple of issues were highlighted in the statement of reservation. I assume that most learned members would have availed themselves of the opportunity to read the report. That statement of reservation relates to a couple of points that I will come back to if time permits.

One thing needs to be restated and it was said by a couple of members, I think, very eloquently: many people love sport. I would say that probably 99.9 per cent of Australians love sport. The simple fact is that, even if you are more into cultural pursuits, the Olympic and Paralympic Games are more than just an ideal. They are more than just two signature sporting events. They forever change the fibre, tone and timber of the way that a city is seen. We need only look to recent history to see that. Some leaders have talked about Brisbane being a new world city. I say this with the utmost respect to them: I do not think you can ever consider your city a truly real world city unless it has successfully hosted an Olympic Games. From looking at both this and the other side of the chamber I know that many members are true sporting diehards.

As a shadow minister, it is beholden on me to keep the government of the day in check. A fundamentally important element of the games that will affect infrastructure is the very important transport portfolio, which I represent as shadow minister. Overnight I was thinking about whether I would speak on this bill and I decided, 'Why not? It's an important bill.' I then had a very important choice to make: do I use this 10-minute speaking opportunity to talk about where we are heading given current infrastructure delays or do I maintain the spirit of true bipartisanship? I was shocked myself when I landed on the position that on this particular bill I will stay completely bipartisan. There will be plenty of other opportunities to speak in the future.

I make it very clear to the government members that we need to be mature. If we want our city to grow up and be a true world city, we have to start that growing-up process right here. There may be criticism in the future, regardless of who sits on that side of the chamber. There will be a couple of elections before 2032—tick-tock, that never changes. We have to make sure that, regardless of who forms the government of the day, they take on board the fact that we shared one defining outcome. In 2032 many of us will not be members of parliament. Let us be frank about that. However, we do have the opportunity to speak on these matters now and if criticism of a process or a project is delivered in the right spirit to try to forge a better outcome, then that is fair, it is just and it should not be misconstrued as simply bashing the government of the day.

I have had many years of development and project management experience on multimillion dollar infrastructure projects in the private sector. As the Register of Members' Interests shows, I am still involved in property development. It is all declared on the interests register. There are always three essential elements to project management: time, quality and cost. In relation to infrastructure for the 2032 Olympics Games, everything has to be done within that time-quality-cost triangle. If one of the corners of that triangle is compromised, the others can be as well.

In reference to the 2032 Olympic Games, I would be honoured to continue in my role as a member of parliament and, if still in opposition, I would be honoured to continue to be the shadow minister for a portfolio that will to a large degree decide the efficacy and the success of the games. You have to be able to get athletes from point A to point B. We saw the importance of that with the Commonwealth Games and we saw it 20-plus years ago in Sydney. I give my absolute commitment to this House. I wish the 2032 Olympics all the very best.