



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2022

## ADJOURNMENT

### Townsville Electorate, Matildas

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.10 pm): On 8 April our Matildas played their first game ever in North Queensland. More than 10,000 people packed into Townsville's Queensland Country Bank Stadium to watch on as Matildas captain Sam Kerr and Emily van Egmond scored in the dying minutes to win the game 2-1—sorry, bubby—against New Zealand's Ferns. There were some unbelievable performances, with both teams putting on a fantastic showcase of the world's game. The match generated more than a million dollars for Townsville's visitor economy, showing that is why my hometown is the events capital of north Australia. In fact, in July Queensland Country Bank Stadium is on to another international winner, with Brisbane Roar set to play English Premier League team Aston Villa again in Townsville.

As we all know, the Matildas are one of Australia's favourite teams and it was fantastic to be at the game. What is really important to me is that I received a letter a few days after the game from Evie Wilson, an 11-year-old girl who travelled up from the Gold Coast with her mum to attend the game. These are her words—

Before I watched some play, I knew the basics of the game, that the team captain was Sam Kerr, that she was one of the best female soccer players in the world.

During the game I felt excited because I got to sit in the fifth row that allowed me to watch the players from very close, and that I was even more thrilled when the Matildas scored two goals and won the game in the last few seconds.

I was overjoyed that the players got to sign my water bottle and I also discovered that female soccer very entertaining to watch.

Evie's 15-year-old cousin, Calea Staieg, travelled five hours from Eungella outside of Mackay to watch the game live. A state football player herself, Calea had the opportunity to meet Sam Kerr, get a selfie, and have her Matildas shirt signed by Sam and many other Australian players. Words cannot describe what the impact of meeting her hero had on that young woman.

Our government knows the importance of women's sport. As we know, historically men's sport has received more exposure, which has often meant higher participation. There are barriers facing women and girls such as time constraints due to competing priorities, the suitability of facilities and programs, and their own levels of self-confidence; however, Queensland is seeing tremendous growth in women's sport and the number of girls playing football. We know by that by bringing international football to Queensland we can show young Queensland women what is possible, inspire them to bring their best game and, of course, stay active.