




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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ADJOURNMENT

Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (7.16 pm): A very exciting sporting competition is taking place all this week and it is happening right here in Queensland. The 2023 Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival is being held in Springfield, in my electorate of Jordan, and I could not be more thrilled. The annual carnival for the most talented male footballers with an intellectual disability is again seeing representative teams from eight states and territories compete. The teams are selected from the very best talent in their local inclusion leagues and academies.

First played in 2014, the 2023 tournament is the second time the event has been held in Queensland after the 2017 edition was staged on the Gold Coast. Delivered by the AFL and AFL Queensland, with APM Employment Services coming on board as supporting partner, our state is hosting 72 matches with more than 160 athletes and support staff participating. The carnival is played as per traditional Australian football rules with adjustments to the playing numbers, with 12 versus 12 on the field and four players on each bench. The event falls under the classification of Sport Inclusion Australia where players are required to meet classification guidelines to ensure the integrity of the event is upheld.

Playing football is obviously a major focus of the carnival. However, it is also an opportunity for players to develop their independence through living away from home for a week. Also, through attending education sessions and running coaching clinics within special schools, the carnival develops footballers as role models, thereby providing a sense of belonging in the community.

As the local member I am so excited to see both the Springfield Central Sports Complex and Brighton Homes Arena being used for the National Inclusion Carnival this week. Brighton Homes Arena, supported by the Queensland government, is an \$80 million, world-class AFL stadium and the only venue in Australia that provides elite training and recovery facilities for both professional men's and women's AFL. It is the perfect venue for the grand final of the National Inclusion Carnival, which will be held on Friday.

On Sunday night I was honoured to attend the official welcome event in Ipswich, which was absolutely fantastic. Emcee Peter 'Spida' Everett and Jonathan Brown were there as well. It was wonderful to meet many of the players, who were equal parts excited and a bit nervous, and to see firsthand how this fantastic carnival promotes inclusion, breaks down barriers and showcases the skills and talents of footballers with intellectual disabilities.

This year in Queensland we have seen the introduction of the inaugural Queensland Wheelchair Football League, with four foundation clubs playing the first season. In Victoria they have introduced AFL Blind, a new adapted version of Australian Rules football that enables people with blindness or low

vision, through modifications to equipment and rules, to play the game. There are now more than 12,000 Australians with a disability playing Australian Rules football through various programs. I would like to congratulate AFL for what are really groundbreaking initiatives that promote inclusion within their sport.

I wish all of the state teams participating in the National Inclusion Carnival the very best as they battle it out this week. Currently, WA is on top ladder but I am still holding out for a Queensland win.