




Speech By
Hon. Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2024

**BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. MP HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Sport) (4.47 pm): I want to begin by thanking Magnus Edwards, a ranger from Innisfail, whom I recently had a meeting with. He wanted to know how speeches worked so I said, ‘You can have a look at this one. We are talking about something very important.’

Before I talk about the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill, I want to pick up on a couple of points that the member for Everton made in his contribution. I think it would be fair to say, and I have said it before to a number of people, that there have been two Olympic Games in my lifetime that were never politicised. They were Moscow and Beijing. I encourage people to look at the reasons behind that.

The fact that the Brisbane games are being politicised comes as no surprise to a lot of people. What is concerning is the damage that is being done to the brand. The member for Everton has touched on that point and he has contributed to it with misinformation and the way those opposite have conducted themselves. We will not go down that road. We were the ones who secured the Olympic and Paralympic Games and we are years ahead of Sydney. The enthusiasm in those essential areas is well and truly in place. What we need to be doing is what we are doing. We are setting up the appropriate legal infrastructure to ensure that we depoliticise it, we get it happening and we get it moving. That is what people want to see, that is what the IOC have been asking for and that is what we are doing in setting this up. I am more than confident, unlike some of those opposite, that we will provide a first-class Olympic Games and that this state will reap significant benefits. I have absolutely no doubt we will.

The bill establishes the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority and its board to ensure that Queensland is ready to host a successful Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and that the benefits of the games are maximised. This is one of the key components. In my contribution I shall focus on how the bill can support outcomes for regional Queensland. I heard the member for Traeger touch on this. In my part of the world, we are talking about moving Meals on Wheels because of the refurbishment of Barlow Park. People are beyond very excited. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are forecast not just to bring benefits to Queensland’s south-east corner but to Queensland’s regions in terms of the infrastructure, economic development and social benefits of hosting these world-class and vitally important Olympic and Paralympics Games. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will utilise some of Queensland’s excellent existing regional infrastructure and will also provide Queensland the opportunity to upgrade other regional venues to prepare them to host both Olympic and Paralympic events.

In Cairns, Barlow Park will receive major upgrades to sporting and spectator facilities in preparation for event hosting duties. This work will include an upgrade to the existing stadium. We are very excited to see an increase in seating capacity to 5,000, improved sustainability features as well as improved amenities not just for athletes but for the public. If this occurs before the Olympics, this will

provide the foundation to cater for other events. We know how important events are to our economy. We will start to reap the benefits—not just in Cairns but in other areas—well and truly before the Olympic Games.

In preparation to host the Olympic football preliminaries, upgrades to Sunshine Coast Stadium will create more seating and improve facilities for athletes and officials. Multipurpose community spaces and universal amenities will provide access for people of all abilities. I remind people that it is not just the Olympics; it is also the Paralympic Games. The new Sunshine Coast Indoor Sports Centre will be a sustainable, modern facility suitable for a range of indoor sports and, most importantly, community uses. Co-located with the upgraded Sunshine Coast Stadium within the Kawana sports precinct, the centre will have 11 courts and multifunction areas that can be used for basketball, netball, volleyball, good old and fast growing pickleball, Futsal and badminton. It is earmarked to host an Olympic basketball competition.

In addition, the benefits brought about by the infrastructure showcasing Olympic competition throughout Queensland's regions will provide a catalyst for Queenslanders from across the state, and this is so important. You for 2032, the nation's largest ever talent search program, is well and truly underway and is being delivered by the Queensland Academy of Sport. It has tested over 1,000 regional athletes. They are going all over the state. I understand from the member for Traeger that they are going to Mount Isa. I have seen them in Cairns and in other regions. This is where the work begins—now. Unlike those opposite who might not be familiar with the details, these are the facts and we are working towards them. You for 2032 complements existing sporting pathways, ensuring aspiring Queensland athletes from the Torres Strait to the Darling Downs have an opportunity to showcase their talents. This is vitally important because, without recognising those students, we cannot even get them into programs. We have a very well funded QAS which can identify those students, rally around them and give them the appropriate supports.

We know what mega events can do for our state. We have to look only at the events in Brisbane last weekend. I refer to the nearly \$50 million generated over a number of sporting events, whether you were at Doomben watching the races or watching a wide range of Rugby League games. Events are absolutely fundamental to our economy. In 2023 we hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup. This saw an economic benefit for Queensland of over \$100 million. Seriously, this is significant. These are big numbers. These are huge opportunities for our city and our state. As the world's largest event, the games are expected to bring a windfall of over \$8 billion for Queensland across our state. This includes an estimated uplift in international tourism and trade, resulting in economic benefits of \$4.6 billion or around 91,000 full-time-equivalent jobs per year.

If we look at what happened after the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games—taking into account the tragic event of September 11 that put a significant dent in visitation numbers—we see the exposure Australia received. Queensland did quite well, particularly areas such as the Great Barrier Reef or the Whitsundays. Those areas capitalised on that. There were lots of international tourists who came out here, did a couple of days at the Olympics and then they went travelling.

Earlier this week I was in Melbourne at the Australian Tourism Exchange meeting with operators. They are putting packages together to start selling. Airlines are looking at Brisbane. For the first time, in the middle of next year we will have three direct flights coming from San Francisco, Dallas and Los Angeles in the US. The foundation stones are already being built. As I said, international visitors are significant. Over 50 per cent are expected to travel around the state after visiting Brisbane.

With the games broadcast to an international audience of three billion people, all eyes will be on Queensland, our regional cities and our beautiful backdrops. I know that once people see our beautiful hills in Cairns at that time of year and see the backdrops of our other regions they will sell themselves. Our state absolutely sells itself. This is an unrivalled opportunity to showcase what our state has to offer.

The amendments in this bill will build on the extensive work this government has already undertaken to ensure the 2032 games deliver benefits for all Queenslanders and we provide the best Olympic and Paralympic Games we can expect.