




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.21 pm): The KAP wholeheartedly rejects the notion of holding the Olympics given the costs involved. Having said that, we still recognise the intent of the bill. I will try to address this from that angle and what I think should be an extended charter for the committee to brutally assess viability in terms of affordability for the state. Something that baffles me about this event, particularly for regional MPs, is the lack of consideration given to the impact it will have not just on the budget but also on the labour and other resources that will be required to build infrastructure such as sporting stadiums. To make all that happen, there will be a vortex for construction effort in this state for the next 10 years.

My word, that is important for a regional MP from an electorate that is as disadvantaged as Traeger. As I have said before, when I looked at the electorate posters that were put up at the regional sitting of parliament in Cairns, Traeger was the only one that had a projected population growth of minus 0.9 per cent. We talk about decrepit roads. For two years in a row, Burketown and Doomadgee were cut off for three or four months because there are no bridges. The Gilbert River bridge is only a single lane yet it is on a major national highway. In Mount Isa, the renal unit has only 10 chairs and Alice Springs, which has a similar footprint, has 60 chairs. It looks like downtown Mumbai inside our renal unit in Mount Isa. It is very difficult to understand why there is no money for those things but we can find money to have an Olympics event.

As a regional MP, one thing that really frustrates me is to hear numbers such as \$5 billion thrown around initially. We become so accustomed to governments saying, 'We'll just put this number out there at the start.' If I recall correctly, when I first came into this place, when the LNP were in government, the Cross River Rail tunnel was talked about as a \$2 billion or \$3 billion investment and now the cost is north of \$7 billion. That happens with everything I see in this place.

If we look at past Olympics Games, Sydney 2000 was the last one to come in at under \$10 billion. That was 24 years ago and we know it is indexed forward. Those games cost \$8.1 billion. The Athens games cost was \$18.7 billion and some say contributed to the crippling debt crisis they are still burdened by. Beijing was \$52 billion in 2008; London was \$13.3 billion in 2012; Rio was \$13 billion in 2016; and Tokyo was \$35 billion. If we average that out and adjust it for inflation, it is an average of \$26 billion for the past five games so let's say that \$20 billion might be a fair estimate.

This committee might say, 'Let's just use the Commonwealth Games athletics stadium. It's a perfectly beautiful new stadium and we can use that.' If the discussion is around using what we have already built, I would say that there are some beautiful stadiums and, by the standards I am accustomed to, there is some beautiful infrastructure down here that could be utilised. If that is the discussion then that is great. However, you are talking about doubling down on this stuff. You are talking about building more rail, beefing up the road network, beefing up accommodation and beefing up sports stadiums down here.

I love sports. I could rattle off facts and figures from the LA Olympics, which I watched as a kid. I saw Carl Lewis, Edwin Moses, Dean Lucas and John Sieben. It was wonderful. That is great and we can be emotional and sentimental about that, but there is a cost attached to it. My grandkids will be paying for this stuff. To pay for it you need industries and businesses, in the regional areas as well as Brisbane, to be paying taxes. At the moment they are crying about the heavy burden of electricity prices, emissions targets and renewables. They are feeling the heavy burden of insurance costs, which we are not addressing. They are feeling the heavy burden of depleted infrastructure and failing road and rail networks, certainly up to Mount Isa, but we are not fixing any of that.

The idea seems to be: 'Let's not focus on that because we have really big infrastructure projects centred on a sports event that we need to conduct in the south-east corner'. How do members think it will go down with people who are paying taxes and are burdened with the cost of living that we are here discussing how to better manage the creation of a big sports event for some to enjoy? I grant you that the infrastructure would be built anyway. However, is the most mature way to select and prioritise infrastructure and decide where stadiums are to be built in this state by trying to coordinate it with a sports event? Is that the best way to prioritise where our spending goes? I do not think so.

For once, could a little bit of consideration be given to Townsville, Mount Isa and Cairns? They do not have to have the best street networks or the best public transport, but let's make sure that the industries there have decent road networks so that they can still function and make money for us—at the very least. For us, it is not about getting to work faster or having better convenience in our passenger cars. Just give us the tools, the industry, the bridges and the roads to make more money for you to squander down here. At least just give us that. But no; we cannot even have that. We are down here talking about how to better coordinate sinking money into a sports event to be held in the south-east.

I do not want to hear about what a great opportunity this is for kids in the regions. The reality is that I am not sure that Cathy Freeman, who spent time in Hughenden, would be identified now. Last year, finally, let's say after a 20- to 30-year period, it was Mount Isa's turn to host the state soccer carnival. The north-west did not have anyone on the panel that voted for where the carnival would be held. Everyone said, 'Mount Isa does not have the facilities anyway and it's too hard, so let's have it in Rockhampton.' We do not have any events out there anymore for kids to participate in. If they do go away, you have to find two teachers with a first aid certificate as well as parents who are willing to make the 20-hour drive to Brisbane or the 10-hour drive to Townsville to catch an event. They are not resourced well enough. There is no extra money sitting there for teachers. Some of the buses just do not go and kids are not making sporting events. They have watered down the eligibility for kids in remote north-west areas to make it. There is less support and less sport going on out there anyway so the opportunities to participate in something like this have diminished.

It is sort of rubbing it in our face when the government says, 'You could have some kids in it.' Yes, we could and that would be fantastic. However, if the government is not spending the money now, if it is not pouring money back into here so there is less likelihood of fixing those problems, it is a bit of a slap in the face to say, 'You can carry the torch through Mount Isa or the kids can get involved.' I do not buy it. That is a cheap sell on what is a really serious issue. It is going to be a serious burden on our state that our kids and grandkids are going to be paying for. It is wonderful to make announcements like this and it might be politically popular, but I think the government should be careful about this. I do not think it is as popular as they think, even in Brisbane. People can do the maths. They can see it for what it is. I think the government should proceed with caution.

Yes, it is good if the government is planning to have transparency and a regional MP on there. However, we will disagree about it. The KAP is wholeheartedly against this whole thing.