




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor
MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2024

**BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS AND
OTHER LEGISLATION BILL**

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (8.56 pm): As Queensland's new public works minister, I will make a contribution in relation to my portfolio area and the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. We are doing what we said we would do, which was, in fact, outlined in one of the brochures that those opposite are obsessed with. It was in our 100-day plan and we are acting on it. We are getting straight to business and we are doing what we said we would do.

This bill represents our commitment to our state's future to ensure the games deliver a legacy of opportunity, of growth and of pride for generations of Queenslanders to come. The Olympic and Paralympic Games are not just about the two weeks of the competition themselves; they are about transforming our state with much needed infrastructure and positioning us as the global destination we should be known as. This bill delivers the urgent action Queenslanders voted for just a month ago. It will ensure we seize this opportunity to build the infrastructure that will benefit all Queenslanders in the short term and long after the games have concluded. The LNP is committed to restoring confidence in our state's ability to deliver the Olympic and Paralympic Games and all the legacy programs associated with this event.

After years of delays, budget blowouts and mismanagement under the former Labor government, it is time to restore public trust and to finally deliver results. That is why this bill establishes the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority, which will be a truly impartial body tasked with overseeing infrastructure delivery. This is the start of achieving the Crisafulli government's commitment to ensuring generational infrastructure that will benefit every corner of Queensland. We know that the former government wasted over 1,200 days on the games and we have less than nothing to show for that. The 100-day review will allow Queenslanders to see a clear road map for success and to address the gaps and inefficiencies inherited from Labor. This will allow us to embrace the opportunities hosting the games offers for our state. Across the many failed infrastructure projects and budget blowouts, our state has been left with a tarnished reputation.

Serious concerns have been raised about our ability to deliver a successful Olympic and Paralympic Games. At the heart of these values lies Labor's cosy relationship with the CFMEU whose unchecked influence over the construction industry has driven up costs and hampered productivity on job sites across Queensland. We have discovered a massive \$1.4 billion budget blowout for Olympic and Paralympic Games venues which would have been completely wasted money if BPIC had been allowed to continue.

One of the biggest issues with BPIC was the prequalification system that contractors and subcontractors needed to go through to take part in major government projects. I can reveal to the House tonight that independent advice received on the effects of BPIC, commissioned by the former government, quantified the impact this was having on restricting access across our state's building and construction sector.

Advice provided to my department showed that, of the over 176,000 QBCC licensed contractors and subbies in Queensland, just 204 were certified under the complicated BPIC prequalification system. That meant just 0.12 per cent of participants across our building and construction sector were able to bid for those major government projects. Tens of thousands of small and family businesses from right across Queensland would have been locked out of the once-in-a-lifetime economic opportunities hosting an Olympic and Paralympic Games brings if the LNP had not taken immediate action to suspend BPICs.

With regard to the commentary we have heard from those opposite on the notice of entry requirements for workplace health and safety permit holders, these changes are reasonable and sensible. This change simply aligns the Queensland legislation with the entry requirements under Commonwealth legislation.

Ms Grace: Rubbish. Absolute rubbish!

Mr O'CONNOR: There is an exception included. It is in the explanatory notes, member for McConnel. There is an exception included so that this notice requirement does not apply in circumstances where a worker is exposed to a serious risk to their health and safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard. This will ensure there is still an appropriate mechanism to enable workplace health and safety permit holders to enter a workplace without delay when there is a serious risk to workers.

Our new government will ensure there is a level playing field for Queensland's building and construction sector, empowering local businesses and delivering projects which are value for taxpayers' money. Our fresh approach is about more than just fixing Labor's mistakes—it is about restoring confidence in Queensland's ability to host an incredible games and deliver the generational infrastructure our state desperately needs.

I will take this opportunity to raise a couple projects in my own community on the Gold Coast. One of the most exciting developments for Brisbane 2032 is that, for the first time in Olympic history, surfing will be an official sport. Although the Bonney electorate clearly does not have the golden surf beaches that we see in other parts of the Gold Coast, like the glitz and the glamour of Surfers Paradise, we are very much a suburban area with the calm waters of the Broadwater. That is all about to change with an exciting project on the horizon.

Last week, I went to the launch of Palm Valley in Parkwood, which will be Australia's first surf and golf resort. Designed as the world's best high-performance surf training facility, it will provide specialised training programs for Australian athletes targeting Olympic glory in 2032.

Ms Grace: It's going to house a lot of people.

An opposition member: So much for healing the housing crisis.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Order! Members to my left. I will have no more interjections like that, thank you, or I will have no hesitation in warning members if they persist.

Mr O'CONNOR: I will take that interjection from the former housing minister. That is a project approved by the Gold Coast Council. It is a site where over 200 apartments are being built on the edge of a golf course. It is something that worked. It shows we do not need to railroad local councils to deliver housing on sport and recreation properties like this.

This site also has the potential to host the Olympic para surfing competition. It will mean consistent waves in a controlled environment, perfectly complementing our natural surf beaches on the Gold Coast. While the games bring fresh opportunities, they also offer a chance to build on our existing strengths.

As a proud supporter of the Labrador Hockey Club, I have seen firsthand how local players from juniors up to national representatives have benefitted from the legacy of our world-class Gold Coast Hockey Centre. Our amendments to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021 emphasise the importance of leveraging venues already in place. This venue in Labrador was originally built for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. It has proven itself not just as a premiere facility for international hockey competitions but also as a great place for our local community.

As a potential training or alternate venue for Olympic hockey, this perfectly aligns with the LNP's vision of a sustainable games with infrastructure that will have use far beyond the competition, and I certainly hope it is considered as part of the review. An approach like this minimises unnecessary expenditure on new venues and maximises the use of facilities that are already integrated into local communities.

This bill lays the foundation for a games that will be remembered not only for sporting excellence but also for leaving a legacy for Queensland. Under previous Labor governments, the lack of a coherent legacy strategy led to the real potential of underutilised venues, of neglected infrastructure and of missed economic potential.

The 2032 Brisbane Olympics represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform Queensland. It will create jobs and opportunities for local business. It will deliver world-class generational infrastructure for all Queenslanders. It will showcase our state's natural beauty to the world. This is our moment to shine, to deliver a games that Queenslanders will not only watch but also participate in, celebrate and be proud of. The changes that we are passing today will put Queensland on the path to delivering the best Olympic Games ever. I commend the bill to the House.