



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

**MOTION**

**Olympic and Paralympic Games**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. The way it is drafted, this motion is about a choice—one or the other. Why can we not have both? In Townsville we can have it all and we deserve it all. I am proud of the huge investments we are making in the infrastructure areas in Townsville and right across North Queensland, and I am happy to highlight what we are doing in Townsville.

A project that the member for Hinchinbrook and his fellow KAP members would be familiar with is CopperString. I know that they are huge supporters of this project, and I welcome that support. The support we are giving to CopperString is \$5 billion. This is an absolutely huge investment for the future of North Queensland. In fact, it is the biggest build in North Australia. This is a nation-building infrastructure project and Townsville will be the epicentre of it. People have called this project a game changer. I disagree: this project is the game. It is the whole game. It is the big enchilada. It will help unlock huge opportunities for renewable energy right throughout North Queensland. As the Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals, I know how important CopperString is to the North West Minerals Province. There is potentially \$500 billion of critical mineral deposits in the region, and this reliable high-powered voltage line will mean more projects and more jobs for North Queensland.

Recently on a trade mission to the USA, I learned that investors were already very aware of CopperString. They were hugely aware of the potential this will mean for the ESG credentials for those commodities. Dozens of local businesses are already benefiting from the CopperString project and a further 450 businesses, including 250 from regional Queensland, have registered their interest to work on this project. There have been 50 work packages released for expressions of interest covering a range of activities and services such as engineering, construction, environmental management, logistics, camp construction, haulage and communications, just to name a few.

It is our progressive coal royalties that mean the Miles government can invest in publicly owned infrastructure like CopperString and other important facilities in regional Queensland like the new Moranbah Hospital. We know that Moranbah is a town at the heart of our steelmaking coal resources sector and we are proud to be delivering this new hospital for that community from those coal royalties. As part of our Big Build, we are also investing \$530 million to upgrade Townsville University Hospital. This major expansion will deliver an additional 143 hospital beds and support 1,270 construction jobs, with BESIX Watpac awarded the tender for work last year. In fact, we are investing a record \$1.2 billion for health care in the Townsville region—an increase of 59 per cent since coming to government.

We are delivering water security for Townsville after the federal member for Herbert, Phil Thompson, and the former federal LNP government squibbed on their election commitment and failed this city when they failed to fund stage 2 of the Haughton Pipeline Project. I am sure the member for Hinchinbrook remembers that one. We invested \$215 million into stage 1 of the pipeline and stepped

in to commit \$195 million to stage 2 of the project after Phil Thompson backflipped on his election commitment and walked away, taking the \$195 million with him. Where is the money? This entire project is supporting hundreds of jobs and delivering water security for the city which is essential for Townsville's future.

It does not stop there. Queensland Country Bank Stadium is another proud legacy of this government. 'Build it and they will come,' is what we said, and that is what is happening. It was built by North Queenslanders for North Queenslanders. In fact, this Friday night the NRL All Stars match will be held in Townsville, helping to bring visitors and millions of dollars into the local economy, which is fantastic for our businesses. Of course, what is happening next month? Pink is coming—two concerts in Townsville at the stadium.

The stadium is world-class and in fact will be used for our football matches for the 2032 Olympics, focusing thousands of eyes—in fact, millions of eyes—from around the world and locally on Townsville. There is potential for massive exposure on the international stage for Townsville and I am excited about those possibilities.