




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (4.37 pm): I rise to speak on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024. Right from the very beginning when the Olympics was mooted the opposition has supported Brisbane hosting the 2032 games. There is much that I agree with the member for Sandgate about in terms of the unbelievable opportunity this has for our city, our state and our country if it is done well. I remember the origins of this, and I think the member for Sandgate referred to it. It was the south-east council of mayors—and it is ironic they are here at the moment; we are about to go to a reception—which raised this possibility. Their major motivation in doing that was to improve the transport networks across South-East Queensland. We have heard anecdotally that when this was first mooted to then premier Annastacia Palaszczuk her response was, ‘The Olympics will happen over my dead body.’ She had no enthusiasm for it whatsoever. Obviously after a period of time she realised, as did other members of the government, that there was some political advantage in supporting the Olympics. That is eventually what happened.

I have looked at the date of when we were awarded the Olympics. It was 10 June 2021. We are two or three weeks away from it being three years since—

Mr Crandon: The day before the budget.

Mr MANDER: The day before the budget; I take the interjection from the member for Coomera. It has been nearly three years and it is only now that a bill has come to parliament to put together an Olympic coordination authority. I would suggest that the main reason this has happened is because of the pressure the opposition has put on the government.

Mr Powell: It was our policy idea.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection from the member for Glass House. Once again the opposition is governing from opposition with good policy which the government, after relentless pressure from the opposition, has yielded to and now recognises as good policy.

Mr Healy: You’re making it up.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the minister, that guy in Cairns. We are not making it up. It is the truth. Is it any wonder the member for Traeger got up and talked about how in his area they are against the Olympics? This mob has poisoned the sentiment. The public sentiment was there. I challenge the Minister for Tourism and Sport to take a straw poll in Cairns. At the moment they would say, ‘Stuff the Olympics. We do not want to see it.’ They would say that because they have seen the chaotic process that has got us to this place. For many people, even in Brisbane, while I will not say they do not want the Olympics, the goodwill that was there has disappeared.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member, I will pause you there. It has been brought to my attention that you have used an unparliamentary word and I ask that you please withdraw.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw. We have an issue at the moment because the government has been afraid to make decisions. They are worried about political ramifications. That is a very sad situation to be in. I am a sports lover. I want the Olympics to happen. The opposition supports the Olympics, but we want it done well. We have to build public confidence back again. Is it any wonder that the public lost confidence when I believe they have been misled by this government? This government said, 'This is not going to cost us any money. In fact, 85 per cent of the facilities are already in place.' They forgot to mention that that included the Gabba. Then we had those wonderful series of press conferences and announcements about the Gabba. When the Auditor-General was asked a question in a committee process about whether he was aware of the business case for the \$1 billion, he said, 'Look, I believe it was in a press release.'

Mr Whiting: We corrected him!

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. You corrected him alright: you said, 'Sorry, no, it is \$2.7 billion. It was not \$1 billion, we made a mistake, it was \$2.7 billion.' Then the Quirk review came back and said it was \$3.3 billion. Decisions being made without any proper business case has soured public sentiment.

Mr McDonald: Inconsistent.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. There is indecision, uncertainty and no business case. That is why we have been calling for an Olympic coordination authority made up of people who have the know-how, the expertise and the commercial acumen to make the right decisions and get things done.

It is important that we have legacy, in particular for our sporting organisations. Yes, there are the transport legacies and commercial opportunities as we go forward, but the Olympics is about world-class sport. I have had sporting organisations lining up wanting to know what will be the legacy for their sport. These are sports that we all know well, that excel in the Olympic arena and internationally. Whether it is tennis, hockey, basketball, gymnastics, football or whether it is Rugby or swimming, they are all looking for legacy. Many of their facilities just do not cut it at the moment. They will not accept temporary facilities such as bringing in a hockey pitch to the middle of Ballymore.

The sport that gives us the most gold medals is swimming. They want some sort of legacy. It is not just here in Brisbane; it is also in the regions. That is very important. I remember growing up and going to an Olympic swimming pool in Brisbane as a result of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. They recognised then that the whole country should benefit from the Olympics held in Melbourne. We have to change sentiment in the regions. Go past Noosa and it is very difficult to get people excited about the Olympics. It is important that the whole state sees what benefit this will bring.

This coordination authority is important—in fact, it is vital. We will support it. The deputy opposition leader has some amendments that we think will improve the bill. I encourage all members to consider and support those amendments. We want to make sure that this Olympics is not just for Brisbane, not just for South-East Queensland but for the whole state. If it is done well this will be one of the greatest events that this city will ever host. It is imperative that we get it right eight years out from the opening ceremony, wherever that may be.