




Speech By
David Lee

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

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QUEENSLAND ACADEMY OF SPORT BILL

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (8.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025. This is a bill to establish the Queensland Academy of Sport—the academy—and to amend schedule 1 to the Public Sector Act 2022. This bill is a fresh and invigorating boost for elite sport and a fresh and empowering start for the academy.

In athletic parlance, the starting gun has fired. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are just seven years away, and we do not have a minute to waste. The Crisafulli government has done more in the last 183 days than an incompetent Queensland Labor Party that frittered away over 1,340 days. Queensland Labor was more concerned about red carpet events and recycled announcements than well-considered planning for our legacy games. If that was not enough, Labor continued to dither with the transition from an advisory body to a statutory body, so it will come as no surprise to hear Labor's confected and exaggerated criticisms of this proposed bill. Those opposite had their chance and they squandered it.

My Hervey Bay electorate backed a Crisafulli government and a fresh start for the Queensland Olympic and Paralympic Games. My Hervey Bay electorate welcomes the YouFor2032 talent search to match aspiring athletes and para-athletes with Olympic and Paralympic sports where they have the greatest potential for success. We have some talented athletes in Hervey Bay, such as Paralympic athlete Ethan Parry, golfer Lachlan Wood, swimmer Keira Stephens and Olympian triathlete Matthew Hauser.

The Delivering 2032 and Beyond plan will leave an enduring and memorable legacy for Hervey Bay and regional Queensland. A mission-critical building block in our preparation for the delivery of the 2032 games and beyond is the establishment of the Queensland Academy of Sport as a statutory body. The academy was established in 1991 as an advisory body and in the first year supported 35 scholarship holders, including Susie O'Neill, Kieren Perkins and Steven Bradbury. The academy currently operates as a business unit within the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games and supports more than 530 athletes across 21 programs. Operations at the academy will continue as normal during the transition.

The academy will be one of three high-performance statutory sporting organisations in Australia and is modelled on the New South Wales Institute of Sports Act 1995 which established the New South Wales Institute of Sports. This bill is specific to Queensland, and the academy is required to comply with Queensland legislation.

In July 2024, following representation from members of Queensland's high-performance sporting industry, including administrators, coaches and athletes, a review of the academy in consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken. The former Labor government then announced the academy would transition into a statutory body within two years—that is right, two years. Labor just loves bureaucratic red tape. It is no secret that Labor's red-tape obsession delayed preparation for the 2032 games for over 1,340 days. Five-time Olympian Nat Cook said, 'The staff at the academy are amazing, but they've spent so much time cutting through red tape.'

Following the October 2024 state election and at the direction of Minister Tim Mander, the department of sport undertook a further review which considered the appropriateness of transitioning the academy from its current organisational form to operating as a statutory body, established under enabling legislation. The academy will be established from 1 July 2025. This is necessary to avoid protracted uncertainty for the staff of the academy, and to ensure any potential disruptions for sports and athletes are minimised as much as possible prior to the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Brisbane 2032. The academy needs to be a statutory body to gain greater independence, flexibility and efficiency in its operations, particularly in preparing athletes for the Brisbane 2032 games and beyond. This statutory structure allows the academy to be more agile and make timely decisions, bypass bureaucratic hurdles and focus on its core objectives. This is integral to the success of Queensland athletes as they prepare for LA 2028 and Brisbane 2032. It is critical that the academy is established as an autonomous contemporary and fit-for-purpose statutory body unfettered by departmental bureaucracy.

The academy will be a high-performance sports organisation, preparing Australian athletes, coaches and teams to become the world's best in 2032. The academy has a golden opportunity to improve support for regional Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The bill provides for the academy to be a statutory body as I said, for the purposes of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 and the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and will be a unit of public administration under the Crime and Corruption Act. Other Queensland integrity legislation, such as the Human Rights Act 2019, will continue to apply to the academy.

The academy is also considered a public sector entity pursuant to section 8 of the Public Sector Act. An explicit function of the board in subclause 13(1)(b) is 'to ensure the academy creates a safe, fair and healthy sporting environment that is consistent with all relevant integrity standards'. Subclause 13(2) provides that 'a relevant integrity standard means a standard or policy developed by Sports Integrity Australia and published on its website'.

This means the Sports Integrity Australia National Integrity Framework is incorporated into the legislation. The website provides a set of rules that all members of a sport need to follow when it comes to their behaviour and conduct in sport, including safeguarding children and empowering women and girls in sport. As a public sector entity, the academy is also required to comply with the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, including child safe standards and the reportable conduct scheme.

Renita Garard, a former chair of the academy's safety committee, has stated that the academy has put in place 'world-class child protection policies within the last 12 months'. Furthermore, paragraph (d) in subclause 13(1) provides a broader provision—'any other function given to the board under this Act or another Act'.

The Crisafulli government is supporting regional Queensland and improving access to the Paralympics. The academy recently announced a \$2 million investment to establish the new Para Sport Unit which will more than double the talent pipeline leading up to the Queensland 2032 games. The Para Sport Unit will be delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Sport and Paralympics Australia, and will reduce barriers for participation and talent identification, enhance performance pathways and develop world-class para-sport coaches. I commend the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill to the House.