




Speech By
Donna Kirkland

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Rockhampton, Sport Infrastructure Funding

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (9.15 pm): Central Queensland is the heart of Rugby League and our region continues to be a powerhouse of talent. Just look at some of the household names that we have produced—Cameron Munster, our very own recently announced captain of Queensland for the 2025 State of Origin game 2. Then, there is Harry Grant, Ben Hunt, Tamika Upton, Steven Bell, Nev Callaghan, Jason Allen, Cyril Connell Jr—all proud NRL representatives from the Rockhampton area, with many more across our broader Central Queensland region. These players have shaped the NRL legacy, fuelling a community mad about Rugby League, with over 8,500 players across the region. We have elite development pathways through the Central Queensland Capras and Mackay Cutters and now, standing on the shoulders of the NRL greats before us, the next generation is pushing for a Central Queensland NRL team of our own—the CQRams—to unite our region under one banner and to foster future NRL legends at the grassroots.

However, across the board, our NRL facilities all desperately need serious upgrades just to meet the compliance standards enjoyed by most South-East Queensland clubs. We are grateful that local clubs have the opportunity to benefit from the Games On! grassroots sporting grants under the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2032 Delivery Plan—crucial support for our overcrowded and outdated facilities.

Rockhampton's Browne Park is currently undergoing upgrades, with stage 1 due for completion in mid-2026, delivering a ground capacity for 5,500 spectators, which is expected to double on completion of stage 2. This will be the perfect home field for our CQRams NRL team, but there is a problem. Back in 2019, the previous Labor government initially funded the \$25 million Browne Park project. Later, due to blowouts, they needed to increase that to \$54 million. With costs more than doubling it is concerning—though not surprising—that the previous Labor government failed to rigorously assess the business case for this much needed facility. Now we have learned that the existing budget cannot deliver the full scope of stage 1. Additional funding is required for a scoreboard, lights suitable for broadcast and grass for field rectification. I have already begun advocating for this and I will continue to fight for the necessary funding to see stage 1 through to completion for our community, for the NRL, for Central Queensland and for our CQRams NRL bid.