



Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Drugs, Testing; Ipswich, Sporting Infrastructure

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.37 pm): At the outset, I want to second the comments from my colleagues on this side of the House in relation to some amendments that have been flagged in relation to pill testing. We read about it in the media. I want to add something to that. All of us in this House are representing communities, and those people expect us to stand up for them—for what they want and what is best for them—in this House. How can we do that if things that are really important—life and death amendments—are put through this House on the sly? It is not acceptable; it is worrying. What does it say about transparency, what does it say about this parliament and what does it say about Queenslanders? We deserve better.

Ipswich deserves a synthetic track. We are the fastest growing local government area in Queensland. Families are moving to our city in record numbers, our schools are bursting with talent and our sporting clubs are nurturing the next generation of Queensland athletes. Despite all of this, we are without a synthetic athletics track. At Limestone Park, our young athletes continue to run on an outdated grass surface. This is simply not good enough for a city of our size and standing. In October last year, under a Labor government, I was proud to secure a \$5 million election commitment to help build a synthetic track at UniSQ's Ipswich campus, but what has the LNP government done? They have ignored Ipswich. They have turned their backs on the thousands of athletes, students and families who would benefit from this facility. Instead, they have announced a million dollars for a business case at UniSQ—but not in Ipswich—in Toowoomba. It just so happens to be the Treasurer's electorate.

Ipswich has the population, we have the demand and we have a range of possibilities for a site. What we do not have is a government that will put Ipswich first. Parents are tired of driving their kids to Brisbane just so they can train on synthetic surfaces and what about those kids whose parents do not have the means to drive them to Brisbane? Clubs are frustrated, athletes are disadvantaged and our region is being left behind.

This is not about politics; it is about fairness. Ipswich is a proud sporting city. We have produced Olympians, national champions and world-class competitors. Imagine what more we could achieve with the right facilities. We even have two of our own in Ipswich representing Australia in the Tokyo World Athletics Championships this week: Gout Gout, who is through to the 200 metres semifinal tonight and Jude Thomas, who competed in the 1,500 metres.

I am calling on this government to stop playing politics with the future of Ipswich sport, stop funnelling funding into electorates that already have facilities and start delivering for the fastest growing city in Queensland. We deserve our fair share. We deserve a synthetic athletics track and I will not stop fighting until we get one.