



Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**


**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Women and Girls, Sport**

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (9.22 pm): Today Queensland finds itself at a crossroad for girls and women in sport. We know the barriers that girls are facing because they tell us every day: uniforms that do not fit because they are not designed for girls; games scheduled late at night because they are the only times that clubs can squeeze them in; being asked to rope in partners, family or volunteers to coach because clubs will not fund professional coaches; match officials not turning up; getting changed behind trees; being discouraged from boards; and enduring sexism and a culture that says, 'You're not welcome here.'

These are the real barriers, especially for girls in regional Queensland. They add up to the heartbreaking truth that the number of girls in sport halves when they reach puberty and they never recover. Girls and women remain underrepresented in sport, despite the fact that they out-medal men three to one. Women give more and we achieve more, yet we receive less investment, less visibility and fewer opportunities. Despite all this, I stand here profoundly hopeful because we are also standing in the middle of one of the most exciting revolutions in sport. Women's sport is surging. Viewership is up, crowds are up and participation is rising wherever investment and visibility meet. The evidence is clear: when we invest in women and girls, performance and participation follow.

This afternoon I welcomed a roomful of leaders in sport to Queensland parliament. They spoke with honesty and ambition. They told me what is working and what is possible—and what is possible is extraordinary. I see a future where girls are supported seamlessly from grassroots through to elite pathways; where female coaches, match officials and board members reflect the talent of those on the field; where clubs invest in fit-for-purpose uniforms; where every club has a female change room; where girls' games are scheduled at times that fit families; and where professional coaching is a standard, not a luxury.

Imagine girls saying confidently, 'I can see a future for me here.' Picture Queensland as a national leader in girls sport: stronger communities, healthier young woman, more elite athletes and more role models in every town and suburb. Picture the ripple effect: new jobs in coaching, sports science, administration and officiating, and greater economic security for women and girls. That is the future we can build if we can act now. However, we cannot ignore the moment that we are in. The sports minister promised during estimates that Queensland's sports strategy would be released in November. Today is 20 November and we are still waiting. We are also watching carefully to see whether this strategy rises to meet this moment. The cost of inaction is high, but the potential from action and the potential from investing in our girls is limitless.