



Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Burnett Electorate

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.45 pm): I rise today to acknowledge some outstanding people and community organisations across the Bundy and Burnett who continue to make our region a special place to live. Firstly, I want to congratulate all of the recipients of our Australia Day Awards who are making such a difference across our community. I give a special shout-out to Jo Leveritt, from Wide Bay Advocacy and Bundaberg Street Law, who was awarded Citizen of the Year. Jo embodies the quiet dedication we so often see in regional Queensland—someone who gets on with the job, supports others and strengthens the fabric of our community. These awards remind us that it is everyday Australians like Jo who make a real and lasting difference.

I also want to warmly welcome our new doctors and medical students. It was a privilege to welcome the 2026 cohort of returning medical students to the UQ Rural Clinical School. Our region is proud to play a role in training the next generation of doctors, and it was wonderful to meet students who have chosen to begin their medical journey in rural Queensland. When young medical professionals choose regional placements it strengthens our healthcare system for the long-term. I wish each of those students every success for the year ahead and thank the UQ Rural Clinical School for the vital work they do.

Do not get me wrong: parliament is exciting, but I am very excited to get back home tomorrow night to host our Sports On! information session. It is a free opportunity for clubs to hear directly from all three levels of government about grants, programs and practical strategies to strengthen their organisations. It is fantastic to see clubs like Kolan Rowing Club, East Magpies Sports Club, Brothers Sports Club, Bundaberg Bowls Club, Bundaberg Hockey Association, Across the Waves Tigers, Western Suburbs Junior Rugby League, Bargara FC and more already stepping up to be part of the conversation. From rowing and rugby league to hockey, netball, football, bowls, chess and croquet, the diversity of sport in the region is something we should all be proud of.

Grassroots sport is the backbone of our communities, which is why the Crisafulli government has invested in programs like the Play On! vouchers and Games On! funding. Volunteers, committee members and coaches give countless hours so young people and families can stay active and connected. Ensuring clubs know what support is available is critical to keeping them strong and sustainable into the future, and I look forward to saying g'day to many of our clubs tomorrow.

Finally, I give a shout-out to Amber Rogers and her team behind the Agnes Blues, Roots & Rock Festival, kicking off next weekend. Events like this not only showcase incredible talent but also inject energy and economic activity into our region. They bring people together, celebrate creativity and highlight everything that makes the Discovery Coast so unique, which is why the Crisafulli government was proud to support them with a \$25,000 Homegrown destination events grant.

From volunteers and farmers to students, doctors and community leaders, the Burnett continues to punch above its weight. I am proud to stand in this House and share just a snapshot of the incredible work happening in our region.