




Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Mander**

**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2025

**QUEENSLAND ACADEMY OF SPORT BILL**

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (8.30 pm), in reply: Winning medals is the key ingredient that will define whether Brisbane 2032 is a successful games or not. We will deliver the games that Queenslanders deserve, and this means that we want Queenslanders to dominate the podium—just like they did in Paris where 40 Queensland athletes brought home 28 medals from the Olympic Games, representing more than half the national total, and a record 28 Queenslanders brought home Paralympic medals. Most of those athletes have been supported in some way by the Queensland Academy of Sport—a world-class institution committed to the development and pursuit of excellence amongst our elite athletes.

As we know, high performance is always evolving and it is now time that the academy transitions to an independent entity. Importantly, high-performance experts and athletes have publicly advocated for this change and backed it up with facts and research, and here we are just six months since Queenslanders elected the Crisafulli government and we are delivering on a recommendation a full 12 months ahead of when Labor said that it would do it. High performance is about going faster and further for longer. It is about being at the cutting edge of technology and science, yet those opposite wanted to drag this process on for a full 18 months.

Regarding the opposition's proposed amendments, it is clear that those opposite obviously were not paying attention during my second reading speech because if they had they would have known that we have addressed every issue that they have spoken about—every issue. We are working to make the QAS more agile while those opposite are trying to bury it in bureaucratic nonsense, going against exactly what we are trying to achieve—trying to remove the limitations that come with being tied to a government department and give it the agility and the efficiency that it needs to be able to respond. What do those opposite want to do? More reports, more bureaucracy, add more to the annual report, add more people to administer all of those things.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order!

**Mr MANDER:** It is the most typical Labor thing you will ever hear: 'Let's make it more complicated.'

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock for a moment. Members on both sides of the House, that was disorderly. The interjections are not being taken either from the right or the left.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is ironic in terms of what we are trying to achieve—

**Ms Fentiman** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Waterford, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MANDER:**—and what high-performance athletes and coaches have called for. That is why they lobbied for this for this exact reason—to get away from this ridiculous bureaucratic overlay. We want to make sure that our athletes are free from these bureaucratic limitations and allow them to achieve their potential, yet those opposite want to drag them backwards. They did not want to do this. They really did not want to do this and that is why they tried to delay it. They only did it because they were forced to and were embarrassed by those high-profile elite coaches—people like Wayne Bennett. That is what shamed them in the end to make this happen. When we came into government and I saw the timetable that those opposite had set, it proved that they were not fair dinkum, and these amendments just prove that. They are not fair dinkum about wanting this to be an independent entity.

One of the key priorities of my portfolio is strengthening the pathways to take Queenslanders from grassroots participation all the way to elite competition, but that is not what we are talking about tonight. Our track record shows that we care more about community sport, but what the remarks from those opposite demonstrate is that they do not understand the basics of the Queensland Academy of Sport and they do not understand this bill. They make the assertion that we are going to leave para-sport behind with this bill, but let me tell you: the Crisafulli government has delivered in the past six months and those comments are an insult to the Queensland Academy of Sport and what it is doing with para-sport and para-athletes.

In the short six months that we have been in government, I think I have gone out to the QAS every second week to talk about another para-sport initiative. I recently announced a \$2 million investment to establish the new Para Sport Unit at the academy which will more than double the talent pipeline leading up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I think we currently have 75 para-athletes in that program. We want to increase it to 200 so that we have more para-athletes reaching their potential. This will help build upon what was an historic performance by Queensland athletes at the Paris Paralympic Games and continue to cement the importance of para-sport for Queensland across the nation.

Earlier this year I announced the first 11 coaches to join the Gen2032 Project Para Coach Development Program to nurture a new wave of high-performance experts. It is an incredible program where we bring coaches in over a four-year program where they work in industry related locations and at the same time they are being coached to be better coaches. It is a brilliant program and something that we are proud to be associated with. Additionally, the Crisafulli government has committed funding towards the Imagine Education program delivered by Paralympic athletes within the academy. The Imagine Education program is designed to create behaviour change by giving learners practical tools to make the world a more inclusive place. It challenges learners' perceptions and attitudes towards people with a disability by inviting Paralympians into schools around Queensland. I went to, I think it was, the member for Stafford's electorate at Stafford Heights to see one of those programs in action, and it was brilliant. It educates students about the Paralympic movement and obviously the Paralympic Games and para-sports as well.

In a world first—and this one is a secret that we have to get out there—we have a YouFor2032 talent identification app, which I launched last month, available to para-athletes. If we want Queensland to be a world leader on para-sport and this transition, this legislation will help us on that journey. Let me tell members about the YouFor2032 app. YouFor2032 is a program where people from the Academy of Sport travel across the state. They have gone to 40 locations—30,000 kilometres. They have been to every town that one can think of to try to identify the talent that we have out there that has not yet been discovered. Out of that journey, 5,700 young people have gone through that program. Some 2,000 of those have gone on to a three-month program. Some 400 of those—422 actually—have gone into a 12-month program and 40 of those people identified are now in state and national teams or titles because of the YouFor2032 program. It gets better: there is now an app where young people between 13 and 23 can go to the app.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:** Download it now—the YouFor2032 app.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:** Do not put your age in because you will be out straightaway. If you are 13 to 23, there are 12 tests. You go and do the test and film yourself and it has this AI, which is just spooky. It is out of this world. It can see what people do. What happens then is that that testing goes straight to the QAS sports scientists and they can do an analysis and work out what potential you might have in different sports. Not only that, it is the first talent identification app that is designed for para-athletes. Now you can have a QAS sport scientist in your pocket and talk directly to them. The member for Lockyer has the app up.

Let me give members an example. There is a guy from Proserpine called Mac Rogers. Proserpine is not known for its rowing. This guy was a gymnast. He went and did the YouFor2032 program which identified he has some potential. He is a man mountain. This bloke is big. I am pretty impressive, but he is bigger than me. They identified that he could be a pole vaulter or a rower. He has never done either of those sports in his life. After a while a guy that has never touched an oar in his life—there are no rowing facilities around Proserpine—is now doing interstate and national titles because he was identified by YouFor2032. It is not only about para-athletes it is about the regions. It is about going out to people where they are. We recognise the fact that we are a decentralised state.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Members, let us take a breather—both sides. There have been a lot of interjections. It is verging on the disorderly.

**Mr MANDER:** I am determined to make sure that our government oversees the most successful period in para-sport in Queensland history. If those opposite were paying any attention they would realise that we have made all the proposed amendments that they are now trying to bring in themselves. Our amendments allow the minister to recommend a person for appointment as a board member if they have qualifications, skills or experience in the area of Olympic or Paralympic sport or any other area relevant or necessary to the board's functions. We have proven this already. The Stadiums Queensland board has a Paralympian on it. We have another member on that board who has a severe disability. We do not need to be told what the right thing to do is.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Currumbin, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MANDER:** We do not need to be told what the right thing to do is. It is bleeding obvious. It is self-evident that if you have Olympic or Paralympic skills or qualifications there is a very good chance you are going to have a Paralympian on the board. You do not have to have some bureaucratic clause telling you you need to do the right thing.

As the Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, I am incredibly proud of those initiatives I have mentioned. Unlike those opposite, we want 2032 to be our most successful Olympic and Paralympic Games ever. That begins with identifying and supporting young Queenslanders with big dreams and even bigger potential. I want to acknowledge, in relation to the YouFor2032 app, the RACQ for their support and sponsorship. It has been a great partnership. We are the most decentralised state and it shows how initiatives like this are so very important. Who knows who might be discovered next. It might be a future Matt Denny, a Mollie O'Callaghan or a Chris Bond honing their skills and waiting for their opportunity to shine. The other day I watched Chris in a wheelchair rugby game. I have seen some tough athletes in my days. If you want to see the toughest footballers up close, go and watch one of those wheelchair rugby games. They get stuck into it. This guy is a legend and a fantastic player. It was a privilege to go out there and watch them.

Those opposite come in here and question the appointments that we may or may not make to the board and question their appropriate skills. I can guarantee in relation to the board that there will be no union Labor hacks. That will make it very unusual. There will be no union Labor hacks whose only skill and experience is lifelong membership of the Labor Party. Unless protesting has become a sport, they have no expertise. Our government will appoint real people with real experience in the real world. Those appointed will have relevant experience. Their only qualification will be—

**Ms Grace:** Membership of the LNP!

**Mr MANDER:** Unlike those opposite we do not owe appointments to our union mates or factional buddies who call the shots behind the scenes.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MANDER:** The academy does incredible work advocating for and supporting women in sport. What those opposite are saying is an insult to the academy. They have achieved incredible results. One only has to look at the results of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris. Of Queensland Olympic medallists, 23 were female and 17 were male. While 36 per cent of our Paralympic medallists were female, I want to take the opportunity to highlight one of our superstars, Alexa Leary, who has to be the cheeriest, most beautiful woman playing sport at the moment. She is just a delight to be around. She won gold in the women's 100-metre freestyle.

**Ms Bush** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Cooper, you are not interjecting from your correct seat. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MANDER:** She got a record the other day in the mixed 4 x 100-metre medley, plus silver in the mixed 4 x 100-metre freestyle. The academy has introduced several initiatives aimed at fostering the greater involvement of women in coaching. I said earlier that over half the athletes at the academy are women—I think it is 54 per cent—and over half the coaches—52 per cent—are women. I also mentioned earlier that the Gen2032 coaching scholarship program has seen 12 exceptional women coaches—accounting for 52 per cent of participants—engaged in a two-year full-time program. Sports these women coach include hockey, sprint kayak, Rugby League, swimming, footy, water polo, beach volleyball, sailing, rugby sevens, BMX freestyle and aerial skiing. Ten of the 12 women were offered a third year of coaching scholarship support through specific Australian Institute of Sport funding. The program is designed to create lifelong learners who use innovative coaching practices and become skilled communicators.

When this academy thrives so too does the future of Queensland sport. This academy is a world leader. Recently a delegation came out from India. They are trying to secure the 2036 Games. I wish them all the best with that. They came to the Queensland Academy of Sport because they were told, when they asked around the world, 'Where do we go to learn about coaching of elite sport?', to go to the QAS. Anybody who has been out there can only be impressed. The strategy that they have on their wall is the most impressive thing you have ever seen. It is brilliant. Do yourself a favour and go out and there and you will be blown away by how professional and state-of-the-art they are. Under the Crisafulli government Queensland will be the undeniable home of Australian sport.

Let us not forget that the Labor Party care so little about the QAS that they were more than happy to dump it because they wanted QSAC to be where the new stadium was built. That is where the academy is. There was no talk about what might have happened to the academy that is well established there. It has a couple of ovals, a throwing pit—which is just brilliant—and all the latest mod cons one could think of in sports science. Those opposite were going to displace them in the lead-up to an Olympic Games. Can anyone think of any worse disruption?

**Mr Bennett:** Can you believe it?

**Mr MANDER:** Can you believe it? I will take that interjection from the member for Burnett. The Leader of the Opposition wanted not only to delay the transition for two years but also to displace the QAS from its home. I have not heard of anything more ridiculous.

**Mr Bennett:** What is the score in the Origin?

**Mr MANDER:** I will take that interjection from the member for Burnett. What is the score in the Origin? Does anybody know?

**A government member:** 20-12 to New South Wales.

**Mr MANDER:** Come on, Queensland! This is an incredibly innovative transition that we have undertaken. Again I pay tribute to my department. They have been under the pump to get this done. They were working to a different timetable to the one the previous government had given them. When we came in, I said that we wanted to show that we could be exactly what the high-performance sector wants—that in the department we could be agile, we could be nimble and we could move quickly. My department has delivered. They have gone beyond the normal expectations that we have of our people. They have worked hard.

This has been quite a complex negotiation to transfer from a public service model to a statutory body and to ensure that we protect everybody's rights, as we have done. We travelled around the country and looked at other models. The New South Wales Institute of Sport was recommended to us as the model to look at. There was a lot of toing and froing. As I said, it was quite complex but the department has delivered and they have done it well. I appreciate that.

I appreciate the QAS guys who were involved in making this happen. I know that they are going to appreciate a new board. There will be a new CEO. There will be a new vision, but they will have the same objective, which is to produce the best sportspeople, whether they be able-bodied or para-athletes, so that the 2032 games is the most successful we have ever had and is a games that Queenslanders will be proud of.