



Speech By
Bree James

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2026

MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (6.04 pm): Today I do not stand here as just a member of parliament; I stand here as a huge supporter and lover of live music and events. I know the potential my region has for world-class sporting events, and I will continue to push for more funding for our Far North Queensland sporting facilities and more events to our region.

The Major Sports Facilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is another example of how the LNP Crisafulli government is putting regional Queensland first and foremost. This bill updates the Major Sports Facilities Act and the Major Events Act to bring regulations for major sports venues in line with current event industry needs. It allows a clearer, fit-for-purpose regulatory framework so stadiums can host more high-profile special events like concerts under sensible and consistent rules. Most importantly, this bill levels the playing field for sporting and cultural events. It allows Far North Queensland and sporting stadiums to shine, or at least to give our venues the opportunities that we often miss out on under the current legislation.

The bill will push for more regional sporting and cultural events that bring state- and national-level competition to regional areas, because it is time for the rest of the world to see just what we have to offer in Far North Queensland. It evens the regulatory playing field between stadiums and supports equitable development, helping venues outside of Brisbane so that venues can attract headline acts and international events. What this means is more entertainment locally, more investment into our region and more opportunities for locals and tourists to rock out and cheer on their favourite teams without the need to hop on a plane.

For years, Cairns has missed out on hosting major headline events even though we have the facilities to do so. We have sporting facilities like the Cairns Convention Centre, the Cairns Showgrounds, Barlow Park and Cazalys Stadium. We have cultural facilities like Munro Martin Parklands, Kuranda Amphitheatre, CPAC and the Cairns Convention Centre. We are home to the best business events venue in Queensland—the Cairns Convention Centre—which has previously supported over \$80 million in direct regional spending. Major events delivered an estimated \$31 million to \$38 million to our regional economy last year and we had 22,721 visitors and 108,000 visitor nights from these events. Business events brought \$42 million to the Tropical North Queensland region last year. Recently we hosted a near-sellout crowd of more than 8,000 passionate cricket fans at Cazalys, and more than 1,700 visitors travelled here specifically for the matches, bringing an estimated \$2.48 million boost to our regional economy. It was an epic event.

While Cairns has been fortunate to host many world-class sporting events, from Crankworx to the Cairns Ironman, this bill will ensure our region remains front and centre, especially when it comes to world-class entertainers. It provides us with the opportunity to host Olympic-size events from downhill mountain biking to soccer and beyond. It also ensures we can lure world-class entertainers to our region. By enabling more concerts and special events, this bill has the potential to drive greater economic activity, more tourism, more hospitality spending and greater visibility for the regions.

On a quick sidenote, I want to commend Tones And I for coming to regional Ingham later this month. This is an epic win for this region. Well done to the member for Hinchinbrook for his advocacy for this, but it should not be a one-off. It was a competition that the town won. We should not be the underdogs. North Queensland and Far North Queensland should be on the touring map each and every time for sports, concerts and world-class events.

My community is really passionate about sport and entertainment. I recently launched a survey for support for the sporting infrastructure in the region. Hundreds of locals have shared their thoughts on our inadequate sporting infrastructure. The message from them is clear: we want, and deserve, more sporting infrastructure. As the assistant minister for the creative industries, events, live music and the arts are things I am really passionate about. Last year I launched a petition to change the legislation about live music in our pubs and clubs, because right now sound regulation laws and expensive acoustic reports are impeding local venues and it has killed the night-life economy in our region and in our state. This generation of musicians is not getting the stage time they need to be the next Powderfinger or the next Veronicas, so I do hope these are changes our government may make in the near future. If you have not signed my petition, please join the hundreds of people in Far North Queensland who have. I will keep advocating for Queensland musicians and live-music venues so we can make the changes that we need.

I go back to sports. Under the former government, we missed out on vital funding across our grassroots sports. Under the former government, not a single cent was given to our sporting community in Barron River in the last decade, other than through community grants. This is not good enough. My local clubs have missed out: the Redlynch Strikers have no clubhouse; Barron Valley Gymnastics have damaged facilities from the Jasper floods and an inadequate facility; the Stratford Dolphins have no lighting and an inadequate clubhouse and changing room facilities; the Marlin Coast Rangers have broken grandstands; and the Northern Beaches Heat Basketball have no home courts. I could go on and on. The lack of female change rooms, the lack of adequate facilities and the lack of training grounds are all realities for Far North Queensland. Our government sees Far North Queensland. Our clubs are begging for a chance to represent the state on a larger scale.

Ms FARMER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the member may be straying from the long title of the bill. I seek your guidance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): I will take some advice. Member for Barron River, what you are talking about is quite broad, so can you please return to the long title of the bill when you can.

Ms JAMES: Our clubs are begging for a chance to represent the state on a larger scale, to host local and national events and to provide our young athletes with the opportunity to witness the thrill of world-class sporting events. Between our incredible location and tourism offerings—and our humidity training which no other location in the state can offer—Far North Queensland has an opportunity to shine. This legislation will assist large-scale events to succeed. This bill will provide my region and other regional Queensland cities with a chance to get in the games. That is why I give my full support to the bill.