



Speech By  
**David Lee**


**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Rugby League

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.12 pm): Our Hervey Bay Seagulls Rugby League Club is, colloquially speaking, punching above its weight and has a well-established and substantial reputation for being a bold and visionary club, a club that has and continues to nurture some national first-class talent including J'Maine Hoggood, Parramatta Eels and Queensland Maroons player and member of the Indigenous All Stars team; Tyrone Hoggood, a Vegas 9s rugby league champion; Harry Armstrong, Penrith Panthers and former under 19s Queensland Maroons player; Sam Burns, captain of the Sunshine Coast Falcons and veteran hooker; Tye Ingebritsen, Ipswich Jets Hostplus coach; and Emily Whittaker, former Wynnum Manly player who currently has a junior representative contract with the Canterbury Bulldogs until 2027. The Seagulls club was established over 50 years ago in 1973. The club's Ralph Stafford Park sporting facilities are tired and in desperate need of fit-for-purpose infrastructure to ensure that the existing and future needs of Wide Bay rugby league players are met.

This season the Seagulls will host events such as the Queensland all-girls state carnival, a female State of Origin fan day which is expected to attract several thousand attendees, a QRL fixture between the Sunshine Coast Falcons and the Ipswich Jets, as well as another women's statewide rugby league BMD cup match during the all-girls carnival. The Seagulls currently support more than 500 junior and senior members and registrations are growing year on year. This year the Seagulls will field 42 teams from under-sixes through to the open men and women.

The club has the largest number of teams in the Wide Bay and over the last three years the club's volunteers have grown from 44 to 67. There has been colossal growth in player registrations: the under-sixes to under-12s have increased from 149 to 269 and the under-13s to under-16s from 153 to 212. That is a staggering 80 per cent increase in players between under-sixes and under-12s. This is a great sign for the future of rugby league in Hervey Bay.

The growth in female numbers is colossal. In 2023 there were just 54 females, including players, coaches, volunteers and trainers. There are now 140 registered female participants in all aspects of the club. This is a testament to the visionary leadership of the Seagulls and an inclusive approach to representation in rugby league. The Seagulls are also instrumental in a very successful tripartite collaboration between the Seagulls, Bayside Christian College and the Redcliffe-based NRL Dolphins. The Seagulls need strategic and fit-for-purpose infrastructure to support their rapid growth and registrations and the capacity to host national rugby league events.

*(Time expired)*