




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Sport Infrastructure

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.18 pm): Across South-East Queensland grassroots sport continues to reach new heights, which means our fields and our courts rarely get a rest. Grounds that once hosted casual kickabouts, dog walkers or people wanting to get out and get some exercise themselves are now fully booked out by organised sport, and even then it is not enough. In my electorate I have teams that are playing their home games away because there simply is not enough field time available at their own clubs. Clubs are having to turn people away. Waitlists have blown out. Families are driving up to an hour just to find somewhere for their kids to play. Some people, particularly women wanting to get back into sport, are simply giving up. It is a travesty. It is not just happening in my electorate.

Hockey Queensland needs seven additional synthetic fields to meet future demand. Football Queensland needs 10 full-size fields, three junior fields and 40 field upgrades in Brisbane alone. Basketball Queensland needs 223 additional courts across Queensland. Netball Queensland needs more than 40 additional courts.

It is clear that right now infrastructure is falling behind participation, and that is before we get into the extraordinary challenges faced by our para-athletes. While local clubs are spending hours a week trying to find and schedule field space and volunteers are working overtime to keep competitions running, this government seem far more interested in Olympic headlines than grassroots realities. While billions of dollars are being allocated to Olympic venues and precincts, the clubs where future Olympians start their sporting journeys are still waiting for a plan from the sports minister.

Last year I wrote to the sports minister and asked how he and his department were undertaking strategic demand mapping alongside all sporting codes across Queensland. I asked whether he was engaging with schools and local governments to identify and open up land for courts and fields and about the government's approach to investment in grassroots sports. His response was that all would be revealed in Queensland's sports strategy.

In estimates last year, the minister told the committee that that sports strategy would be delivered by September last year and then he advised that it would be November. We are four months into extra time and the sports minister has absolutely dropped the ball. There is no strategy. There has been no update to clubs on when it is even going to come. There has been no explanation for how it is months overdue, just a quietly revised note on the department's website saying that maybe we will get it sometime this year.

Today I call on the sports minister to get off the bench and release Queensland's sports strategy. It is well overdue. He needs to release the files because in this state grassroots sports and our athletes have been waiting long enough for that whistle to blow.