




Speech By
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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Toowoomba Sports Ground, Upgrade

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to give the House a quick update on the Toowoomba Sports Ground and some of the upgrades that have happened there. It is fantastic news for our community, and I would like to thank the minister for them. Over \$1 million has been spent in the off-season of the winter sports. We have planted new TifTuf grass and put in extra drainage which will make the playing surface more robust so we can have more competition more often in the facility. We have also upgraded the lights to 500 lux. It is not quite 4K quality yet, but I know the minister will do that for me over a number of years with his big fund.

The improvements have made it an exciting start to the year. I watched the men's and women's South West Queensland Thunder games on the weekend. They are two great football teams, and they did a really good job. They loved the new grass. It is probably just a fraction long for football—some in this place might call it soccer—but it is new and we have to make it survive the season. The extra drainage will mean that the ground will be more robust to play these fixtures on when the rain comes through.

It is really important to make sure we have a pathway from regional Queensland to what is an Olympic sport through a top-quality facility where people can come and watch and get inspired. The juniors also play there. It gives them a really good connection to those elite players and the pathways they can follow.

I was also pleased to be at the Western Clydesdales launch the other day. As the Hostplus Cup season kicks off this weekend in Toowoomba against Easts Tigers, we really need people from the community to get out of their armchairs at home and go and support our local clubs. The Clydesdales are looking in good shape, both men's and women's, and I am excited to see how we go this year. I think we will shock a few people in the Hostplus Cup this year.

As this stadium is slowly developing into a little regional pocket rocket, do not forget about what it means for the community and the pathways and opportunities for young regional kids to come and see their heroes playing the sport they love and aspire to play those positions. It means that we end up with regional people coming into town, going to our boarding schools and following those pathways to hopefully one day go on to bigger and better things in the sport that they love.

These upgrades are really important so people can be comfortable, enjoy themselves and see the game better. If the facilities are top class, the skills will be brought out and the spectators will be comfortable. I would love to see the seats we have getting filled so I can put some pressure on the minister to get us more seats for the stadium. I would love to see this stadium hold 10,000 people in the next decade.