

***Queensland Academy of Sports Bill 2025 – Sandy Bolton, MP
for Noosa***

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

This Bill changes the Queensland Academy of Sports to a statutory agency, replacing the current structure as a division of the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympics and Paralympics Games.

The case put forward for change is that the Academy needs to be able to function in an agile and responsive manner, and currently it is hindered by the structural and administrative requirements of being in a department including the disruption of machinery of government (MOG) changes.

I was interested to see this last one listed - the Coaldrake Report also identified unnecessary MOG changes as problematic, saying these changes can be expensive and disruptive, they also can be associated with ongoing turf wars, and that restructures are not in themselves a tool for guaranteeing improved performance, or a substitute for strategy.

So with the recognition in this bill of the negative impacts of MOG changes, I await the Government's policy to reduce and/or address MOG changes across Government and tackle this issue from the Coaldrake report.

No objections were made to the overall purpose of the Bill however some concerns were raised.

Sporting Wheelies and the Queensland Disability Network advocated for embedding disability inclusion in the bill such investment in para sport pathways. The Department's response was that there is sufficient flexibility in how the Academy will operate to address. Still, it would have been better if these were covered in the bill as the Academy is preparing for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Queensland argued that the Bill should explicitly include references to rural and remote Queensland with targeted regional talent identification programs and dedicated outreach initiatives. The department responded that the Academy already has a program directed at regional areas, however we need to ensure these really address the challenges for remote areas, where the vast distances pose barriers to attending metro events.

The Brisbane Organising Committee for 2032 has emphasised that the Games are our opportunity to create lasting benefits for our communities, and this is covered in the Government's plan "Delivering 2032 and Beyond", which highlights the need for enhancements to regional sporting and community facilities. For years we have had yo-yoing visions of where to hold the Olympics and put stadiums, with dissent and conflict between sporting codes, venue operators, and local councils. We had two expert investigations, the Sports Venue Review in 2024 and then the 100-day Review in 2025, with various stadiums recommended or adopted.

With this finally sorted, may we see a united focus moving forward, including for our two Olympic legacy groups on the Sunshine Coast.

We must ensure the legacy of the games is one we will all be proud of, delivering to our community and all of Queensland so future generations can look back and see the benefits in multiple realms, including a truly sustainable games minus the negative impacts experienced in other host countries such as housing shortages, which is the last thing we need in amongst our ongoing crisis.

There is still much to prepare for. This includes team training locations in the long periods leading up to the games, and support must be provided for councils to deliver facilities suitable.

This includes upgrade of our Noosa sports facilities as identified by Noosa Council. With community sport in Australia generating a \$19 billion annual value in social capital, and an additional \$5 billion in health benefits. These are investments in our wellbeing.

Needed also is the infrastructure and services for the additional visitors, better train Gympie North to Nambour via Cooroy, hinterland bus services and the rapid completion of the Tewantin Bypass.

Let's not forget parking, shuttles and the multitude of existing issues that must be addressed well in advance of the games. Health, policing – just to name a couple examples.

The planning and logistics are extensive, and it is paramount that information is pushed out to communities, instead of what has been a 'pull'.

Thank you to the committee members and the secretariat for the conduct of the inquiry and to those who made submissions on the bill, as it is appreciated the work that you do.

(740 words)