



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Olympic and Paralympic Games

SPEECH

Tuesday, 23 February 2021

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner	Responder
Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (19:45): When the Prime Minister asked me to be his representative for Queensland's candidature for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, I suspect he didn't do so because of my cut physique or my wonderful background in sports elitism. It might surprise you, Deputy Speaker Rob Mitchell, but, unfortunately, my love of sport has actually never converted into prowess in the pool, on the track or on the field. Nevertheless, I'm happy to report that our pursuit of 2032 is progressing and progressing well; however, in true Australian style, we take absolutely nothing for granted. It is nevertheless timely to reflect on why pursuing a games in 2032 is in our national interest. No matter the magical extravaganza that a games might be and no matter the great human feats of athleticism, a 2032 games does not represent two weeks of a sporting spectacular so much as it represents two decades of legacy—a legacy in the lead-up to a games and a legacy after the games. That's why we need to continue to pursue a 2032 bid.

I don't intend tonight to cover off all the aspects of such a legacy, but, if I may, to whet your appetite as to how a 2032 games in South-East Queensland might at least be in our economic interests, I will start with this year, 2021. If we are successful, if the International Olympic Committee, the IOC, were to decide that Brisbane and South-East Queensland should host the 2032 Games, can you just imagine the interest that would garner around the world? It would do wonders for our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines, as we know, are rolling out not just here but around the world. If we were to secure the opportunity to host the games and secure that opportunity in this very year, it would put us centre stage at a critical time in our economic recovery, allowing us to showcase to the world our track record of managing the pandemic, which reinforces our existing reputation for strength and the natural beauty of our country—a clean and green, stable, secure, safe and healthy sport-loving country down under.

More materially, it would provide a platform to show the progress we're making across a range of economic and social fronts, underpinned by a persistent AAA credit rating. The day will come when foreign direct investment will again begin to flow more freely across the globe, and there's an opportunity for Australia to position itself as a safe haven for investment and a place for doing business. As for the Australian tourism sector, can you imagine the shot in the arm it would be for our tourism operators if, as international borders began to open, we were to be announced as the host of the 2032 Games? Could there be any better investment than having such news beamed across the news wires internationally, as people start to dream about starting up their travel internationally again? There is, of course, the opportunity to be accelerating the delivery of infrastructure. Under the new norms of the IOC, the days of the white elephants are gone; the IOC encourages the use of existing assets. But South-East Queensland is growing at such a pace that we do need infrastructure, and there's nothing better than a deadline to get it going. So, as time goes on, the broader legacy will be laid out, but this is certainly worth continuing to progress.