



Speech by

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Commonwealth Games

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: Over the past seven days we have all enjoyed watching the performance of our Aussie athletes at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. The efforts of our competitors have been spectacular, and we have raced to the lead in the medal count. As the Minister for Sport I wanted to take this opportunity to inform members of the achievements of our own Queensland athletes at the games.

Seventy-three Queenslanders were selected to compete in 14 of the 19 sports showcased at the games. In the pool last night Grant Hackett won a silver medal in the men's 200-metre freestyle. He also won a silver medal in the men's 400-metre freestyle and was in the team with Ashley Callus that won gold in the men's 4 x 100-metre freestyle. Nicole Irving won a silver medal in the women's 50-metre butterfly, and Tarnee White won bronze in the 50-metre breast stroke. On the track, Krishna Stanton and Jackie Gallagher secured second and third in our historic marathon trifecta, and Matt McEwen locked up silver in the decathlon. Paul di Bella won a bronze as part of the Australian men's 4 x 100-metre team, and Justin Anlezark won gold in the men's shot-put with a games record. Shooter Diane Reeves joined her Victorian partner, Nessa Jenkins, to wrap up victory on the last shot of the competition in the women's pairs trap event, and Bruce Favell took out bronze in the men's 25-metre rapid fire pistol pairs. Anne Marie Forder won bronze in the women's 10-metre air pistol pairs, and Susan Trindall won bronze in the women's double trap pairs. In addition, cyclist Kerri Meares took out gold in the women's 500-metre time trial, and Nathan O'Neill won bronze in the men's road time trial. Gymnast Damien Istria won a silver medal in the men's individual horizontal bars as well as joining Dane Smith to win bronze in the men's team all-around competition. I am sure all members will agree that this is a wonderful effort, and in the coming days hopefully more Queenslanders will take their place on the victory dais.

I am also pleased to report that 48 of the athletes representing Queensland at the games are scholarship holders at the state government's Queensland Academy of Sport. Now in its 12th year, the QAS plays a vital role in helping our local sporting heroes compete successfully on the world stage. In addition to financial support for competition and training costs, QAS athletes receive world-standard coaching and support services, such as sports science, strength and conditioning and career education. It is the success of our athletes at events such as the Commonwealth Games, as well as recent Olympic and Paralympic competitions, which reinforces the wisdom of the Queensland government's decision to support elite sport through the academy. However, it is also important to note that the state government is supporting all Queensland members of the Commonwealth Games team—regardless of their association with the QAS—through the bonus grant scheme.

While many of us envy our elite athletes, the reality is that reaching that level invariably involves a great deal of dedication and sacrifice and, in many cases, financial burden. By providing \$5,400 to each Queensland athlete who meets the selection criteria we can help ease that burden and let them concentrate on performing to the best of their ability. It is gratifying to know that with a little help the state government can play a role in helping so many Queenslanders reach the top of their chosen sport. Congratulations again to all those Queenslanders competing at the games, and I am sure the members of the House will join me in wishing them every success over the coming days.