



Speech by

# Hon. Rod Welford

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard Tuesday, 26 August 2008

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### State Schools; Beijing Olympic Games

**Hon. RJ WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.17 am): Like the minister for sport, I, too, recognise the many Queenslanders who have participated in the Olympics. Over the years, Queenslanders have been renowned for their sporting prowess—Pat Rafter, Cathy Freeman, Susie O'Neill, Greg Norman and Darren Lockyer to name a few. Many of these athletes, both those of the past and those of these Olympics, have come from our state schools. So today I would like to acknowledge some state school achievers who represented our country and Queensland at the Beijing Olympics.

Firstly, 16-year-old swimming sensation Cate Campbell, from Kenmore State High School, was the youngest swimmer on the Australian Olympic team. But she did not let that stand in her way. In the 50-metre freestyle final she held her nerve and was rewarded with a bronze medal. The year 11 student juggled her Olympic preparations with studies, completing years 11 and 12 over three years to have time off to train and compete.

Over at North Lakes State College there was keen interest in the Olympic softball. There, teacher Jodie Bowering was a member of the Australian Olympic softball team. She was joined by Sandy Lewis in the team. Sandy is also a teacher and has been doing relief work at schools around the state's south-east in the lead-up to the games. They are both returning home with bronze medals for their efforts. Diver Melissa Wu, who studies through distance education, received a silver medal in the synchronised diving 10-metre platform. No doubt there are many former state school students who were successful Queenslanders at the Olympics such as Matthew Mitcham, a former student of Mansfield State High School.

Queensland's state schools were represented not only in the pool and on the playing fields during the games. Nineteen years 10 to 12 students and five past students from Mackay North State High School, participating in a marching band, were among those from 40 countries invited to be part of the 2008 Olympic international band. I am looking forward to catching up with the students next week when I am in Mackay for community cabinet.

Lastly, I congratulate my training colleagues from John Rogers Swim Squad at Albany Creek swimming pool—Leith Brodie, Kylie Palmer and Bronte Barratt. Kylie and Bronte were in the women's 200-metre freestyle relay final and won gold, and Leith won a bronze in the men's freestyle relay. Congratulations to all our state school achievers who represented their country, Queensland and our state education system at the Beijing Olympics. With this being the year of physical activity they are great role models for our students.