




Speech by

Jason Costigan

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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WHITSUNDAYS ELECTORATE, ATHLETES

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (9.04 pm): I rise in the House to pay tribute to some individuals from Mackay and the Whitsundays after their recent heroics in their chosen sport. Firstly, I want to congratulate Proserpine cyclist David Nicholas, a dual world champion, who won both a gold and bronze medal in the C3 time trial and men's individual C1-3 road race respectively at the London Paralympics. Like all elite athletes, 20-year-old David trained the house down prior to the games, spending time in Wales before his pedal power kicked in for the Paralympics, where he was part of a very successful Australian team.

Fittingly, the Whitsunday Regional Council has organised a street parade to honour David, who has cerebral palsy. The parade is on next Friday, 21 September 2012, and I commend the council on this great initiative. I encourage members of the community to come out in support of this special event, which will start at 5.30 pm near Freshfields Shopping Centre before finishing at the front of the Proserpine Entertainment Centre. Here, the mayor, Councillor Jenny Whitney, will make a presentation to David, whom I might add follows in the footsteps of another great and world-class Paralympian from the Whitsundays—the legendary Alan Duffy. For those unaware, Alan won 12 medals at three Paralympics from 1984 to 1992.

I would also like to congratulate another of our region's Paralympians, Cobi Crispin, who was part of the Australian women's wheelchair basketball team in London. Cobi, a 23-year-old from Mackay, who was born without a thigh bone, took part in her second Paralympics and went one better than Beijing, winning a silver medal. Well done, Cobi. Here's hoping gold follows in Rio!

The other sporting identity whom I wish to acknowledge this evening is rugby league star Ben Barba, who has enjoyed a stellar NRL season for the Canterbury Bulldogs. Ben was named the 2012 Dally M Medal winner. Not only did he win that medal; he also walked away with the Provan-Summons Medal, named after the 'Gladiators', from the 1963 grand final played in the mud at the Sydney Cricket Ground. But wait there's more.

Ben was also the Dally M fullback of the year, he was the NRL's joint top try scorer and he also won the Peter Frilingos headline moment of the year thanks to his wizardry on 24 June 2012. That is when Mackay hosted its first NRL game, and I am pleased to advise the House that I have since written to all NRL clubs in Australia outside the great state of Queensland, encouraging them to play in Mackay. For the record, Ben's junior club, Norths, is based in my electorate and the Red Devils, the Mackay rugby league community and our Indigenous community—in fact, the entire Mackay community—were delighted to see him win the Dally M.

Mr Ruthenberg: He'll bring home the championship, too.

Mr COSTIGAN: We'll see. The Cowboys are 12-12 against Manly. Thank you, member for Kallangur. The Dally M is an award for the best player in the toughest rugby league competition on the planet and, on that note, it would be remiss of me not to say that Ben's performances for the 'Dogs' in 2012 were something out of this world.