



Speech By  
**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**


**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 July 2015

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Clarke, Mr R, AO, MBE**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): Since the House last sat, Queensland, and indeed Australia, has lost one of its true gentlemen and sporting legends. Today I would like to place on record my government's sincere condolences to the family and friends of Ron Clarke, who died on 17 June 2015 aged 78. Mr Clarke, despite being a famous sporting hero and serving for eight years as the mayor of the Gold Coast, was in fact a very private person. His family farewelled him at a private funeral last month. However, there will be a celebration of his life to be held this afternoon at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

As all members will know, Ron Clarke was a great of Australian athletics. He set 17 world records during his sporting career and was the winner of silver and bronze medals at Olympic and Commonwealth Games levels and countless other titles. He will also be forever remembered as having been the first Australian to light the Olympic Games flame at the age of 19 at the 1956 Melbourne Games. Although a Victorian by birth, Mr Clarke and his wife, Helen, were regular visitors to the Gold Coast and made their home there from 1995.

Mr Clarke was a successful businessman throughout his life. He financed and ran health and fitness centres in Australia and England, and on the Gold Coast he was pivotal in the launch of Couran Cove Island Resort and the Runaway Bay sports centre. In 2004, Mr Clarke decided to contest the Gold Coast mayoralty. Mr Clarke served two terms as mayor until he decided to resign in February 2012, having served eight years. One of Mr Clarke's last major political achievements as mayor was to play a pivotal, key role in helping the then Labor government secure the 2018 Commonwealth Games for the Gold Coast. He is also credited with playing an important role in the AFL, deciding to establish a team on the Gold Coast.

Ron Clarke lived life to the fullest. His list of achievements are many, not the least being having been appointed a member of the Order of the British Empire in 1966 and an officer in the Order of Australia in 2013. I place on record the government's thanks—and I believe the thanks of all members of this House—for the years of service and dedication Mr Clarke gave to the Queensland community. On behalf of all members of this House, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Clarke's family and friends.