




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Olympic Games

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Over the last week and half Queenslanders have done what Queenslanders always do—carry the rest of Australia through the Olympic Games. It has been an incredible Olympics already for Queenslanders in Rio. There have been ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies, but ultimately Queenslanders have done us proud on sport's biggest stage. To mention just a few: on the opening night it was the Queensland girls—the Campbell sisters and Brittany Elmslie—along with Emma McKeon, who may not be a Queenslanders but who lives and trains here, who won gold and set a new world record in the women's 4 x 100-metre freestyle relay. There have been a swag of other medals won in the pool.

The women's sevens rugby team won the first ever women's rugby sevens gold medal—around half the team hailing from Queensland. We had already had some early success: Ryan Tyack and Taylor Worth won bronze in men's archery. Who could forget the sheer joy on the face of Dane Bird-Smith, who took bronze in the 20-kilometre walk?

I would like to pay special tribute to the great Anna Meares—another medal over the weekend. Anna had her last event this morning and, while the result did not go her way, her courage and tenacity inspired us, as it always has. We know Anna is considering the next step in her career. Anna, the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games is only two years away!

Beyond the medal winners, we have taken so much pride in the daily performances from all our Queensland athletes. As well as the athletes themselves, I would like to pay tribute to the coaches, managers and support staff of our athletes, not to mention their families and friends. It is not just the athletes who make great sacrifices to perform at the highest level; it is the people around them who do everything they can to help them get there. Often, they have been doing it for many, many years—driving our athletes to training, washing their gear, looking after them when they are injured, keeping their spirits up when they face setbacks, making sure they stay focused throughout their successes. Behind every great athlete is a group of incredible supporters.

As we watch the Rio games on TV, the countdown continues to our own games—the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018. I have no doubt there will be plenty of Queensland athletes switching their focus very quickly towards competing in a home Commonwealth Games. The rest of us—the armchair athletes—cannot wait to get away from the TV and see these world-class athletes live and in our own backyard, but we have a while to wait for that. First things first, congratulations to everyone involved in Rio and to our athletes yet to compete. Just remember one thing—Queenslander!