




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rio Paralympic Games, Welcome Home

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.38 am): From 12.30 pm today at King George Square we will welcome home our 2016 Australian Paralympic team. At this event, co-hosted by my government and the Brisbane City Council, Queenslanders will have the opportunity to meet their Paralympian heroes. There will be a public signing with the Paralympians, followed by a presentation by me and the Lord Mayor to the athletes. We will also have Brisbane's Tony Dee performing. Tony was the face and voice of the *Yes I can* song that provided the soundtrack for the viral video *We're the Superhumans* promoting the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. I will also be co-hosting a private reception with the Lord Mayor, dignitaries, our Paralympians and, of course, their guests.

Celebrations such as these, including the welcome home event for our Olympians in September, are an opportunity for us to show our support for the athletes who have represented our country on the world stage. I am so proud of our Paralympians and honoured to be welcoming them home today.

Australia achieved outstanding results at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. That included 22 gold, 30 silver and 29 bronze medals. Our very own Queensland athletes took out 26 of these medals: seven gold, eight silver and 11 bronze—more than 30 per cent of Australia's total medal tally. Forty-one Queensland Paralympians competed across 10 sports, all of them proudly supported by the Queensland Academy of Sport. Each of our athletes are an inspiration to each and every one of us. They represent determination, dedication and the true Australian spirit. They should be incredibly proud of their achievements, because we certainly are. Today will be a very fitting celebration to honour those heroes.

I will be reminding the members of the Paralympic team of the opportunity to compete at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Gold Coast 2018 will host the largest parasports program in the history of the Commonwealth Games. We will host up to 300 parasport athletes and 38 medal events across seven sports—an increase of 45 per cent in terms of athlete numbers and 73 per cent more medals compared to those awarded at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.