




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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ADJOURNMENT

Special Olympics

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (7.15 pm): I rise this evening to praise a group of local athletes in Gladstone who are very dear to my heart. Eleven athletes from Gladstone have been selected to compete as part of the Queensland team at the upcoming Special Olympics Australia National Games. Every four years hundreds of athletes with an intellectual disability from all over Australia demonstrate their skills and sportsmanship at the Special Olympics Australia National Games—the flagship event of Special Olympics Australia.

The Special Olympics provide such a great opportunity to transform the lives of people with an intellectual disability and it is fantastic to see so many athletes from Gladstone heading to the national games in Adelaide in April. The Gladstone team has athletes competing in the following: soccer, Adam Knust, George Button, Beau Westlake and Tyler Roberts; swimming, Ruby Lawler and Levi Harris; basketball, Rachel Smith and Nicole Corowa; and equestrian, Shelby Davis-Hill, Ellie Bloomfield, and Sarah Rukavina.

The athletes are led by Ruby Lawler and Adam Knust. Ruby's swimming achievements and Adam's soccer skills and their sportsmanship are shining examples for the rest of the team. The athletes are supported by five officials—Suzie Lawler, Donna Smith, Terry Fellows, Kasey Mossman and Debbie Knust. I had the great pleasure last weekend of presenting the athletes with their uniforms. To see their excited faces was such a joy.

The Special Olympics in Gladstone has grown from strength to strength. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Debbie Knust for her work as president over many years and wish her all the best in her retirement and welcome new chair Suzie Lawler. I would like to wish the team the very best of luck for the national games in Adelaide. I cannot wait to celebrate with them upon their return. I know that they will all give their best and have a great time representing the Gladstone community.

I will finish by reading the Special Olympics motto which speaks volumes for these great kids travelling to Adelaide. 'Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.' The motto of the Special Olympics is about finding the courage to give it a go. Giving all you have got may be going to an event for the first time, swimming across a pool, running to second base or just having the courage to ask a friend to dance at the state games. The Special Olympics nurtures athletes and shows them that there is an abundance of caring coaches and other volunteers who will support and challenge them in their efforts to give it all a go.