




Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Queensland Academy of Sport, Para Sport Unit

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (2.35 pm): The success of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be measured in a significant way by the success of our athletes, and my goal is for Brisbane 2032 to be the most successful games ever for our country.

At the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games Australia won a total of 63 medals, with 18 gold medals in that tally. Twenty-eight of those medals were won by Queenslanders, bringing home a remarkable seven gold medals. This is an outstanding effort, but we want to see even more Queenslanders on the Paralympic podium and more para-athletes to inspire the next generation like Curtis McGrath, Alexa Leary, Korey Boddington and Chris Davis. That is why I recently announced \$2 million in funding for a new Para Sport Unit at the Queensland Academy of Sport, delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Sport and Paralympics Australia.

The goal is to more than double the pipeline of future Paralympians on the road to Brisbane 2032. Currently, the QAS supports 85 para-athletes, and the Para Sport Unit aims to take that number to beyond 170 by 2029. The Para Sport Unit will reduce the barriers to participation for para-athletes, expand talent identification programs and develop more world-class coaches who specialise in para-sport. There are far too many barriers to participation for our para-athletes: a lack of experienced coaches, the cost of travel to competitions and difficulty assessing high-performance pathways and classifications, to name a few. The Para Sport Unit will address some of these challenges to keep Queensland at the forefront of Paralympic sport and get more Queenslanders with a disability participating in competitive sport. The unit will include: a talent program for 40 aspiring para-athletes at the pre-elite level; a Gen 2032 coaching program to develop coaching expertise; and a talent ID network, where we will work with allied health professionals and networks to expand talent identification.

The Para Sport Unit will help change Queensland's Paralympic future, ensuring more athletes with a disability can follow their dreams. We have little time to waste, with LA 2028 just around the corner and Brisbane 2032 only seven years away. Be assured that in 2032 we will deliver the games that Queenslanders deserve.