

## **Commonwealth Day**

Thank you for the invitation to be guest speaker today on this most special day. Commonwealth Day has been celebrated throughout the Commonwealth on the second Monday in March since 1977.

This day was chosen as Commonwealth Day because it is a day when all schools throughout the Commonwealth are in operation and it doesn't fall on any other holiday. Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau actually started this day. He wanted one day each year where all Commonwealth countries could mark their membership and encourage commitment to the association. All the Commonwealth leaders agreed that the day should be used to promote knowledge of the Commonwealth, especially among the young people of their countries.

### **So, what is the Commonwealth?**

The Commonwealth is a group of over 50 independent sovereign states, which provide support to each other, and work together toward international goals. The Commonwealth is a "family" of nations, originally linked together in the British Empire, and now building on their common heritage in language, culture and education. It brings together some 2 billion people of many faiths, races, languages, traditions and levels of economic development. The Commonwealth represents almost one-third of the world's population, half of whom are 25 years of age or less and a quarter are under 5 years old.

### **A few facts about the Commonwealth**

**6 – the number of continents spanned by the Commonwealth**

**21 - Gold Coast 2018 will be the 21st edition of the Commonwealth Games**

**34 – the highest one-name Scrabble score of any Commonwealth nation - Mozambique**

**70 – national teams expected to participate in the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games**

**1400 – the population of Niue, the smallest Commonwealth Games participant**

**1930 - the year of the first British Empire Games in Hamilton Ontario**

**1957 – the year Ghana became the first of many African nations to join the Commonwealth**

**198,000 – the kilometre distance covered by the Glasgow 2014 Queens Baton Relay**

**9,984,670 –Canada is the largest Commonwealth nation by area**

**31,500,000,00 – the square kilometre land area of the**

**Commonwealth**

**1,026,000,000 –India is the most populated Commonwealth nation**

**2,100,000,000 – the combined population of the Commonwealth**

This brings me to our upcoming Commonwealth Games on the coast.

In 23 days we see the Games start – 22 days until I carry the baton in Burleigh Heads. All the planning and hard work is coming to fruition. Some 12 years ago the journey started with the inception of idea – it was then taken to Anna Bligh to see if it had legs. Then it went to the bid stage and a team travelled to St Kitts and Nevis to convince the Commonwealth countries that the Gold Coast could put on a good Games. We won – then the real work began.

### **SOME FACTS**

Games will go from 4<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> April

18 Competition venues will hold the 18 sports

Expected 1.5 million spectators

Some 6,600 athletes and team officials

15,000 volunteers

70 nations and territories

7 para sports – most para events than ever held before

275 gold medals

1<sup>st</sup> time that there will be the same number of events for men and women

**The 2017 theme of Commonwealth Day was “A Peach Building Commonwealth”. This year it is important for the Commonwealth to address the global challenges and work to create a better future for ALL citizens – through sustainability, safety, prosperity and fairness.**

### **Some facts about the Village**

1,170 apartments – 82 townhouses

4 pools

7 serviced laundries

516 accessible bedrooms for para athletes

3,500 bins to service all areas

1,700 pillow cases changed daily

2,053 bathrooms cleaned daily

3,300 bedrooms cleaned daily

3,400 single sheets changed daily

7,000 towels changed daily

### **DURING THE GAMES**

208,000 bath towels

31,000 hand towels

75,000 sheets

57,000 toilet rolls

1,000 kg of washing powder

178,000 garbage bags

56,000 coffee sachets

### **Catering**

18,000 meals served daily

3,300kgs fresh strawberries

Over 10,000 kg of fresh fruit salad

121,000 bananas

29,000 kg of fresh chicken

14,000 beef steaks

5,000kgs of lamb

1500kg of sticky rice

3000kg of jasmine rice

240,000 serves of assorted bread

Over 100,000 fresh eggs

8000kgs of fresh fish

Over 40,000 individual smoothies

52,000 individual ice creams

25,000 individual yoghurts

Transport – 84 buses coming and going in the transport mall per hour

7 hectares of residential and retail precinct and 7 hectares of parkland.

18 new buildings including six apartment towers with 1,252 dwellings (1,170 one and two bedroom apartments, 82 three-bed townhouses, and 516 accessible beds).

Up to 1,500 jobs created during design and construction.

13 indigenous businesses contracted during the development.

56,252 m<sup>3</sup> of concrete used in the construction and 2,379 tonnes of reinforcement.

136,420 trees planted in green spaces throughout the completed development. *Upkeep during GC2018:*

500 mats changed daily.

1,700 pillow cases changed daily.

3,400 single sheets changed daily.

7,000 towels changed daily.

17,000 toilet rolls over Games period.

27,000 meals served daily.

800,000 pieces of fruit served over Games period.

400,000 items of linen laundered over the Games period.

3,500 bins of different sizes to service all areas.

### What does all this tell us??

That the athletes are going to be looked after / going to be fed well and are going to be clean.

I was involved as a competitor in 4 Commonwealth Games. They are the FRIENDLY GAMES – participants come together to share experiences and develop relationships. To have a home games is just something that is extra special.

Edmonton / Brisbane / Edinburgh and Auckland

Then Delhi and Glasgow as observers.

All are very different but the one thing is that the Commonwealth Games has that can never be changed is that they are the FRIENDLY GAMES. They are different from the Olympics. Don't get me wrong – there is still a lot of pressure – athletes still want to win. This is why they train so hard putting hours and hours of work into their performance.

Sport has taught me so much

The main messages I think have been;

1. So important to have a dream and then work towards this.
2. Belief – believe in yourself and what you are working towards.
3. Motivation – once you have the dream and the belief you need to be motivated to do the work to ensure the dream comes to life
4. Communication – conversations tend to help the dream grow and grow and be achieved.
5. Be patient – listen / talk / listen / talk / listen

I wish the Commonwealth a great day. It has brought many years of pleasure to my life – in competition and now as an administrator and organiser.

On April 4<sup>th</sup> the birth of baby that has been growing for some 12 years will happen. Much enjoyment, many dreams realised and a lot and lot of hard work will be recognised.

Enjoy the Gold Coast – enjoy Queensland – enjoy Australia.