

**Speech by Mrs Gina Rinehart
Patron of the Australian Swimming Team
Executive Chairman of the Hancock Prospecting Group
Swimming Australia's Gala Awards Dinner
Sunday 29 October 2017, Adelaide**

Thank you very much John, good evening distinguished guests, swimmers and your families, friends and the wider swimming family.

It is truly wonderful to be here with you for your night, a night for each swimmer, your supportive families and your coaches too.

Tonight, I'm here as Patron, but I think much more than that, as I feel, and I hope you know, I feel more than just your Patron. I like and regard very highly your dedication, self-discipline, huge efforts and sacrifices, your wonderful strong desires to represent your country, your modesty, your values, and as I say many times, both your ambassadorship for Australia, and your huge contribution as role models.

So I am very fortunate to be your patron and look forward to being so, through to seeing many of you at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

This country has been built by people putting everything on the line and 'giving it a go.' Built by fine dedicated people working hard for themselves, their families, and ultimately for our country.

Our sport of swimming is similar in so many ways.

You train hard, you live the dream through your own efforts of achieving at the highest level, in this case, on a world stage.

Very few people have attained through their own endeavours, a position such as you have.

You never have the attitude, although I didn't win that race, I'm entitled to do so and want to share another person's medal! Instead, you work harder and achieve more.

Your position is also a privileged position, not without its responsibilities.

But the greatest responsibility is to yourself... that you have given it your all and with humility, so in years to come, indeed for the rest of your life, you can look back on your career with the utmost pride and say, I gave it my very best.

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At this point, I want to mention our President, John Bertrand AO, because he has lived his outstanding life doing just that. I am very appreciative as I am sure you are too, of his incredible, selfless, efforts and leadership. *Applause.*

Continuing thanks to your coaches and to your supportive families and loved ones.

Without them, this would not be happening. Because this is both an individual and a team sport.

To get to the very top, you need the help of those you are closest to.

Speaking of the very top, warmest congratulations on your recent medals in Budapest and Toronto, and congratulations to all of those who achieved medals in Adelaide for the Hancock Prospecting Australian Short Course Championships. In particular my warmest congratulations to Cate Campbell who broke the 100m Womens freestyle Short Course World Record and Emily Seebohm who won her 25th National Short Course title.

Now, I have the honour of recognising the efforts of two outstanding members of the Australian Swimming Team.

The first has had a stellar performance year and is well and truly deserving of recognition for her performances in Budapest being the first Australian female to win six medals at a World Championship event! She also won four medals, including a gold, at the Rio Olympics.

The second is also a wonderful ambassador for the sport. She performed brilliantly in Canada recently, and in Rio, she won Australia's first gold medal of the Paralympic games in world record time, proving again her nickname, Australia's 'lucky' charm!

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Emma McKeon OAM and Lakeisha Patterson OAM are the 2017 Patron Award winners. Please join me on the stage Emma and Lakeisha.

Thank you and best wishes to everyone in our Australian swimming family.

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