# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Visit to the Commonwealth Games** |
| **DATE**  | **Monday 16 April 2018** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport** |

I have just returned from visiting the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast. I was delighted to be there in support of Team Wales and I would like to pay tribute to the athletes, coaches, Commonwealth Games Wales, Sport Wales, National Governing Bodies of Sport in Wales and all the other individuals and organisations who worked so hard to field a really strong Team.

I was immensely proud to witness Wales’s first gold medal for weightlifter Gareth Evans from North Wales on day 2 of the competition. It was the first gold medal amongst a record breaking medal haul for Team Wales at an overseas Commonwealth Games, a fantastic achievement.

From day one the team did Wales proud with para-cyclist James Ball and tandem pilot Pete Mitchell earning our first medal of the Games. It was also thrilling that Hollie Arnold went on to win gold and set a new world record in the Women’s F46 Javelin. What is really encouraging though is the number of close misses in terms of medals which bodes well for the future.

The Commonwealth Games are special because Wales competes as a nation in its own right. It also shows what we can do alongside bigger nations.

The professionalism, passion, commitment and general good humour of the Welsh athletes could be seen in abundance. So much so that many Australian supporters adopted Wales as their second nation and were cheering on our athletes with loud pride and passion. I was enormously proud to be Welsh. The Team’s attitude, performance and pride was a credit to Wales and gave me a fantastic platform when talking to other politicians, governments and business people at official events. Even the British High Commissioner to Australia, was happy to admit that on this occasion she would be shouting loudest for Wales. Judging by the commitment of those participating as well as the passion of those who were there in support, it was abundantly clear that the opportunity to compete and

cheer for Wales at the Commonwealth Games is very special.

Throughout my time in Australia, I drew attention to the improved connectivity for businesses and travellers, with the gateway into North Wales just 30 minutes from the border at Manchester Airport and the new Qatar Airways route between Doha and Cardiff begins on 1 May.

During my trip to the Australian east coast I also met with the British Chamber of Commerce in Sydney and with leading tourist organisations covering the whole of the country.

I also represented Wales at the Commonwealth Games Federation meetings and functions, where there was a palpable desire for greater collaboration across sport, health and economic agendas. I was proud and honoured to be given the opportunity to address Team Wales athletes during a visit to the Athlete’s Village and to be present at many events to cheer on our competitors.

I also hosted a reception at the Team Wales House which, with its large ‘Cymru Wales’ sign, attracted a good deal of attention from visitors of all nations as well as the Welsh Diaspora living on the Gold Coast.

The Welsh Government is committed to a Healthy and Active Wales. There can be no better inspiration for Welsh people to get active than the performance of Team Wales at the Gold Coast 2018.

It was truly an occasion where flying the flag for Wales was an honour and a pleasure.