

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR
EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE
ON WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY 2015**

NatWest Island Games 2015

The recent NatWest Island Games was a huge success and I would like to congratulate all those involved in making it one of the best weeks that Jersey has experienced in recent years.

My first thanks go to Phil Austin and his Organising Committee who planned and masterminded a week which really could not have gone any better. They set out to put on the best Games ever and, having spoken to many experienced local and visiting participants, I am very confident that they achieved this, and more. All our visitors were very complimentary and the Committee could not have done more to ensure that all would go so well. They were even bold enough to have their strap line as 'a time to shine'. They, and the Jersey weather, certainly did that in abundance.

The organisers of the 14 different sports spent many hours preparing and delivering first class competitions at excellent facilities across 34 venues. This resulted in some great sport which was played in the right spirit ensuring that they truly were the friendly games. The sports and their officials should be very proud of what they achieved.

In addition to the sport organisers, the Waitrose Games Makers, resplendent in their purple uniforms, made a huge impression and added great value to the Games. They were well trained and worked tirelessly to make all our visitors feel very welcome. Many of these people spent countless hours over many weeks and months in preparation for the Games to ensure all went well. What great volunteers we have in Jersey. I thank them all.

I know that the Organising Committee were very grateful for the support received from many States departments and also the Emergency Services, Honorary Police and St John Ambulance. I am grateful to them all for their efforts and support which was a great example of what can be achieved when so many people work together in a common cause. From the moment people arrived at the ports until they departed seven or eight days later, everyone joined in to make their visits as memorable as possible.

The Parish of St. Helier played a major role in welcoming everybody, with the streets of town dressed to thrill and full of happy smiling people. All the Parishes were in one way or another were involved in the Games and it would be wrong if I did not thank all those who assisted through their Connétables here today. Our tourist industries including hotels, transport providers, restaurants and retail all played their part in supporting the Games. Clearly, many of these had financial benefits from the Games, but somehow, it was the positive way in which we all did it together that enhanced the atmosphere and created a 'feel good' factor across the Island.

School children supported their designated islands by attending many of the sports around the Island and assisted at the medal ceremonies. I hope they will remember these Games for the warmth and generosity they encountered and that the memories will be carried through their formative years into adulthood. These children are our future and it must be hoped that the keenly

contested sport they witnessed, played in the right spirit will spur them on to be our medal winners in future Island Games

The Jersey Team certainly played their part in making the week even more special. Their success in competition was excellent and they were so well supported by so many in our community. It was a pleasure to witness many of the achievements but also to see how Team Jersey were such good ambassadors for our Island watched by many spectators and supporters.

My thanks go to the media for the part they played in recording such a marvellous week and for sharing it with the residents of Jersey and many beyond our shores.

My final thanks go to my fellow States Members, including the Council of Ministers in 2009, who agreed to back the bid to host the 2015 NatWest Island Games, and subsequent Council of Ministers who have continued with their support. Those decisions allowed so many in our community to deliver the excellent week we have just all enjoyed.

I have long been advocating the importance and value of sport. These Games demonstrated how important sport is and I can do no more, than say thank you to each and every person in Jersey who made them happen, and for helping make it such a memorable week, which I am sure many islanders will never forget.