



AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, MISSION AND SERVICE

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Paralympians leading the way

The 2026 Paralympic Winter Games, which open on March 6 in the Arena di Verona, Milano Cortina, Italy, will highlight around 665 athletes competing in 79 medal events across six sports.

Australia is sending a team of 15 athletes to compete. The team, which includes two guides, will compete across four sports: para-alpine skiing, para-snowboard, para-cross country and para-biathlon. This matches the largest-ever Australian Winter Paralympic team.

For Australian Paralympians, their families, and all who support them, the excitement of the upcoming Paralympics is only a small part of the story.

In this moment, it is easy to forget the way in which society routinely discriminates against people with disabilities.

“Our Winter Paralympians reveal the strength of the human spirit and the deep truth that no one is defined by limitation alone,” said Bishop Tim Harris, chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice Mission and Service.

“Their dedication is a powerful invitation for Australia to build communities where people with disability are welcomed, supported and empowered.”

As part of its broad range of work, the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service - a commission of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference - undertakes public and private advocacy in support of people with disabilities.

Reflecting on Australia’s athletes in the lead-up to the opening ceremony, Bishop Harris said: “Their efforts inspire us to walk together in solidarity and create a world where every person can flourish.”

“As we cheer them on, may we also renew our commitment to full inclusion in the Church and every part of our society,” he said.

“The well-deserved focus on our Paralympians brings renewed focus on our shared humanity, dignity and individuality as Australians. We wish our Paralympians every success knowing that, for all of us, they are leading the way.”