

Claire's bronze winning journey

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CLAIRE Barr's first international swimming event was filled with nerves and adrenaline as she helped win the Australian team a bronze medal.

The 18-year-old headed to the International Federation for Athletes with Intellectual Impairments (INAS) Global Games in Brisbane, where her last of six swims proved the greatest.

It wasn't until the night before the Women 4x100 LC Metre Medley III Championship Relay Multi-Class on October 17 that Barr was drafted into the team.

"The events I was swimming in were uncertain the entire week," she said.

"I got pulled out of the 100 breaststroke and put in the 50m breaststroke.

"They also threw me in random races like the 200m breaststroke in the middle of the week and then relays, so it was really hard to adjust to the changes."

Barr was already registered to compete in the 1500m freestyle and said she was contemplating whether she should decline the offer.

"I was already worried about the 1500m freestyle because I felt I'd walk out of it with another injury again," she said.

But securing a personal best time of 21.56.60, shaving a minute off her personal best and finishing seventh in the world, Barr had the confidence to continue a marathon swimming day.

"I certainly have no regrets now," she said.

Barr was chosen to bring the team home with the freestyle leg in the 100m relay final, but admitted she'd started to lose hope before jumping in the pool.

"We started off pretty strong with the backstroke before we dropped off in the butterfly just before I was diving in," she said.

"But I just took the advice of one of the coaches, dove in and cruised along the first 50m before going all out in the home stretch.

"In the last 25m, I could see Brazil (fourth

place) next to me and I told myself to go."

Not only did Barr secure an unexpected personal best (1.05.48), but she also left all her teammates, family and friends shedding tears of joy.

"It was very emotional and probably the swimming highlight for a lot of us," she said.

"I went out for tea after to celebrate, but was in bed pretty quickly because we were all tired after a long day."

Barr said it was daunting to see so many athletes in the one place upon arrival at the event.

"I was that nervous I didn't think I was going to settle, but then I started connecting with a lot of the swimmers and built friendships," she said.

"The opening ceremony was amazing — walking through the streets with a marching band behind us before amazing fireworks."

Barr said at the conclusion of the event, Australian head coach Andrew Howard, who coached 2012 Summer Paralympian Grant Patterson, offered her a spot on his club team in Cairns.

"They were quite shocked with my performances and he asked, but my mum was quick to shut down that talk," she said.

Barr knows the trip would not have been possible without the support of the community, who helped fund her trip.

She thanked all who donated, her swimming coaches and those who were watching the live streams and sending messages while she competed throughout the week.

It caps off a great month of swimming for Barr, who attended the 2019 Hancock Prospecting Short Course Champs only one week later.

Barr made the national finals of the 100m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 50m backstroke 100m breaststroke and recorded four personal best times.

Barr will be continuing to set her sights on all race meetings as she tries to catch the attention of national selectors in her bid for the Commonwealth Games.



Claire Barr is all smiles after securing bronze in the INAS Global Games last month. Picture: COHEN MORTIMER

AFL CENTRAL MURRAY ANNOUNCES 2020 ACADEMY SQUADS

THE 2020 AFL Central Murray Football Academy sides have been selected giving more than 100 young players the opportunity to take the next step towards a future at elite level football.

Teams across the under 13, 14 and 15 boys along with the youth girls side will work with some of the most experienced coaching staff across the region and compete against other region academies throughout the year.

UNDER 13 SQUAD	UNDER 14 SQUAD	UNDER 15 SQUAD	YOUTH GIRLS SQUAD
<p>Coaches: Scott Wishart, Trent O'Neil, Jeff Mason and Vince Mazzarella</p> <p>Harry Scott, Swan Hill Ethan Curran, NNWU Charlie King, Woorinen Blake Greenwood, Wandella Wil Bennett, Swan Hill Lachie Vrolijk, Swan Hill Kodyn Melbourne, Ultima Billy O'Toole, Ultima Sam Miller, Ultima Sebastian Papa, Balranald Hudson Fountain, Cohuna Kangas Lachlan English, Cohuna Kangas Jimmy Houston, Hay Ryan Bassett, Koondrook-Barham Xavier Leonard, Koondrook-Barham Harry Bremner, Kerang Leigham McAlpin, Kerang Kai Evertt, Lake Boga Rylan Barnes, Lake Boga Iszac Green, Lake Boga Sam Whinfield, Macorna Max Parsons, Mallee Eagles Charlie Kingwell, Mallee Eagles Darcy Butler, NNWU Ethan Ellis, Sea Lake Joss Tait, Sea Lake Pat Blake, Tyntynder Zach Kelly, Tyntynder Myles Greenwood, Wandella Laing Waddingham, Wandella Hugh Thompson, Woorinen</p>	<p>Coaches: Brenten Hogan, Dale McMullan, Luke Brown and Paul Grayling</p> <p>Blake Forster, Macorna Will Cooke, Cohuna Kangas Isaac Durie, SL Nandaly Tigers Xavier Wishart, Macorna Xavier Sherlock, Lake Boga Otto Conlan, Woorinen Glen Gillbee, Balranald Travis Ford, Cohuna Kangas Koben Ryan, Lake Boga Jed Daniels, SL Nandaly Tigers Will Lake, Koondrook-Barham Eli Boyd, Koondrook-Barham Billy O'Meara, Mallee Eagles Kallum Hazlett, Tooleybuc William Rush, Woorinen Nicholas Taylor, Lake Boga Felix Warne, SL Nandaly Tigers Tahj Bolton, Woorinen Jensen Hargreaves, Hay Jonah Devlin, Ultima Jack Helgeland, Balranald Bohdan Thomson, NNWU Sol Kelly, Nullawil Lucas McInerney, Sea Lake Sam Nelson, Tyntynder Spencer Nicholls, Woorinen Ethan Glass, Cohuna Kangas</p>	<p>Coaches: Marcus Demaria, Brayden Wren and Rhys Bradley</p> <p>Jack Lake, Koondrook-Barham Dante Miliano, NNWU Jude Palmer, Cohuna Kangas Zeb Pryor, Tyntynder Tyson Clingan, Kerang Thomas Cox, SL Nandaly Tigers Brody Palmer, Lake Boga Brock Crowe, SL Nandaly Tigers Dude Kelly, Nullawil Mitchell Uhlhorn, Woorinen Jackson Hopkins, NNWU Lance McClelland, SL Nandaly Tigers Ryan Harvey, Lake Boga Mac Scoullar, Koondrook-Barham Liam Farnsworth, Balranald Jake Lowry, Koondrook-Barham Lachlan Somerville, Kerang Charlie Boulton, NNWU Charlie Fawcett, Nullawil Eddie Schifferle, Tyntynder Dustin Holmes, Lake Boga Tristan Dalbon, SL Nandaly Tigers Fraser Colville, Lake Boga Ryan Drotzky, Lake Boga Daniel Stewart, Hay Taj Lane, Wandella</p>	<p>Coaches: Matt Curran, Whitney Kennedy, Katie Quigley and Roberta Barry</p> <p>Ebony Lee Matthews Rachael Ann Mason Jemma Pryor Molly Brown Charlotte Oliver Tatum Boyd Bridgette Zucco Demi Greenwood Emily Rookes Sophie Renee McClelland Emily Paterson Brydi Lewis Gaby Sanford Samantha Johnston Sienna Charles Sophie Lea Fasham Kate Heffer Ayla Davis Grace Doherty Ava Isabella Pryor Jonajia Hamilton Montana Rose Hughes Paige Elizabeth Schulz Marie Donna Barry Laine Somerville</p>
<p>SUPPORT STAFF</p> <p>Keith Blackman, Lyndon Shadbolt, Wes Lewis and Jarrod Skinner</p>		<p>PROGRAM MANAGER</p> <p>David Alderuccio – Football Development Manager</p>	