

= Australia at the 2014 Winter Paralympics =

Australia sent nine competitors to the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi , Russia . The delegation also consisted of two sighted guides and 15 support staff . The team won two bronze medals . Toby Kane won a bronze medal in the men 's Super combined standing , and Jessica Gallagher and guide Christian Geiger won one in the women 's giant slalom visually impaired event .

The Australian Team 's performance was affected by the death of para @-@ snowboarder Matthew Robinson just prior to the Games , and injuries to Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula and Joany Badenhurst forcing them to withdraw from their events .

= = Team Preparation = =

Australian Paralympic Winter Program members competed in competitions in Europe and the United States in the lead up to the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi , Russia . In September 2013 , Australia hosted the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup at Thredbo , New South Wales . Australia finished the competition with three gold , three silver and one bronze medal to finish third on the medal tally behind the United States (eight gold , six silver , eight bronze medals) and Slovakia (eight gold , two silver , three bronze medals) . Australia 's Mitchell Gourley and Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula won gold medals .

Three team members ? Toby Kane , Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula and Mitchell Gourley undertook wind tunnel testing at Monash University in 2013 to assist them in determining their optimal aerodynamic position whilst skiing .

= = = Pre Games Skiing Accidents = = =

The Australian Paralympic Team suffered two major skiing accidents just prior to the games . Matthew Robinson died after a skiing accident while competing at the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup , Whilst Robinson 's event was not included in the Games , he was an integral member of the Australian Paralympic snowboard team . Less than a day after being named as Australia 's flagbearer for the Sochi Paralympics , Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula was injured while training for the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympic Games . Rahles @-@ Rahbula suffered a knee injury that forced him to miss his opening races , but he still hoped to be able to compete in his pet event , the slalom , and in the giant slalom . On 10 March 2014 , it was revealed that Rahles @-@ Rahbula has a knee fracture and would not be able to compete in any of his Paralympic events .

= = Administration = =

Kate McLoughlin was appointed the Chef de Mission in March 2013 . This was the first time that a woman had been appointed a Chef de Mission . However , she stepped down due to family reasons , and was replaced by Chris Nunn in November 2013 . The Australian Paralympic Committee announced that it cost AUD \$ 1 @.@ 5 million to send the Team to Sochi , with \$ 200 @,@ 000 of the budget still outstanding . To raise additional funds , it launched the " Believe " campaign .

= = Team = =

On 4 February 2014 , Australian Paralympic Committee announced a team of nine athletes , as well as two sighted guides , to attend the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympics . Their head coach is Steve Graham . Athletes selected were :

Alpine skiing

Jessica Gallagher

Christian Geiger (guide for Gallagher)

Mitchell Gourley

Toby Kane

Victoria Pendergast
Melissa Perrine
Andrew Bor (guide for Perrine)
Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula
Snowboard cross
Joany Badenhorst
Trent Milton
Ben Tudhope .

Victoria Pendergast became Australia 's first female sit @-@ skier to compete at a Winter Paralympics , and Ben Tudhope , who turned 14 in December 2013 , became Australia 's youngest competitor at the Winter Paralympics . The 14 @-@ year @-@ old Tudhope was the youngest competitor at the Games from any nation . The team included three medallists from previous Winter Paralympics : Jessica Gallagher , Toby Kane and Cameron @-@ Rahles @-@ Rahbula . Four athletes and one guide made their Games debut .

= = Ceremonies = =

Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula , competing at his fourth Winter Paralympics , was named as the Australian flag bearer for the Opening Ceremony . After being named flag bearer , Rahles @-@ Rahbula had a skiing training accident that made his participation doubtful . He went on to carry the flag but withdrew from the Games on medical advice . At Opening Ceremony , the entire Australian team of nine athletes , coaches , medical staff and administration officials wore the black arm bands to remember Matthew Robinson , who had recently died as a result of a skiing accident . Ben Tudhope , the youngest competitor at the Games , carried the Australian flag at the Closing Ceremony .

= = Medallists = =

= = Events = =

= = = Alpine skiing = = =

The International Paralympic Committee introduced para @-@ snowboard as an alpine skiing discipline for the 2014 Games . These events are for standing athletes with a lower body disability .

Women

DNF ? did not finish

DSQ ? disqualified . Melissa Perrine was disqualified after the slalom leg of the Super combined for wearing a visor , which was taped to her helmet , to keep rain from her goggles . This was a breach of the IPC Alpine Skiing rules . Jason Hellwig , CEO of the Australian Paralympic Committee described it as " mindnumbingly @-@ dumb mistake " as it was not picked up by relevant team officials . He indicated it was an honest mistake and there was no intention to cheat .

DNS ? Badenhorst was forced to withdraw from the event after suffering an injury to her left knee whilst training on the morning of the event .

Men

DNF ? did not finish .

DNS ? did not start . Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula withdrew from all competitions after the Games commenced . This was due to injuries sustained in training just prior to the Games .

= = Broadcasting = =

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation showed a daily 30 minutes highlights program twice a day

, and also streamed the alpine skiing and ice hockey live on its Grandstand website . The Games ' opening ceremony was broadcast live . The presenters for the ABC 's coverage were Amanda Shalala and Darren Boyd .

= = Outcome = =

Australia finished the Games with two bronze medals . Jason Hellwig stated that the aim was to win between two and five medals . He said : " wo medals absolutely is a pass ... so we 're really pleased with that but we 're absolutely disappointed we didn 't get the mission done to win that gold medal , but I tell you what , we are absolutely determined to get it done in four years ' time . It hasn 't been easy , we 've come in under the most difficult of circumstances that I 've ever seen a team at a major Games . " Chris Nunn , Chef de Mission , pointed to the future by stating that " We really need to focus on having good @-@ quality athletes who are robust and have financial support to get overseas . It 's not like living in Austria , Sweden or Germany where you can do this on the weekend and after work . "

Toby Kane and Cameron Rahles @-@ Rahbula indicated that Sochi Games would be their last Winter Paralympics . Kane and Dutch snowboarder Bibian Mentel @-@ Spee were named winners of the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award , which is presented at every Paralympic Games for outstanding performances and overcoming adversity .