

Priya Cooper

Paralympics Swimming Champion & Motivational Speaker

Priya Cooper is an extraordinary athlete who has not let cerebral palsy stop her from achieving all her life goals. A record-breaking swimmer, she has won multiple medals at national and international competition level. An influencer in the world of sport, she is a Vice President of the Western Australia Disabled Sporting Association and a board member of the Technology Assisting Disability Western Australia.

Much awarded, Priya Cooper received an Order of Australia Medal in 1992. She was the 1999 Young Australian of the Year for Sport and in 2014 she was inducted into the inaugural WA International Women's Day Hall of Fame. In 2015 she was inducted into the Sports Australia Hall of Fame along with Ricky Ponting and Casey Stoner.

A talented broadcaster, Priya Cooper commentated the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester for Seven Network and has been engaged as a reporter on lifestyle and entertainment programs such as Sydney Weekender, Great Outdoors and Big Arvo.

An excellent motivational speaker, Priya's presentation titled 'Success is A Choice' often elicits standing ovations from audiences.

Priya began swimming at a young age for therapy and later realised her potential as a competitor. It was not until 1991, while competing at a school carnival, she was approached to represent Western Australia.

Priya competed for the first time in the National Wheelchair Games winning a staggering nine gold medals. With the hours of long, hard training Priya went from success to success, winning three gold and two silver medals, and breaking two world records and three Paralympic records at the Barcelona Paralympics in 1992. This was her first international competition.

Priya won the most medals of any Australian athlete at the Games, and as a result was given the honour of carrying the flag for Australia at the closing ceremony. On arriving back in Australia she was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her services to sport, and became an Australia Day Ambassador.



Priya then set her sights on the World Swimming Championships in Malta in 1994. Priya competed in five events, won five gold medals and set four world records as well as captaining the Australian team.

The lead up to the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta saw Priya compete in 1995 in the Pre-Paralympic Swimming trials in Atlanta winning eight gold medals in eight events and setting one world record. These results focused much attention on her for the subsequent Paralympic Games in 1996.

At the 10th Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Priya led the charge for Australia winning five gold medals, one silver and one bronze medal, as well as setting three world records and five Paralympic records. Far exceeding her efforts in Barcelona four years earlier. She was also selected to captain the entire Australian Paralympic team, and once again won the highest number of medals of any Australian athlete.

In 1988 Priya competed in the British National Swimming Championships and won four gold medals, a bronze medal, and set a world record.

In 1999 Priya was named Young Australian of the Year for Sport, winning the award over other major sporting stars such as Pat Rafter and Ian Thorpe who were also finalists in the Sports category of this prestigious award.

Priya spent almost two years in Sydney prior to Sydney 2000 Paralympics to concentrate on her training and lifelong goal of winning gold for her country, in her country, at the Sydney 2000 Paralympics. Despite recovering from major shoulder surgery, Priya achieved her aim and in October 2000 won a gold medal in the 400m Freestyle and three bronze medals in other events.

Priya Cooper has a degree in Health Promotion and Journalism from Curtin University of W.A, and is very involved in public speaking. She has addressed major corporate and government conferences and events in Fiji, Sydney, Canberra, Hobart, Gold Coast, Cairns, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. She is an excellent motivational speaker whose presentation titled 'Success is A Choice' reminds us that any dream, large or small, personal or corporate, can come true with the strength of sheer determination.

Client Testimonials



Excellent. Great down to earth presentation which linked well with our theme of achievement for the day. Great personality and rapport building ability.

Dept of Public Works & Services



Priya's presentation for our annual state conference was sincere, inspirational, fresh, enlightening, fun and set a great tone for the day.

Ray White Real Estate



(Priya was received) really well, she was perfect for the style of the function. Very warm and engaging, my members enjoyed her presentation. My CEO and I are very pleased with the outcome.

Australian Funeral Directors Association



Priya was very friendly and well received by the audience. Priya's speech was very inspirational, funny and full of emotion. Her many personal stories were a highlight at our recent Women's Health and Wellness Day. Many of our guests would like her to return next year.

Rando & Associates

[VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE ▶](#)