



Sarah Clifton-Bligh racing through The Rocks on Australia Day 2019.

Born with cerebral palsy, 15-year-old Sarah Clifton-Bligh has worked extra hard to follow her passion for athletics.

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of *Pushers Post*.

Our quarterly newsletter is for our community of Members and Supporters to stay up to date with what's happening at Wheelchair Sports NSW and find opportunities to get more involved.

FEATURED ATHLETE

Sarah Clifton-Bligh

Sarah's first school athletics carnival was held on grass, preventing her taking part in any track events in her wheelchair.

She decided to have a go at shotput instead – and proved she

was a natural, before getting a chance to try Wheelchair Racing at a subsequent school carnival on a synthetic track. From that moment she was hooked.

It was tough trying to go fast in her heavy and slow day chair, but she gave it all she could.

Then Sarah and her mum found out about Wheelchair Sports NSW while she was at Sydney Olympic Park getting the official Paralympic classification for her disability.

Thanks to generous supporters, we could lend Sarah a racing chair and invite her to sports training on Saturday mornings. Sarah was thrilled at the sessions to meet our

volunteer coaches, Paralympians Louise Sauvage and Angie Ballard, who have since become her mentors and friends.

From initially struggling to push and steer a race chair, her confidence and skills have skyrocketed. Sarah now has a bunch of gold medals herself, including for javelin and the 100m, 200m and 400m track events in the NSW Open Championships. This year she proudly completed her first Oz Day 10km.

Everyone at Wheelchair Sports NSW is very proud of Sarah, and we're looking forward to what comes next for this terrific athlete.

Our new CEO



On January 7 2019, Wheelchair Sports NSW welcomed new CEO Mick Garnett. Mick was previously the CEO of Variety the Children's Charity of Australia, bringing a combination of Not-for-Profit and Commercial experience to the organisation.

A former sportsman and graduate of the Australian Institute of Sport, Mick is passionate about working with the team to grow the amount of people living with disabilities who Wheelchair Sports NSW can help.

"Our mission is to enrich the lives of people with a disability through participation in sport", Mick said.

"It's an incredible mission, and the team understands what a wonderful community of people surround the work we do. We are committed to building on the extraordinary legacy that has been established by everyone involved in our organisation since 1961, and we will do it together".



Farewell Jim

In early 2019, Wheelchair Sports NSW said goodbye to its longest serving staff member. CEO Jim O'Brien joined us in 1998, and his expertise benefited the organisation for over 20 years. Jim was farewelled throughout the 2019 Summer Down Under Series, and in late February at a celebration dinner.

Jim led us through the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney, and the subsequent growth of disability sport over two decades. He helped WS NSW stage internationally recognised

sporting events for people living with disabilities, such as the National Junior Games, the Sydney International Wheelchair Tennis Open, and of course the Summer Down Under Wheelchair Track and Road Series which incorporates the Oz Day 10K.

He has been an incredible champion for the cause, providing the enriching benefits of sport to people living with disabilities. The Board, staff and membership thank Jim for his incredible commitment, and wish him the very best for his retirement.

Thank you Jim for enriching people's lives with sport, mates, mentors and an amazing sense of belonging.



Another fantastic Junior Christmas Camp

The 2018 Junior Wheelies Christmas Camp was a huge success, with 33 of our amazing junior members enjoying a weekend full of the enriching benefits of sport.

Campers had the chance to try a number of great sports throughout the weekend, including wheelchair rugby, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, balloon soccer, lawn bowls, adaptive yoga, swimming and more. The weekend would not have been possible without our dedicated Junior Committee, volunteer carers, volunteer group leaders and expert coaches.

Thank you also to the Mazda Foundation, Lord Taverners and Disabled Children's Foundation for supporting this wonderful event.



Exciting NEW ways to be a Member in 2019

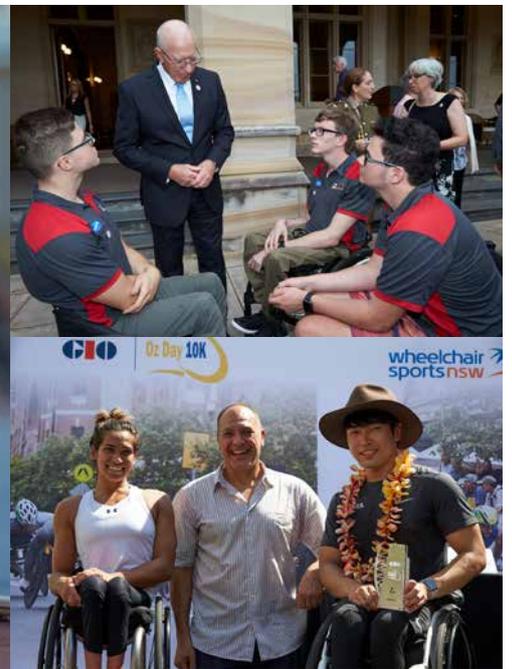
TRIAL MEMBERSHIP For new athletes living with a disability to receive the enriching benefits of sport. Free for the first 12 months

ATHLETE MEMBERSHIP (Formerly Full Membership) For our wonderful athletes living with disabilities, and anyone who wants to try sport with their loved one. \$30 a year (free for under 13s)

SUPPORTER MEMBERSHIP (Formerly Associate Membership) Donor, partner, coach, administrator, volunteer or friend, all are welcome to join our incredible community of passionate supporters. \$30 a year (free for under 13s)

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP A chance for the amazing businesses who support our work to get more involved. Includes a framed plaque you can proudly display in your workplace. \$200 a year

Become a proud member today: www.wsns.org.au/membership



All the action from the GIO SUMMER DOWN UNDER Series



The 2019 GIO SUMMER DOWN UNDER Wheelchair Track and Road Racing Series has grown from a single road race to an international event, with athletes from Australia and abroad competing over 7 great days.

Major sponsor GIO Insurance hosted a Welcome Dinner for athletes, supporters and officials at the GIO Stadium in Canberra. ACT Minister for Disability Services Rachel Stephen-Smith enjoyed the evening as we heard from Jonathan Davies (GIO), and our new CEO of Wheelchair Sports NSW Mick Garnett. Louise Sauvage chaired a panel discussion with Australia's elite and rising star athletes Sam Carter, Sam Rizzo and Sarah Clifton-Bligh.

Then we went straight into three nights of racing at the Canberra International Track Meet. Ten regional records and three world records were set, including Madison de Rozario in the T53 800m.

Afterwards the action moved to Sydney, kicking off with a function for athletes, coaches and supporters hosted by His Excellency General, The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of NSW.

At the Sydney Twilight Track Meet at Blacktown, races were combined with a Mentor Clinic giving our junior and developing athletes one-on-one time with elite racers to refine their skills.

Finally, we celebrated 30 years of racing at the 2019 GIO Oz Day 10K through The Rocks on Australia Day. The Governor of NSW started the race, and both the 2018 Champions Tomoki Suzuki (Japan) and Madison de Rozario (Australia) defended their titles.

Thank you to our generous sponsors and partners, including GIO, Invacare, Lufthansa, Office of Sport, icare, Blacktown Council and International Sportspark, Sky News and Vittoria Water.

View full results at
wsnsw.org.au/sports/summer-down-under

Save the Date

1 May	Stacks Goudkamp Golf Day at St Michael's Golf Club, Little Bay
16 May	WS NSW Gifts in Wills morning tea at the Clive Austin Conference Centre, Royal Rehab, 235 Morrison Road, Ryde
24 June	Wheelchair Sports NSW AGM
27 July	ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation Race Day
25 October	Wheelchair Sports NSW Annual Luncheon

For all Sporting Events please visit www.wsnsw.org.au/calendar