



# Disability Education News

Mar - Apr 2010

QUEENSLAND UPDATE ON AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION EDUCATION AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

## LAC excellence in connecting rewarded

The Minister for Disability Services, Anastacia Palaszczuk, has presented Damien Plackett, Department of Communities Local Area Coordinator in Dalby, with the Minister's Award for Excellence for his local Sports CONNECT program. The program has connected people with disabilities to their communities across the northern downs district of south west Queensland using sport as a vehicle.

Since the inception of the Sports CONNECT program there are now participants who have taken part in social tennis at the local club, rugby league as part of the junior team training sessions, and football as part of a senior team.

Partnerships with Sport and Recreation Services, Dalby Regional Council, Bungeeba Sport and Recreation Centre, Dalby PCYC and local disability service providers, Waminda Services and Blue Care, are increasing capacity for more people with disabilities to become involved in sport and active recreation on a regular basis in the region.

Damien's focus on engaging the participants of this program in its organisation and social activities empowered them to become further involved leading to the development of an incorporated group, the Jandowae Adaptive Games Society (JAGS), being managed by local community members in a town 50km from Dalby.

In 2010 an inter-district competition between Dalby, Jandowae and the Sports CONNECT Hub in Toowoomba will provide further skill development and a pathway to competition progressing towards the annual 'Spring into Sport' Sports Ability carnival in Charleville this year.

Damien joined the Sports CONNECT Education Presenter Team in 2009 presenting workshops in Toowoomba, Warwick and Roma educating others on how to provide opportunities for people with disabilities in sport. The Queensland Sports CONNECT Team would like to congratulate Damien on his award and for his leadership in building a supportive community for people with a disability.



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Anyone wishing to find out more information about Damien's local Sports CONNECT program can contact him on (07) 4662 0974 or email [damien.plackett@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:damien.plackett@communities.qld.gov.au)

# HUBs making connections through education and training

Whilst the concept of a Sports CONNECT HUB is still developing across Australia, the HUBs in Queensland are actively engaging in education and training as a means to build capacity and help to better engage their community.

Both WIRAC (Warwick Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Centre) and the USQ Student Guild, Toowoomba are undertaking HUB Education training in the first six months of 2010. Both organisations will undergo an individualised training module and a significant focus will be placed on how they can continue to link with their community and in particular how they can encourage more people with disabilities to their centre.



HUBs provide a community venue for people of all ages and abilities to participate in sport and structured physical activities in a safe, inclusive and fun environment.

If you live in Warwick, Toowoomba or Townsville communities and would like to know more about any of the HUBs you can find their contact details on our website, [www.sportingwheelies.org.au](http://www.sportingwheelies.org.au) and click on 'Sports CONNECT' and then 'Sports Ability and Sports CONNECT Hubs'.

## Table Tennis connect with first swing at inclusion

Table Tennis Queensland (TTQ) has undertaken the first important steps towards the inclusion of people with a disability in their sport since the approval of their first Sports CONNECT Charter in December last year by their Board.

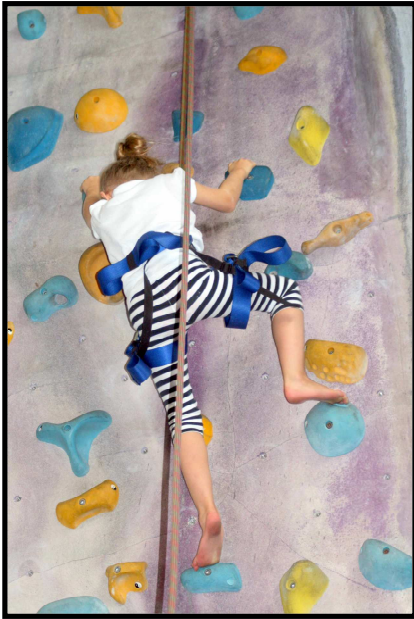
TTQ staff have conducted an inclusive audit of associated clubs throughout Queensland to gain an understanding of current membership numbers of people with a disability, inclusive programs or competitions currently in place, and club's knowledge of key stakeholder groups for table tennis players with a disability. An initial and simple example of this commitment is the inclusion of a player with a disability on their website header.



In February TTQ conducted the first meeting of its newly formed Athletes with a Disability (AWD) Reference Group whose aim was to provide guidance and assist TTQ with achieving its Sports CONNECT Charter. TTQ's AWD Reference Group consists of club representatives with in depth experience and knowledge of inclusive pathways, as well as a representative from Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association and the Executive Officer of TTQ.

TTQ is keen to encourage and develop Queensland table tennis players with a disability at the club level to take advantage of opportunities such as the annual National AWD Table Tennis Championships and the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

## Feature Profile – Darcy Stuart



This month we take an insightful look into the story of Darcy Stuart and her involvement with sport and active recreation, in particular her participation in rock climbing and how her Mum's role has changed over time.

### *There's no mountain high enough to stop Darcy!*

Darcy Stuart is a little girl who doesn't understand the word "can't". Her parents have always been told what she will not be able to do and were not going to be bound by other people's theories and opinions.

Darcy has an unspecified Congenital Myopathy and a 54 degree scoliosis. She has tried ballet but found it to be 'not her thing', regularly swims, does a weekly Pilates Reformer session and has just mastered skipping. This in itself is no small feat, as Darcy's muscles have no explosive ability and she has only recently taught herself to 'jump' after persisting for years.

Not knowing all the things she shouldn't be able to do, Darcy is willing to try anything challenging. Her mum, Louise, spotted Urban Climb after investigating potential activities for Darcy. Louise found the staff at Urban Climb to be extremely welcoming and have worked with Darcy to ensure that she is able to climb safely. She participates in the same climbing program as all kids in the Gecko program and recently she received her first ability level certificate.



With no modifications to the activity, she is able to climb alongside her peers. Darcy climbs barefoot and stills wears her spinal brace (called the Barbie Brace!) and in Darcy's words "I love it when I get to the top because I get to swing off the wall (abseil) down to the ground and it is heaps of fun!"

Louise believes that her role in Darcy's life is no longer one of looking after her therapy regime but one of being her advocate and her coach. She views Darcy in the same light as an elite athlete – constantly reviewing and evaluating her physical abilities and challenging her to achieve her best. No one knows her better than her family and they are taking active steps to ensure Darcy is ahead of her game – whichever one she chooses.

*Urban Climb conducts two junior Climbing Programs. Geckos is for children 6 – 12 years and is run every Saturday morning from 8am – 10am at Urban Climb Montague Road, West End, contact (07) 3844 2544.*



# Lifeline Community Care North Queensland igniting a demand for sports participation

Stating a commitment to “connect adults and young people with a disability into sport and recreation opportunities in the Townsville community”, Lifeline Community Care North Queensland (LCCNQ) has signed Queensland’s first ‘demand’ Charter under the Sports CONNECT (SC) Framework. The Charter outlines seven key strategies LCCNQ will work on over the next 12 months.



In keeping with one of the fundamental pillars of the SC Framework, partnerships and links with key organisations in the Townsville community feature throughout their strategies. Organisations such as Townsville PCYC, Riverway Rowing Club and the Greg Norman Golf Foundation have been targeted locally.

Amanda Pascall, Disability Case Worker, has used the SC State and Regional Network to establish contacts with Lawns Bowls Queensland, Tenpin Bowling Association of Queensland and Athletics North Queensland.

These partnerships will aim to provide opportunities for up to 60 people with disabilities to be involved in five local sports communities. A further 55 young people with disabilities are participating in the weekly Disability Sports program, coordinated by Amanda, and the new Sports Ability program, which is a pilot program being run in conjunction with Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association’s Regional Development Officer, Jonathon Orman, at the Sports CONNECT Hub at Townsville PCYC.

The importance LCCNQ places on education of not only their own staff but the greater Townsville community is outlined in their plan to build stronger links to Inclusion Works, a disability service provider that helps build better communities through the inclusion of people with a disability, and the Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation Services) through their planning processes and Indigenous programs.

To find out more about LCCNQ’s commitment to Sports CONNECT please contact Amanda Pascall on (07) 4775 9110 or email [amanda.pascall@lccq.org.au](mailto:amanda.pascall@lccq.org.au)

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## The Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Sport and Recreation Association of Queensland Inc.

60 Edmondstone Road, Bowen Hills Qld 4006

Phone: (07) 3253 3333 Fax: (07) 3253 3322

Website: [www.sportingwheelies.org.au](http://www.sportingwheelies.org.au) , click on 'Sports CONNECT'

**Jenny Frowd** - State Coordinator, Sports CONNECT/Disability Education  
[jennyf@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:jennyf@sportingwheelies.org.au)

**Michael O'Brien** – Project Officer, Sports CONNECT/Disability Education  
[michaelo@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:michaelo@sportingwheelies.org.au)

**David Bartholomaeus** – Sports Development Co-ordinator/Sports CONNECT State Case Manager  
[davidb@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:davidb@sportingwheelies.org.au)

**Susie Bennett-Yeo** – Sports CONNECT National Case Manager (Shooting)/ State Case Manager  
[susieb-y@bigpond.net.au](mailto:susieb-y@bigpond.net.au)

**Kelli Chilton** – Services Manager/Sports CONNECT National Case Manager - Golf  
[kellic@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:kellic@sportingwheelies.org.au)



**SPORTS CONNECT**

