

BLITS E-Newsletter - September 2012 Release 2

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BLITS E-NEWS



In this issue of BLITS E-News we take the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding efforts of the Australian Paralympic Team at the 2012 Paralympic Games. It was a breathtaking competition, one full of inspirational athletic performances and personal stories.

In this issue you will find the stories of two athletes who represented their country in this competition with great honour, pride and distinction.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The board and management of BLITS are excited by the opportunities and possibilities of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to produce outcomes that will improve the lives of people with disability. This scheme represents the biggest social reform since Medicare; providing people with disability greater choice and control over their lives.

The ACT will be amongst the first state or territory in the nation to benefit from this scheme with a trial launch set for 2013.

BLITS Update

Having taken over the role as Chair of BLITS in March this year, the last six months have been both fascinating and exciting. We have been delighted to see and assist with the ongoing growth and development of the Everyone Everyday program and to continue the work on the BLITS Access Recognition Program.

Earlier this year the BLITS board completed the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, a demanding but rewarding piece of work that has provided a strong foundation for the next 18 to 24 months. As part of this process the board engaged in a review of the BLITS structure and an assessment of available resources and the application of those resources

The results of this process will help us recalibrate the way BLITS delivers the strategies detailed in the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, its capacity to deliver on our objectives generally and our ability to take advantage of the work to date.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board and BLITS officers for their support and assistance. We all look forward to the work ahead over coming months and in 2013-2014. We will be bringing you more exciting news in the coming months.

Finally, a reminder that the 2012 Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards are just around the corner. The Gala Dinner and Awards Presentation will be held on 4 December and tickets will be available soon – watch this space!

Graham Hambleton

Chair

ACT BLITS

The Hulk Strikes Gold with a World Record Throw

Todd Hodgetts (aka 'The Hulk') has become Australia's first Paralympic Gold Medallist in an event for people with an intellectual disability since the 2000 Sydney Games.

The 24-year-olds 14 year long career journey to this achievement is both awe inspiring and breathtaking.

Todd suffered bullying through most of his school and athletic life. Driven by his love of sports he persevered and was competing in main stream sports in 2010 when his ability attracted the attention of coaches.



(image right: Todd Hodgetts Celebrates his World Record Gold Medal Win)

Soon after this Todd came to Canberra and started training for the Paralympics. Unfortunately, due to issues with the criteria and application process, and with a little more than 12 months before the London competition, Todd's confirmation of eligibility had not been confirmed.

By way of background, events for people with intellectual disability were banned from the Paralympics after the gold-medal win by the bogus Spanish men's basketball team in 2000. (The Athens and Beijing games did not offer events for people with intellectual disability).

While the rules were changed recently and people with intellectual disability are once more welcome to compete in the Paralympics, the application process is a complex one – and it includes the requirement to prove eligibility as evident before the age of 18.

Thanks largely to the combined assistance and persistence over many months of Ausrapid, Athletics Australia personnel and Australian Paralympic Committee, the matter was finally resolved and with only months to go Todd's place was confirmed.

Shortly before the final day of competition in the shot put, Todd developed a severe inflammation to his right elbow on his throwing arm. This last hurdle was not going to stop Todd. He fought through the pain and with a world record throw of 16.29 m he won the gold medal.

Jayne Richardson-Paris Shines at London

Jayne Richardson-Paris competed in the Australian Cycling team in the London Paralympics. Jayne won bronze in the 500m time trial despite suffering a violent and sudden seizure mid-race in her C1 individual time trial. She demonstrated remarkable strength and determination to finish the race strongly – still managing to set a world mark of 40.476 seconds and medal in the event.

For the girl from Sydney's west, it's hard to believe it wasn't until she was 11 years old that she took the training wheels off her bike. And after hearing a Paralympic female cyclist call for more girls to take up the sport during a TV interview, she decided to give cycling a go.



(image above right: Jayme Richardson-Parisin competition)

In 2005 Jayme was talent spotted at an APC Talent Search day and after much persistence she was chosen for the NSW team at the 2006 National Championships where she cycled her way to a silver medal.

The following year, Jayme won two gold medals at Nationals and broke the world record for the 500m time trial. However because her classification was yet to be internationally recognised, she had to wait until the UCI Para-cycling Track World Championships later that year, where she again broke the world record, to call herself a world record holder.

C1–C5 athletes have an impairment that affects their legs, arms and/or trunk but compete using a standard bicycle. A C1 cyclist will have an impairment that has more of an impact on their ability to cycle than a C5 cyclist.

Jayme Richardson-Paris Supports Everyone Everyday

As recently reported, the Everyone, Everyday teaching resource for ACT schools will be trialled in term 4 this year. This resource includes learning activities that highlight the capabilities and contributions of people with disability, and celebrates their achievements.

We are proud to announce that one of the people featured in the resource will be Jayme Richardson-Paris.

The Paralympian Score Card

2012 Paralympic Games Gold Medal Tally				
Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	95	71	65	231
Russia	36	38	28	102
Great Britain	34	43	43	120
Ukraine	32	24	28	84
Australia	32	23	30	85
United States	31	29	38	98
Brazil	21	14	8	43
Germany	18	26	22	66
Poland	14	13	9	36
Netherlands	10	10	19	39
Iran	10	7	7	24

