

Sydney-Siders Still Generous at Charity Fundraiser at Kirribilli House

The Global Financial Crisis and party politics were on hold last Friday night as both Labour and Liberal politicians attended a Charity fundraiser at Kirribilli House, in support of the Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of NSW (ParaQuad). The event raised approximately \$40,000 for the reconstruction of ParaQuad's accommodation complex, Ferguson Lodge.

During the evening, Master of Ceremonies, Channel 9's Ben Fordham, conducted an entertaining and informative interview with Joe Hockey, Shadow Treasurer and Member for North Sydney; and Robert McClelland, Australia's Attorney General. All three of these men donated their time to ParaQuad for free. Seeing the 'lighter side' of these politicians was much to the delight of the 200 Sydney socialites in attendance.

ParaQuad's supporters were also treated to a guest performance by the inspirational Tim McCallum, who has overcome the challenges of quadriplegia to become a stellar theatre singer. Tim broke his neck in an accident in the surf ten years ago, just as he was commencing his studies at the prestigious Academy of Performing Arts in Western Australia. Tim's success and 'get on with it' attitude is a true testament to the support given to him by organisations like ParaQuad all around Australia.

ParaQuad CEO, Max Bosotti, was delighted with the turn-out, with the 200 tickets to the event selling out two weeks in advance. Mr Bosotti said "It is very reassuring that in these difficult economic conditions we have received the support of so many people, especially our major sponsor, Star Track Express."

Derek Lightfoot, CEO of Star Track Express said that "Star Track Express is proud to support ParaQuad and their terrific work, as we share their values of empowering people to overcome adversity and achieve their potential. We believe ParaQuad sets the example of what can be achieved, and Star Track Express is ever mindful, like ParaQuad, of striving to do your best."

ParaQuad was one of the charities that responded to Prime Minister Rudd's offer to use Kirribilli House for charity events. Mr Bosotti said "The aim of the event was to raise funds for the reconstruction of the largest of ParaQuad's accommodation facilities; Ferguson Lodge at Lidcombe. For 30 years Ferguson Lodge has provided a home and a place of respite for people with spinal cord injury, however, it is in dire need of a full redevelopment."

"Two State Government departments; the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Motor Accidents Authority, have contributed \$10.5 million for the redevelopment, however, an additional \$500,000 is needed to bring the project to completion" he added.

ParaQuad (the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of NSW) was founded almost 50 years ago with the objective of empowering people with spinal cord injury to become independent members of our community. ParaQuad provides a wide range of community services to people with spinal cord injury, including: accommodation, personal care, nursing, occupational therapy, social work, education and training, and information services.

Media enquiries and images: Deborah Schofield, PR Manager, (02) 8741 5627 / 0448 018 439, email deborah.schofield@paraquad.org.au.