



MEDIA RELEASE

HACKETT BLOWN OUT OF THE WATER BY ARIA SINGER

Monday 9 November, 2009 - Former Olympic champion **Grant Hackett** was blown out of the water this morning by ARIA award winning singer, **Jenny Morris** in ParaQuad's *Wheels for a Day* race in Sydney's Martin Place.

To **launch national Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week**, eight high profile Australians duelled in wheelchairs raising awareness of the day to day challenges faced by those with spinal cord injuries. Each of the participants had to undertake a range of activities whilst in a wheelchair including buying a coffee, going through a door, boarding a bus and using an ATM. The participant who completed the tasks in the shortest time was declared the winner.

Taking out first place against other high profile Australians (including distance swimming champion Grant Hackett, WSFM's **Jonesy and Amanda** and comedian **Julia Morris**) was singer Jenny Morris who dedicated her win to her two sisters in law - both who have disabilities.

'I know the trials and tribulations that my sisters in law face each day and I thank ParaQuad for putting on this event on their behalf,' said Jenny in her acceptance speech.

While most spectators had their money on Grant Hackett to take out first place, the swimmer admitted he struggled with his centre of gravity being out of balance. Coming in in fourth place, Hackett nearly toppled his wheelchair in the bus component.

'It was harder than I expected,' said Grant. 'Weighing more than one hundred kilograms, my centre of gravity was completely out of balance. I'm certainly better off in the pool - gravity's definitely not my friend!'

'Wheels for a Day is a fantastic and light hearted opportunity to highlight the challenges that face wheelchair users, especially in the workplace and with public transport,' says Wendy Potter, Chairman, ParaQuad NSW.

'People take for granted simple tasks such as boarding a bus and opening a door, but for those of us in wheelchairs straightforward tasks can become quite onerous,' continues Wendy.

For more information visit www.paraquad.org.au/LatestNews/WheelsforaDay

ENDS

Facts on Spinal Cord Injuries

- It is estimated that around 10,000 people in Australia live with a spinal cord injury
- Between 300-400 new injuries are reported each year
- After a spinal cord injury, it may take a year or more before the person can leave hospital and return to the community

About ParaQuad

ParaQuad NSW is a not-for-profit member-based association striving to empower people with spinal cord injury to achieve their potential. ParaQuad is a registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

Formed in 1961, ParaQuad has provided vital care, support and clinical services to people with spinal cord injuries, their families and carers for more than 40 years.

People with disabilities often have difficulty in achieving their desired quality of life without support and assistance. After a spinal cord injury, it may take a year or more before the person can leave hospital and return to the community.

Even then, the journey is not easy. People with newly acquired spinal cord injuries may have to find a new and accessible place to live, and/or require assistance with activities they used to take for granted, such as getting out of bed, showering, toileting and shopping. In addition there may be ongoing health, adjustment and social issues to contend with.

ParaQuad provides a support system that aims to meet the needs of people with a spinal cord injury and their families at every stage of life. The cost for this personal care is between \$190,000 - \$300,000 per year.

The services are designed to help our clients with spinal cord injury to have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the community.

ParaQuad's services include:

- Clinical practitioners specialising in spinal cord injury
- Supported accommodation for people with transitional and long term care needs
- Home-based personal support care
- Information, advocacy and assistance
- Training and community awareness programs
- Continence and related healthcare supplies

About Wheels for a Day

In its third year, ParaQuad NSW's event 'Wheels for a Day' aims to raise awareness of the everyday challenges faced by people who use wheelchairs, with a particular emphasis on workplace access. Wheels for a Day is ParaQuad's feature event for 'Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week', a national campaign which runs from 9 through to 15th November 2009.

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