

WE LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS VE

MEDIA RELEASE

19th September 2017

WAVES FOR ALL:

Life Without Barriers & Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club form Accessible Partnership

Life Without Barriers (LWB) has partnered with Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club and the Newcastle City Council to build a more accessible and better beach community by increasing the ease of access for people with a disability to the Surf Club and the Beach.

The new accessibility infrastructure includes a lift and toilet to be located in the Clubhouse, a ramp from the Clubhouse to the beach, and ramp from street level on Memorial Drive to the Clubhouse.

The “**WAVES FOR ALL**” Event (on **Sat 23rd September from 10am**) coincides with the launch of the new season, the raising of the flags and is a celebration with special guest Paralympians **Kurt Fearnley**, **Andrew Edmondson** and **Maddie Elliott**, and Newcastle Knights players **Peter & Sione Mata’utia** and **Trent Hodkinson**.

People with a disability, families and the extended beach going community are ALL invited to this special Saturday morning event.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Sat 23rd September 2017
Time: 10am – 1pm, with raising of the flags from 9am.
Location: Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club
Address: Memorial Dr, Bar Beach NSW 2301

SPECIAL GUESTS & SPEAKERS

Kurt Fearnley: Australian wheelchair marathon racer and multiple Paralympic Gold Medalist, OAM

Andrew Edmondson: Australian Wheelchair Rugby Athlete

Maddie Elliott: Paralympic Multiple Gold Medalist Swimmer, OAM

Peter & Sione Mata’utia and Trent Hodkinson: Newcastle Knights players

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In the spirit of Reconciliation, Life Without Barriers acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country, and their connection to land, water and community. We pay our respect to them, their cultures and customs, and to Elders both past and present.

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ACTIVITIES

- Face Painting
- KOFM Street Patrol Team & Giveaways
- Beach games & activities including flags, beach sprints, beach volleyball, beach cricket, surf boat demo, CPR demo, surf rescue demo and tug-o-war.
- Bacon & Egg Roll Breakfast
- Sausage Sizzle
- Beach Cake

Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club (CHSLSC), through its “Same Waves” and disability access programs, has been working to reduce barriers limiting young people and people with a disability from accessing a range of surf and beach-side activities.

Chief Executive of Life Without Barriers Claire Robbs said, “Funding this increased accessibility infrastructure at Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club reinforces our commitment to providing disability support and accessibility assistance so that EVERYONE has access to and can enjoy life at the beach – which is such an important part of our culture and brings to much joy.”

“Disabilities come in many forms, some we see others we don’t. This building addition is the first step in creating a truly dedicated facility that delivers a beach that is accessible to the whole community. In partnership with Life Without Barriers and through community collaboration we have delivered a building that is the first of its kind in the Hunter. Our aim and our ethos is to break down the barriers that surround disabilities and make Newcastle and the Hunter the leaders in the future of inclusion,” says President of Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club Richard Hermens.

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Media Enquiries

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About Life Without Barriers: Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia’s largest leading social purpose organisations, working in more than 300 communities across all states and territories. Its main areas of operation includes support to children, young people and families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disability, older people, and people who are vulnerable to social exclusion.

About Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club: Formed in 1911, members of Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club have been patrolling Bar Beach, Newcastle for over 100 years. One of the largest Surf Life Saving Clubs in NSW, Cooks Hill is a proud and welcoming club of dedicated members that prides itself on high levels of training and patrolling. Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club is the centre of a strong community through activities such as Patrols, Nippers, Training, Surf Competitions, Surf Boats, Groopers Winter Swimming, Old Boys Rugby and much more.

More about KURT FEARNLEY OAM: Australian wheelchair racer Kurt Fearnley OAM is one of Australia’s most well-known and respected athletes as winner of some of the world’s most prestigious marathons in London, Paris, Rome, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Kurt won the Paralympic men’s wheelchair marathon in Athens in 2004 and retained his title in Beijing in 2008. With marathon podium finishes in London 2012 and Rio 2016 cementing 4 consecutive Paralympic Marathon medals.

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At the 2016 Rio Paralympics campaign Kurt had the honour of serving as the Captain of the Australian Paralympic Team. In total Kurt has 13 Paralympic medals spanning across 5 Games. He's also a 6 times world champion from 800m to the marathon. His marathon personal best is 1hour, 18minutes and 51seconds set in Boston in 2011.

Off the racing circuit Kurt has been a winning crew member of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, taking line honours in 2011 on board the yacht Loyal. However, he is most well-known for his amazing feat of crawling the 96km Kokoda track.

Kurt is actively involved in various charities as a Board Member, Patron and Ambassador. In 2016 Kurt was elected by his peers to be one of six Summer Paralympic Athletes to serve on the International Paralympic Committee's Athletes Commission.

Quick Facts about Kurt:

- 65 marathons. 41 wins. 17 additional podium finishes.
- Marathon wins in 12 countries on five continents.
- Five-time Paralympian, 13 medals, 3 gold
- Six-time World Champion
- 2015 AIS Sports Personality of the Year
- 2015 Newcastle Citizen of the Year
- 2007 and 2009 Laureus World Sports Award Finalist
- Commonwealth Athlete of the Year with a Disability
- 2009 NSW Young Australian of the Year
- Recipient of Order of Australia Medal in 2004
- Board Member of Australian Volunteers International 2006-2015
- Contributes as Patron, Ambassador or Volunteer for Wheelchair Sports NSW, St Jude's School Tanzania, Newcastle Children's Hospital, Humpty Dumpty Children's Charity, & more.

Download high res photo of [KURT FEARNLEY HERE](#)

More about ANDREW EDMONDSON OAM: A sports star in the making, Andrew Edmondson had only just accepted a scholarship to play rugby union at an elite private school in Sydney when he collided with a sandbar while surfing at Coogee Beach, breaking his neck. Scans soon confirmed what doctors feared and Andrew was told he may never walk again.

At just 13, he struggled to come to terms with his disability but says that being introduced to wheelchair sport during rehabilitation motivated him overcome his disability and have a great life. Even better, after watching a game of wheelchair rugby, Andrew realised that his dream of representing Australia in rugby was in reach and that his accident could actually be the start of something even bigger for him.

After attending an APC Come and Try Day in 2004, Andrew rose through the ranks of his sport, first as captain of the NSW state squad, and then as a valued member of the Australian Steelers. Achieving his lifelong goal of representing Australia in rugby, 'Edmo' made his international debut in 2014 in a friendly series against the USA, and his Paralympic debut two years later in Rio, where the Steelers became the first team in wheelchair rugby history to win consecutive Paralympic gold medals and a World Championship title in a four-year period, defeating the USA 59-58 in a double-overtime thriller.

In April 2017 Andrew received an Order of Australia Medal for winning a gold medal at the 2017 Rio Paralympic Games as recognition for his service to sport and Australia.

Download high res photo [ANDREW EDMONDSON HERE](#)

More about MADDIE ELLIOTT OAM: In 2012 Maddie represented Australia at the London Paralympics. Maddie made Australian history by becoming Australia's youngest Paralympian to win gold at the young age of 13. This was achieved as a member of the Women's 4x100m freestyle relay team. Maddie also won a silver and 2 bronze medals in London. Following this she was awarded an OAM for services to sport.

In 2016, Maddie competed in the Rio Paralympics - her 2nd games at the age of 17 where she won 3 gold and 2 silver medals and was recognised as Australia's most decorated athlete of the Games. She went on to win Female Para Swimmer of the Year as well as Female Paralympian of the Year. She holds multiple World and national records in both long course and short course swimming. To date she has an impressive 4 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals from two Paralympic Games.

Download high res photo of Maddie [MADDIE ELLIOTT HERE](#)