



World Transplant Games  
Gold Coast  
Australia 2009

media release

31 March 2009

## Australia's Sporting Heroes Sign on for World Transplant Games

Eight of Australia's elite sports stars have signed on to help Australian transplant athletes achieve their personal best at this year's World Transplant Games on the Gold Coast.

The Sporting Heroes will help to raise the life-saving benefits of organ and tissue donation and transplantation and the importance of Australian families discussing donation.

Transplant Australia Chief Executive Officer, Chris Thomas, said the original intention of engaging the sports stars was to provide inspiration to transplant athletes competing in the World Transplant Games on the Gold Coast in August.

"I think it's fair to say that many of the celebrities have been equally inspired by the determination and spirit of these recipients who at one stage faced an uncertain future but through the generosity of organ donation have been given a second chance at life," Mr Thomas said.

The Sporting Heroes who have generously given their time include: Australian swimming great Samantha Riley, Olympic swimming coach Michael Bohl, Olympic and World Champion Volleyball players Kerri Pottharst and Natalie Cook, World Champion cyclist Lorian Graham, World Champion Outrigger and Olympic Kayaker Shelley Oates-Wilding, Golfing great Charlie Earp, and Olympic and World Champion Rower Duncan Free (see sporting profiles attached).

Queenslanders Samantha Riley and Michael Bohl have teamed up to conduct the first training clinic in swimming at her new swimming facility in Mt Gravatt East, Brisbane and said she is inspired to be working with other Australian sporting professionals to mentor transplant recipients for the World Transplant Games.

"I think that they are probably more of an inspiration to us than the other way around, Sam said.

"These people have been faced with really tough situations and being able to overcome that is, I think, more admirable than being able to stand on the blocks and win a gold medal or break a world record."

Over the next six months Transplant Australia will conduct a series of training clinics with the Sporting Heroes, designed to encourage recipients to be at their best for the World Games in August.

The program will help mentor and encourage recipients, both young and old, to improve their fitness, motivation and technique from experts in their sports.

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### The 17<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games

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## Australia's Sporting Heroes Continued...

The Sporting Heroes have also generously agreed to promote the importance of organ and tissue donation in their speaking engagements and promotional opportunities.

Below are just a few Queensland swimmers that will represent Australian at the World Games and will benefit from the expert tips and advice from Samantha and Michael this Sunday (available for interview).

### Emma Hutchison – Kidney Recipient

Emma Hutchinson is celebrating her eighth year of her kidney transplant and is a fit and healthy twenty-nine year old working for University of Queensland. Before her transplant Emma was in a regular training squad for swimming, and once competed against the likes of our very Sporting Hero, Samantha Riley.

As a 21 year old, Emma faced end stage organ failure in her kidneys. She was fortunate to receive a kidney transplant and was back in the pool, enjoying her new found health and lease on life as soon as was able.

Emma has competed in the past three World Transplant Games (Bangkok, Canada and France). At the 2007 World Transplant Games in Bangkok, Emma won gold in the 50 metre breaststroke; 100 metre breaststroke; 50 metre butterfly; 50 metre freestyle and 200 metre medially. She was also the captain and flag bearer for the Australian team.

Emma is now looking forward to a full career and enjoying life with her partner.

### Nicholas Morland – Liver Recipient

As a nine month old infant, Nicolas Morland had to receive a liver transplant. As a fit 16 year old teenager in year twelve at school, Nicolas is a strong swimmer and will compete in his second World Transplant Games this August.

Usually training five times a week, Nicholas is keen on all four strokes, but loves breaststroke. Despite ongoing struggles with his liver transplant, he is hoping to be well enough at the Games to win a gold medal (and do well in his final year twelve exams!).

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## Australia's Sporting Heroes Continued...

### Stephanie Ashby – Two-time Double Lung Recipient

Forty year old Stephanie Ashby was diagnosed (along with her twin sister, Michelle) at 3 months old with Cystic Fibrosis. She had a double lung transplant in 2001 and due to complications from her original operation, she received another double lung transplant in November 2008. Stephanie is now back and work and is in good recovery, and starting to enjoy a fantastic quality of life again.

“My highlights would have to be (obviously aside from generally being well and having a normal lung function), achieving my sporting dreams. My goal post transplant was to learn how to swim. I learnt from scratch, entered the National Australia Games a few months later, won a silver medal in the 50m freestyle, said Stephanie.

“I went on to compete at the World Transplant Games in France and was placed 4<sup>th</sup> in both 50m & 100m freestyle swimming events. When I returned home from this fabulous trip, I joined a swim squad and swam three times a week under the eye of a great coach who prepared me to enter my first long distance open water swim in the beautiful Gold Coast broadwater at the Spit (1.5km), I have now swum two of these. I have also completed 5 triathlons, (I completed one on my own and did the swim leg in a team event in the other 4.”

Stephanie is a part of the Local Organising Committee for the World Transplant Games is the swimming event coordinator.

“Transplant Australia has been a fantastic part of my motivation for keeping fit and healthy, having these Games to look forward to and train towards makes it not only a great opportunity to meet other transplant recipients but also a healthy way to minimize side effects from medications (fluid retention etc).”

### John Peacock – Liver Recipient

Four years ago John Peacock was a healthy 51-year-old IT specialist, having owned and operated a business in the data capture sector for more than 17 years.

In December 2005 John was presented to Wesley Hospital's emergency department with what appeared to be heart attack symptoms. He was eventually diagnosed with severe liver disease and referred to a gastroenterologist.

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“After three to four months of treatment I was advised I had “end stage” liver disease and would require a transplant. Subsequent investigations by my wife and I confirmed this was the only course available and we began the process of getting me onto the transplant waiting list. It was frightening enough dealing with the “issues” I faced living with liver disease. But what was even more frightening was the fact I couldn’t be comforted by the fact I would simply get “treated”. I soon learned donor organs were so rare I would be lucky to receive a transplant at all,” said John.

In August 2006, just 11 months after receiving a liver transplant, John competed in the Australian Transplant Games at Geelong. “I had decided to take up swimming as a way of recovering my health and it paid off with four gold medals.”

John is now the Queensland Branch President of Transplant Australia is on the Local Organising Committee for the 17<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games.

The heroes will also be providing general sporting, nutrition and well-being advice through the [www.worldtransplantgames09.com](http://www.worldtransplantgames09.com) website leading up to the Games.

View the schedule for training clinics at <http://www.worldtransplantgames09.com/Sporting-Hero-Events-Schedule.html>

**To contact World Transplant Games athletes attending the clinics, or for more information please contact Teresa Vella 02) 9922 5400 mob. 0403 895 144 e. [teresa.vella@transplant.org.au](mailto:teresa.vella@transplant.org.au)**

### Sponsor Recognition

Astellas Pharma Inc. is the Proud Sponsor of the Games’ Sporting Hero Encouragement Program.

The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority and Queensland Events Corporation are major partners of the World Transplant Games.

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# Sporting Hero Profiles

Samantha Riley OAM

Australian Swimming Great  
Multiple Gold Medallist Commonwealth Games  
Multiple Gold Medallist World Championships  
Silver and Bronze Olympic Medallist  
1994 Female World Swimmer of the Year

Lorian Graham

World Champion and national champion women's cyclist  
Two-time Queensland Cyclist of the Year  
Ambassador to the Amy Gillett Foundation

Kerri Pottharst OAM

Dual Olympian and Olympic Gold Medallist beach volleyball player  
Multiple Gold Medallist World Champion  
Professional volleyball coach  
Business entrepreneur of Live2xl

Natalie Cook OAM

Dual Olympian and Olympic Gold Medallist beach volleyball player  
Multiple Gold Medallist World Champion  
Professional volleyball coach  
Business entrepreneur of Sandstorm Volleyball Courts

Shelly Oates-Wilding

Dual Olympian in kayaking  
Five-time Outrigging World Champion  
World champion in Surf Ski  
Representing Australia in netball, track and field and touch football  
Board member of Australian Canoeing and Kayaking  
Professional trainer and business entrepreneur of Live2xl

Duncan Free OAM

Four-time Olympian in rowing and Olympic Gold Medallist  
World Champion and National Champion rower

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## Sporting Hero Profiles Continued

Charlie Earp OAM

Professional golfer and professional coach for over 50 years  
including coach of Greg Norman  
Long standing board member of the Professional Golfing  
Association  
Administrator for the Greg Norman Junior Foundation

Michael Bohl

2008 Australian Coach of the Year and Olympic and national  
team swimming coach  
Platinum Licence qualification for swimming coaching  
Previous Queensland Director of Coaching for 11 years  
Head coach for St Peters Western Swimming Club (Stephanie  
Rice's coach)

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## media release Backgrounder

### About Transplant Australia

Transplant Australia is the national community organisation promoting organ and tissue donation and caring for all those touched by transplantation:

- recipients whose lives have been saved
- donor families who generously gave them that gift, and
- living donors who courageously shared the miracle of life with someone special.

Transplant Australia strives to:

- Make sure no-one dies on our transplant waiting lists,
- Improve the community's understanding of organ and tissue donation, and
- Help recipients recover their life through well-being, back-to-work, exercise and rehabilitation programs while assisting donor families with counselling services in their journey of acceptance.

### About the World Transplant Games

The 17<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games will be staged on the Gold Coast from August 22 – 30, 2009. Up to 3,000 participants are expected from 50 countries across the world. The Games are officially sanctioned by the World Transplant Games Federation.

Global Objectives

- To raise awareness of the miracle of organ and tissue donation and transplantation throughout the world
- To demonstrate through sport that transplant recipients are able to return to a high level of fitness and quality of life
- To show gratitude to families of organ and tissue donors and living donors
- To encourage transplant recipients and those awaiting transplantation to participate actively in sport, recreational and other activities
- To celebrate life

Australian Objectives

- To encourage all Australians to talk to their family, friends and loved ones about their wishes in relation to organ and tissue donation
- To encourage Australians to sign on to the Australian Organ Donor Register
- To demonstrate that thousands of Australians are still waiting for a transplant and that every donation counts

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