

**Date** 29 March 2011

**Subject** Hunter wheelchair rugby league launched thanks to nib foundation

The Hunter's first wheelchair rugby league competition will be launched at the Newcastle Basketball Stadium tomorrow thanks to funding from nib foundation.

The 24-week competition will allow individuals with significant and/or multiple disabilities that use a wheelchair to take part in the popular sporting activity locally, removing the need to travel for competitive games.

General Manager, Karen Stace from Connectability Australia said the need for a regional competition was identified by local wheelchair athlete, Bianca Lawrence.

"Bianca and her peers were travelling to Sydney each weekend to participate in a weekly competition which was difficult to attend due to their transport needs," Ms Stace said.

"Thanks to nib foundation we have been able to create a competition right here in Newcastle. With this funding we are able to provide greater accessibility for people in electric and manual wheelchairs, giving them the opportunity to get active and meet new people," she added.

The \$26,000 grant from nib foundation will also fund a supported social program as part of the competition for players, their friends, families and carers.

"This will help participants develop natural networks with their peers through social activities which will increase their self esteem and engagement in the community," Ms Stace said.

nib foundation Chairman, Terry Lawler said the Hunter-based competition will provide a much-needed increase in choice of sporting activities for mobility impaired people in the region.

"Exposing people with a disability to different sporting activities will provide improved physical and mental health outcomes for participants and their families," Mr Lawler said.

"We are proud to be able to fund such an important project that will enhance the sporting and social opportunities for people in a wheelchair in the Hunter," he added.

Participants who are interested in joining the competition can register on the day or by calling Connectability on 02 4962 1000.

### **Photo Opportunity**

The official launch and come and try day will be held at the Newcastle Basketball Stadium on Wednesday 30 March 2011 from 10.30am till 1.00pm.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Renea Murphy  
nib foundation  
02 4914 1739  
0402 376 835  
Email: [r.murphy@nib.com.au](mailto:r.murphy@nib.com.au)