



Media release: Sky Tower set to light up for Special Olympics

Auckland landmark part of international display of unity

This Saturday 21 July Auckland's Sky Tower is set to turn red in a global display of unity to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Special Olympics. The Sky Tower will be one of 70 international landmarks including the Sydney Opera House, the London Eye and Niagara Falls, turning red for the global celebration.

Special Olympics provides a year-round programme of sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. In New Zealand, more than 7000 athletes throughout the country train and compete in 13 different Olympic-type summer and winter sports.

Special Olympics New Zealand Chief Executive Officer Carolyn Young says the celebration marks 50 years since the first Special Olympics World Games was held in Chicago.

"What Special Olympics has achieved internationally in 50 years has been huge for people with intellectually disabilities. As well as providing them with opportunities to compete against their peers both locally and internationally, the work that has been done to promote inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities has been remarkable," Carolyn says.

"We are grateful that one of New Zealand's iconic landmarks has got on board to help us celebrate while our international counterparts mark the occasion all around the world."

As part of the 50th birthday celebrations there will also be a Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) held in central Auckland which will see Police and other law enforcement professionals, including Auckland City Police District Commander Karyn Malthus, walking alongside Special Olympics athletes to raise awareness.

Similar in style to the Olympic torch relay, the LETR is a series of relays and fundraising events that raise awareness and money for the Special Olympics movement. Globally more than 90,000 police professionals and supporters across 35 countries participate in Law Enforcement Torch runs.

"The New Zealand Police are proud supporters of Special Olympics in New Zealand and we look forward to celebrating alongside them this weekend," Carolyn says.

Law Enforcement Torch Run details

What: Law Enforcement Torch Run celebrating 50 years of Special Olympics.

Where: The Cloud to Karanga Plaza and back

When: 10.30am, Saturday 21 July

Who: Special Olympics athletes will walk alongside New Zealand Police, accompanied by Police vehicles, dogs, remote control vehicles and more. Auckland City Police District Commander Karyn Malthus will speak prior to the walk.

Read more about the international celebrations <https://www.specialolympics.org/Landmarks-Lighting-Up-for-Inclusion.aspx>.

Special Olympics New Zealand

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About Special Olympics New Zealand

Special Olympics New Zealand is a year-round programme of sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. More than 7000 athletes throughout the country train and compete in 13 different Olympic-type summer and winter sports.

Special Olympics New Zealand offers athletes leadership development through its Athlete Leadership Programme, and encourages social inclusion through Unified Sports[®], where intellectually disabled athletes are combined in teams with unified partners (without intellectual disabilities).

Special Olympics New Zealand also offers health screening via the Healthy Athletes[®] programme. People with intellectual disabilities typically have poorer health status than the general public. Special Olympics New Zealand works to promote the health and wellbeing of Special Olympics athletes. There is a focus not just on detection of health issues but also on health promotion, health education, and the forming of partnerships that can provide our athletes with improved access to follow-up and healthcare.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics provides athletes continuing opportunities to develop fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy as they participate in the sharing of gifts and friendship with other athletes, their families and the community.

Special Olympics New Zealand: www.specialolympics.org.nz

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