



For immediate release

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Media release:

Athletes head home from National Summer Games

More than 1250 athletes with intellectual disabilities are heading home from their pinnacle sporting event – the Special Olympics National Summer Games 2017, which finished in Wellington today.

The event concluded with a Closing Ceremony at Te Rauparaha Arena in Porirua, where athletes celebrated their achievements throughout the week. Over the course of the event (27 November to 1 December 2017) athletes competed in 11 sports - swimming, athletics, basketball, bocce, equestrian, football, golf, indoor bowls, powerlifting, table tennis and tenpin bowling, at venues in Wellington and surrounding areas.

“This has been the most amazing week in Wellington. Our athletes have achieved some outstanding results and the looks on their faces regarding their experiences in the capital say it all,” said Chief Executive for Special Olympics New Zealand, Kathy Gibson.

“We have been supported by the most incredible sponsors and we cannot thank them enough. From the Sport NZ, Datacom and FMG corporate volunteers through to the suppliers of our horses, Lions and Rotary members and our wonderful team of volunteer clinicians, the generosity of the support has been so much more than we expected.

“They say Wellington is the event capital of NZ and this community has turned it on for our Special Olympics community in spades. While the beautiful weather played a huge part, it has been the warmth and kindness shown that has really made this week special for us.”

As well as being an opportunity to compete with athletes from around the country, the National Summer Games is a time for athletes to connect with their Special Olympics friends and also to promote understanding about people with intellectual disabilities in our communities.

“I am always keen that we leave a positive legacy in our path and that we build awareness and understanding for people who may not know a lot about intellectual disability,” Kathy said. “Many of the comments I have received during Games week suggest that our athletes have left a great impression on those that they have connected with. If we have done that then I am immensely proud.”

To check out the full results of the National Summer Games visit www.specialolympics.org.nz/NSG2017

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Editor's notes:

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 also offers athletes leadership development through its Athlete Leadership Programme, health screening via Healthy Athletes[®], and encourages social inclusion through Unified Sports[®], where intellectually disabled athletes are combined in teams with unified partners (without intellectual disabilities).

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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