

2023

Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation **AWARDS**

Tuesday 3 October 2023

Marvel Stadium, Docklands



Acknowledgement of Country

Disability Sport & Recreation acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play.

We recognise their continued connection to land, sea and community. We acknowledge sovereignty was never ceded and pay our respects to all Elders, past and present.





2023

Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards

Major Partners:



Associate Sponsors:



ACTIVE MELBOURNE

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Minister's Message

I am delighted to welcome you to the Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards - a celebration of the incredible achievements of people with disabilities, those who support them and the inclusive sport and recreation sector.

Sport is the lifeblood of many communities, and all Victorians deserve to participate in it regardless of their disability, age, gender or where they live. These awards highlight the tremendous dedication of communities across the state to making this a reality.

For our part, the Andrews Labor Government is making community sport and recreation more inclusive and accessible by investing more than **\$213 million in the 2023-24 Budget** to improve infrastructure and support initiatives that boost participation and inclusion.

The Andrews Labor Government is also committing **\$40 million through the All Abilities Sport Fund** to remove the barriers of entry for people with a disability in regional Victoria to get involved in sport and active recreation, and will include programs to support participation, workforce sustainability, and community sport infrastructure projects.

We are proud to support Disability Sport and Recreation, and it's fantastic to see the organisation continue to foster meaningful engagement between people with disabilities and sport and recreation in our state.



This year's nominees for the Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards remind us that a life-changing moment is just a game away. Congratulations to you all and thank you for your contribution to sport in Victoria.

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Community Sport



Welcome

Welcome to the Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation (DSR) Awards, an event that honours outstanding achievements in inclusive sports and recreation within our state.

We are delighted to host this prestigious occasion at the iconic Marvel Stadium. This year, we have experienced a remarkable surge in nominations, highlighting the ever-expanding impact of this event. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all nominees and our esteemed panel of judges, whose dedicated efforts ensured the selection of deserving award finalists and recipients.

We reserve a special place in our hearts for Julie Cass, Danni Di Toro and Aileen Marshall, distinguished recipients of the 2023 Disability Sport and Recreation Kevin Coombs Lifetime Achievement Award. Their remarkable accomplishments inspire us all and embody the spirit of our sports and recreation community.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our numerous sponsors, supporters, dedicated volunteers and the exceptional team at DSR. Without your substantial contributions, this event would not have been possible. We would also like to extend our congratulations and appreciation to Tim Chiu, who has wholeheartedly dedicated an impressive three decades to volunteering with DSR Kids.

Lastly, we applaud all the award nominees and finalists for their exceptional achievements and thank you to those who have supported them.



As we embark on the awards ceremony, let it serve as a powerful reminder of our shared mission: to collectively work towards a future with enhanced choices, improved access, and increased participation opportunities for individuals with disabilities in sport and recreation.

Thank you for joining us on this inspiring journey of celebration, recognition, and progress.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Anderson".

Sarah Anderson
Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Tesone".

Liz Tesone
Chief Executive Officer



2023

Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards

- Sport and Recreation Victoria Volunteer of the Year
- Love the Game Team of the Year
- My Sport Live Coach/Fitness Leader of the Year
- WorkSafe Victoria Administrator of the Year
- Sport and Recreation Victoria Sport Initiative of the Year
- Clublinks Active Recreation and Leisure Initiative of the Year
- Polytan Inclusive Sport, Recreation or Open Space Infrastructure Award
- Carbine Club Marg Angel Junior Sportsperson of the Year
- My Sport Live Masters Sportsperson of the Year
- Active Melbourne Community Sportsperson of the Year
- Polytan Elite Sportsperson of the Year
- Kevin Coombs Lifetime Achievement Award



Awards judging panel

We express our sincere gratitude to the following independent panel members for their contribution in assessing the recipients of these awards.

Dan Ferguson

Executive Officer -
Parks and Leisure Australia

Lisa Hasker

Chief Executive Officer -
Vicsport

Kathy Parton

Chief Executive Officer -
Aquatics and Recreation Victoria

Michelle Williams

A/Director Participation and
Sector Development - Sport
and Recreation Victoria

Tom Zappulla

State Manager -
Victoria - Clublinks

Ben Tudhope

General Manager -
Partnerships - Aligned Leisure

John Summers

Director - Leisure
Management Excellence

Liz White

Senior Specialist -
Education Policy and Advocacy -
Life Saving Victoria

Wade Mackrell

Consultant - Sport
and Leisure Solutions

Meghan Mayman

Executive Officer -
Regional Sport Victoria

Simon Begir

Coordinator Aquatic
Services | Active Communities -
City of Stonnington



Keynote speakers



Shae Graham

Librarian by day, wheelchair rugby player by night, Shae Graham became the first female to represent Australia playing wheelchair rugby internationally at the 2019 Four Nations tournament in Alabama. In 2021, she topped that accomplishment by becoming the first female to represent Australia playing wheelchair rugby at the Paralympic Games. Shae made her Paralympic debut against France, where the Australian Steelers won 50-48. In 2022, Shae was on the Steelers team that brought home the World Championship.

At 18, Shae was a backseat passenger in a car crash. Her friend was speeding down a quiet residential street in Mackay, Queensland, when he lost control of the wheel and crashed into the side of a house. The crash left Shae with many injuries; multiple spinal fractures, severe whiplash, a fractured pelvis, a brain injury and a C6 incomplete spinal cord injury.

Shae hasn't let her injury define her life and has since gone on to complete multiple degrees, work in a variety of different industries, make the move to Melbourne, and to travel the world multiple times. In 2013, Shae lost a bet to her brother which resulted in her playing wheelchair rugby, Shae is often quoted as saying "I lost a bet and found a passion".





Peter Ogunyemi

Born in a small Nigerian village, Peter Ogunyemi faced life's early challenges with resilience, compounded by his struggle with polio. However, sport emerged as his salvation, offering purpose and a path out of poverty.

The turning point came on the eve of the 2000 Paralympics when a simple mistake crushed his gold medal dreams, leading to deep depression. Yet, the unwavering support of his parents reignited his spirit, reminding him that setbacks don't define a person; it's the courage to rise again that counts.

Rise, he did. Peter excelled in wheelchair basketball, representing Australia with passion. He also embraced the social aspect, forging lasting friendships. His journey continued in professional para-basketball across Europe, where he channeled earnings to support disabled individuals in Africa, exemplifying his commitment to giving back.

Peter's legacy extends beyond sports. He's an advocate for shifting the focus from what people with disabilities can't do to their vast potential. His message is clear: it's not how the world sees you; it's how you see yourself.



Finalists **2023**

Sport and Recreation Victoria Volunteer of the Year

- Anne Cherny - Multiclass Sports Association
- Cally Bauman - Special Olympics
- Brooke Carter - Victorian Goalball Association

2022 winner

Doug Sloan - Blind Golf Victoria, Blind Golf Australia and Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria

Love the Game Team of the Year

- Victoria Protect Thunder Wheelchair Rugby Team
- Team Vic - Special Olympics Victoria
- Melbourne City FC Powerchair Team

2022 winner

Table Tennis Victoria - Team Vic Para Squad

My Sport Live Coach/ Fitness Leader of the Year

- Sally Francis OAM - Para Equestrian
- Mary Longden - Riding for the Disabled Victoria
- Vicky Lee - Slamin Tennis and Fitness

2022 winner

Alois Rosario - Para Table Tennis

WorkSafe Victoria Administrator of the Year

- Serene Tan - Gymnastics Victoria
- Jon Watson - Tennis Victoria
- Shane Bicknell - Little Athletics Victoria

2022 winner

Steve Odgers - AFL Victoria



Sport and Recreation Victoria Sport Initiative of the Year

- AFL Barwon Inclusion League - Leisure Networks/ AFL Barwon
- Inclusion@Sport Project - Banyule City Council
- Victorian Blind Tennis Program - Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria

2022 winner

Sport4All - Get Skilled Access

Clublinks Active Recreation and Leisure Initiative of the Year

- Advantage Autism - The Au-Tastic Tennis Program - Slamin Tennis and Fitness

- The Bubble - a sensory friendly water safety experience - Life Saving Victoria
- emotion21 - Inclusion Foundation

2022 winners

- Zooming in on a vision for health and well-being - Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria
- Inclusive aquatics and recreation: a guide to increasing participation by underrepresented communities - Belgravia Leisure, Belgravia Foundation and Aquatics & Recreation Victoria

Polytan Inclusive Sport, Recreation or Open Space Infrastructure Award

- Powered Beach Wheelchair - City of Port Phillip
- Camp Manyung - YMCA Camping

2022 winner

Dementia Friendly Forest & Sensory Trail - Parks Victoria, Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance (Ballarat) and Dementia Australia

Carbine Club Marg Angel Junior Sportsperson of the Year

- Jack Howell - Triathlon Australia
- Brady Cochrane - Basketball Victoria
- Cayden Bell - Cranbourne Little Athletics

2022 winner

Liam Costello - Athletics

My Sport Live Masters Sportsperson of the Year

- Nazim Erdem - Wheelchair Rugby
- Maria Strong - Athletics
- Ross Patterson - Tennis

2022 winner

Adam Fayad - Tennis

Active Melbourne Community Sportsperson of the Year

- Rebecca Webber - Rare Voices Australia & Reining Australia
- Chris Henderson - Richmond FC Wheelchair AFL
- Daniel Pritchard - Victorian Goalball Association

2022 winner

Robert Fletcher - Blind Tennis

Polytan Elite Sportsperson of the Year

- Sarah Larcombe - Sport Climbing/Adaptive Climbing
- Andrew Robbins - Special Olympics
- Vicki Robbins - Special Olympics

2022 winner

Heath Davidson - Wheelchair Tennis

Kevin Coombs Lifetime Achievement Award

- Julie Cass - Cranbourne All Abilities Football
- Danni Di Toro - Table Tennis Victoria
- Aileen Marshall - Maryborough Riding for the Disabled

2022 recipient

Dylan Alcott OAM



VICTORIAN DISABILITY
SPORT & RECREATION
FESTIVAL

DISABILITY SPORT
& RECREATION



2023 Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Festival

FREE

Friday 1 December, 10am - 2pm

Crown Riverwalk, Southbank

Yarra Promenade between Queensbridge St and Rockpool Bar and Grill

www.dsr.org.au/vdsr-festival

Major supporter:



Associate supporters:



Event supporter:



DISABILITY SPORT
& RECREATION



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