

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TORCH RUN VICTORIA



THE FLAME NEWSLETTER ISSUE 5

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I hope you enjoy this edition of the LETR Victoria Newsletter. You'll see it looks a little different to previous editions, we hope you like it.

The current lockdowns of the COVID-19 environment has put a temporary pause to most Torch Run activities for the time being but you'll see we have been busy behind the scenes. Our new website www.torchrun.org.au is now up and running so we'd love you to have a look. Over the coming months the functionality of the new website will grow and we are excited to be able to better connect with our supporters, Special Olympics Clubs and of course the athletes!

A couple of exciting events to let you know about which are coming up in December. The first is an Athlete Celebration Day on 12th December where we can't wait to see as many Special Olympics Athletes as possible. A fun day with lots of activities is planned so stay tuned for more details. Our annual city Torch Run celebrating International Day of People with a Disability is also being planned for December 3 so get your running shoes on!

As we navigate our way out of the pandemic we will look forward to Special Olympics training and competitions starting up again over the coming weeks and months. We would love your assistance at any of these events. I can guarantee you will have a great time and make a real difference in the lives of people living with an intellectual disability.

Can I finish by saying a huge 'thanks' to each and every one of you who supports the Torch Run. Our ability to continue to support the athletes and Special Olympics Clubs during these testing times is only possible due to your generosity. For that we are grateful.



MATT VOLK

**LETR (TORCH RUN)
PRESIDENT**

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LETR PROFILE

Cassandra D'Alessandro – Northcote Uniform and LETR Champion

Cassandra has been with Victoria Police for 4 years and works as a First Constable at Northcote Uniform. She enjoys interacting with the community and the versatile jobs she gets to attend. Cassandra loves taking part in the LETR Committee and is a regular at LETR events with our athletes. Her very first torch run event was at the Special Olympics Victoria State Games at the Bulleen Veneto Club in 2019. Cassandra stays active by playing soccer, hiking, travelling, camping and cooking.



Her favourite Special Olympics moment was seeing the athletes develop their skills, establish friendships and creating long lasting memories at the athlete leadership camp Mt Buller.

She thought the entire GREAT tour was incredible. But seeing so many different athletes of different ages from regional areas was a definite highlight.

During the Covid Lockdowns Cassandra has enjoyed seeing all the posts from athletes and is excited to be part of planning some special events coming up. Fingers crossed we all get to see each other again soon!



“LETR is changing the future of people with intellectual disabilities and lighting the way for acceptance and inclusion”



ATHLETE PROFILE

Chris Hansen – Melbourne North

Chris first started with Special Olympics through Croxton Special School in 2006. You can now find him regularly competing at Bocce and Ten Pin Bowling events.

He trained hard and in 2013 he competed in the Asia Pacific Games in Newcastle. He loves training and competing but his favourite thing about Special Olympics is meeting up with his friends at National Games events.

Chris is a Special Olympics athlete leader and a regular supporter of LETR and you will often find him at an LETR torch run cheering us on. He loves taking part in torch runs and is an expert at the LETR chants! He was a great participant in the LETR Gippsland Regional Engagement and Awareness Tour (GREAT) in 2019.





THE CHIEF'S CHALLENGE

Law Enforcement Torch Run Victoria patron Chief Commissioner Shane Patton recently launched the 3rd annual 'Chief's Challenge'. Following the success of the last two years the Chief is once again challenging all Victoria Police staff to plan an activity which demonstrates our commitment to meaningful engagement with the intellectually disabled community. The challenge takes place is the lead up to International Day of People with a Disability on December 3 each year. We are keen to see what innovative ideas are used to celebrate the day.

Covid-19 hampered efforts to celebrate in 2020 but 105 Victoria Police staff supported and connected with over 615 people in the disability sector taking part in the activities. Events included virtual torch runs, and specialist schools visits. These events helped build stronger connections between Victoria Police and people in our community with disabilities.

To register your event or activity send the details to LAWENFORCEMENTTORCHRUN-MGR@police.vic.gov.au

“Let’s take inspiration from these Special Olympics athletes and work towards a Victoria Police ‘personal best’ in inclusiveness” – CCP Shane Patton



GLOBAL WEEK OF INCLUSION

The Victoria Police Academy was lit up in red on 22 July as a show of support to Special Olympics during the Global Week of Inclusion. Isn't it a magnificent sight?!

LETR, along with Victoria Police, are proud to promote respect, encouragement and choose to include people living with an intellectual disability. As a Champion of Inclusion we are proud to partner with Special Olympics because we achieve so much more together!

It's not too late, you can show your support and take the pledge to ensure no one is forgotten during this critical time around the world. Sign the pledge at: support.specialolympics.org/a/pledge-today together we are moving to a more unified world.

“Brilliant display for inclusion”
– Anna Mezger



“It looks amazing lit up on the hill”
– Glenda Bender

I TAN TAN YOU?

Our athlete leaders showed us how resilient they are by taking part in the 4KM Tan Ultra event in August. Melbourne turned on the perfect weather for them as they ran, jogged or walked their way around the Botanical Gardens. Tan Ultra raises funds for CanTeen, the Australian organisation for young people living with cancer. Congratulations to all the athlete leaders and volunteers that took part giving up their time to support others.

LETR members Matt and Cass were on hand to cheer them over the finish line in true LETR fashion. Lots of amazing fun and fitness was had by all!





FIGHTING BACK

LETR and Special Olympics pulled together an immunisation event to fight back against Covid-19. Over 200 athletes, volunteers and supporters turned out to be immunised. And to answer one athletes question "is the flamin' torch police going to be there?", we were there but the torch stayed home this time! We loved being a part of this event, and glad we got to hand out lollies and stickers to support all that came along.

We haven't been able to support our athletes in the usual ways but the LETR Victoria Committee is always looking for ways we can show our athletes we are thinking of them. We have led the way and these events are going to be replicated in at least 2 other states. Congratulations and thanks to SO Victoria and Aspen Medical Australia for making this event happen.



“Thank you to all involved in organising and delivering this service, my family are now all full vaccinated, stay safe everyone!” – Marie Butler



CONGRATULATIONS CHELSEA!!

LETR is a global organisation with 110,000 law enforcement employees from more than 40 countries involved every year. The LETR International Executive Council has delegates from the 14 LETR regions overseeing all of the LETR global activities and one athlete representing all 5.6 million Special Olympics athletes from around the world.

Victorian Athlete Leader Chelsea Haag-Witherden was nominated to stand in the LETR International Executive Council elections as one of only 9 athletes shortlisted from around the world.

She presented to the International Executive Council and blew them away just like we knew she would. It was a tough challenge as she was up against strong and worthy nominees for the Council to choose from.

We are so incredibly proud to announce Chelsea has been elected as the athlete representative on the International Executive Council!! This is only the second time an athlete from outside North America has been selected in LETR's 40 year history. It is an amazing achievement.

Chelsea is an incredible young woman who embodies all that can be achieved through Special Olympics. We know she will be an outstanding ambassador for all athletes and are proud to call her part of the Special Olympics and LETR Victoria family.



“An amazing achievement from an amazing individual” – Gareth Hogan
COO, Special Olympics Australia.



“An amazing achievement from an amazing individual” – Gareth Hogan



ATHLETES WE NEED YOU!

We spend a lot of time encouraging our athletes to get fit and active – now we are asking you to get your creative minds working. LETR Victoria would love to see what t-shirt designs our athletes can come up with.

There is no limit in colour or ideas but don't forget it needs to represent the Torch Run (LETR). Feel free to draw on a larger piece of paper, it just has to fit the space on the front of the t-shirt to be considered.

There will be prizes provided for first, second and third place. In addition the winning design will work with the LETR Committee and be a part of signing off the final look before it goes to the printers!

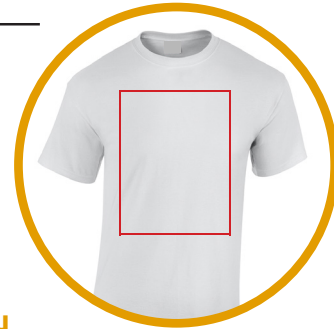
Designs need to be submitted no later than 26 October 2021. We can't wait to see what you all come up with!

NAME:

CLUB:

AGE:

EMAIL:



DRAW YOUR DESIGN BELOW IN THE RED BOX.

RETURN YOUR DESIGN TO: info@torchrun.org.au

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE 21/10/21

FOUR LOVE

On 27 June 2021 we were lucky enough to be able to meet up with some of our athletes at Ringwood. Our athletes were competing to qualify for the National Games in Tasmania next year. It was an amazing turn out with athletes from all over Melbourne.

The clouds were threatening to wash out the event but the sun came out to save the day just in time.

It was a great competition with so many close matches. LETR were on hand to umpire and even got to help out with some skills drills.



UNIFIED BASKETBALL

Remember that time not so long ago when we could all see each other, before covid came back? Well LETR used our time well and caught up with as many activities as we could. We were able to get along to the Unified Basketball training and the athletes showed us how it is done!

We ended the day by gifting the Unified Basketball team vouchers to purchase brand new basketballs. Only the best for our athletes!





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