



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CANBERRA TEENAGERS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY TAKE TO THE WAVES ON SYDNEY'S NORTHERN BEACHES**

**Four teenagers from Canberra who have cerebral palsy have swapped the bush for the beach and tested out their surfing skills on the waves at Collaroy on Sydney's northern beaches.**

Nathan Howard and Will O'Neill (both 14), Shane Dowley (15), and Rachael Leonard (17) joined other teenagers with cerebral palsy from regional NSW on a summer camp organised by The Spastic Centre. For many, it was their first trip away from home without their parents.

A highlight of the four day 'Sydney Summer Escape' was surfing at Collaroy Beach. The teenagers left their wheelchairs and mobility aids on the sand and took to the waves with the assistance of the Disabled Surfing Association.

Other activities included visiting the Sydney Aquarium at Darling Harbour, participating in a scavenger hunt at The Rocks, and enjoying a cruise around Sydney Harbour.

CEO of The Spastic Centre, Mr Rob White, said the summer camp was designed to help teenagers from rural areas build self-esteem, make new friends, and develop new skills.

'Cerebral palsy is the most common physical disability affecting Australian children, with a baby born with CP every 15 hours', Mr White said. 'However, teenagers with cerebral palsy who live in rural areas can often feel isolated as they may be the only person in their town with CP.'

'The summer camp brings these teenagers together from different parts of the state and is a great way for them to build independence and confidence, and importantly, realise they are not alone.'

The 'Sydney Summer Escape' was funded by Clayton Utz Foundation.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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### **The facts of cerebral palsy**

- Cerebral palsy (CP) is the most common, physical disability in childhood
- CP is a permanent disability that affects movement
- CP results from damage to the developing brain, usually before birth
- In Australia, 1 in 400 babies is diagnosed with CP
- There is no known cure and, for most, the cause is unknown
- People with CP may also have seizures, and sensory and intellectual impairments

Donations may be made by phoning 1300 136 140 or at [www.thespasticcentre.com.au](http://www.thespasticcentre.com.au)