**February 2021**

**Isla Gillespie**

My name is Isla Gillespie, and I am 15 years old and in Year 10 at Pittwater House School in Collaroy. I participate in Athletics as a part of the UTS North Club, as well as competing for my school. I have also recently started training for wheelchair tennis, which I am really enjoying, and I am hoping to compete sometime over the coming year.

I started competing in Para athletics in Year 3 when I was 8 years old and have loved it ever since. The main events I compete in are shot put, discus, javelin, long jump, and I also sometimes compete in the 100 metres. I was originally classified as a T/F38 but was reclassified as a T/F35 after I had surgery on my legs in 2018. My favourite event is javelin which I started doing in 2018. I train with my throws coach Annabel Davies every second week. I would love to start training more but schoolwork comes first so I have had to cut it down to fit in everything I love to do!

My proudest sporting moment was probably breaking the Shot Put and Javelin F35 Australian records in 2020, but an honourable mention was definitely receiving the UTS Norths’ 2020 Athlete with a disability of the year award.

My ultimate sporting goal would be to compete in the Paralympics, but my short-term goals are to break the F35 Long Jump Under 17 record this year and to compete in a wheelchair tennis competition.

When I leave school, I’d love to study abroad and currently would like to become either an astrophysicist or a human rights lawyer, but I have plenty of time to decide between now and then!

Online learning was definitely very different from anything I’d experienced before, but I loved it. Doing our classes online meant I was able to be on a call with my friends in all my classes which kept it fun and I loved not having to wear a uniform and being able to take classes from my bed! It also allowed me to pick the sports I was interested in when I would normally be doing PE, so I was able to fit in a lot more athletics training!

I am really excited to start competing again this year and can’t wait for the competitions to begin!