**April 2021**

**Ali Green**

My name is Ali Green. I live in Dubbo, and I started boarding school this year in Sydney. I am 13 years old, and I am in year 7 at St Vincent’s College Potts Point.  I am a part of this amazing community due to a brain malformation resulting in seizures that medicine would not control.

At 5 months of age, they removed my left temporal, parietal, and a section of my occipital lobe. This resulted in a right hemianopia (right sided blindness), and coordination/dexterity issues to my right side. I cannot remember life before my surgery, so I hardly notice my vision loss.

I love to swim, I also play soccer, netball and have recently started water polo. I am still swimming for Dubbo RSL Community Swimming Club, but I’m currently trying to find a swimming club/coach that will work around boarding school. I have been attending the NSW CP girls football clinics and have met some lovely people.

My goal this year is to stay fit. My doctor has told me to play sport for life to stay strong. I qualified for All Age Nationals last year in Perth 2020, but COVID put a stop to that.

I had never competed at that level, so I really wanted to make it to Nationals this year. And I did! Despite the rain at the Gold Coast, I really enjoyed it. I did some great times, and even walked away with three finalist ribbons.

I love to try new things. This year I was very nervous to try water polo. I made it into the A side for school water polo and even though some games were rough I had fun.

My greatest swimming achievement was when I was in year 5, I made it to school Nationals at Melbourne. Dubbo’s indoor pool was broken so I could only do land training, and my mum had an elastic long band to swim in my “semi- warm” 18-degree home pool. I swam really well at Melbourne. I came third in the 200m freestyle, second in the 100m fly and first in the mixed relay. I was thrilled to place, I really wasn’t expecting to medal.

I am not really sure just yet on what I want to do when I leave school. I love animals (especially my two sausage dogs Helga and Gary) so maybe something to do with animals but I really am not sure.

I actually found it easier to do my work at home during COVID with less distractions. (Although I really do love my friends). It is much more interesting to be at school than learning from home. I have been finding training like I did in Dubbo harder since boarding school. I am lucky, there is a girl in year 11 and we have been swimming at Boy Charlton, and Cook and Phillip pools. Being in Sydney is easier to attend the CP football clinics though and I’m really enjoying being able to attend.

Looking forward to the future when borders and international travel recommences, I am looking forward to getting overseas to wherever my Mum and Dad will take me. When I’m old enough to travel myself, I’d like to ski in Canada.

When everything was cancelled, it was really hard to train as I found it hard to set goals and to stay motivated. Goal setting is very important for me to stay motivated.

Some quick and interesting facts about me: I like scary movies. I hate heights. I like mint flavouring. I hate wasabi. I love the cold. I hate being hot.