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SEMINAR EMPOWERS IPSWICH WOMEN AND GIRLS TO GET ACTIVE

Women and girls in Ipswich have today had the chance to interact with some of Queensland's top female athletes and sports professionals, during a free 'Active Women and Girls' morning tea at Ipswich Civic Hall.

Member for Ipswich, Rachel Nolan, representing Sport Minister Judy Spence, said the State Government sponsored information seminar has provided attendees with the information they need to get involved in sports and active recreation at the local level.

Ms Nolan said: "Sport and active recreation is such an important part of life – it's good for your mind and your body. It also helps to build self-esteem and confidence, allows you to make new friends, and most importantly, it can be great fun.

"Despite all the obvious benefits, not enough women and girls are getting their daily dose. 48 per cent of Qld women are not active enough to receive health benefit, and less than 1 in 15 girls participate in at least 1 hour of moderate physical activity every day.

"These 'Active Women and Girls' morning teas aim to turn these shocking trends around, by raising awareness about the importance of exercise. Today's event is part of a series of free information sessions being held across Queensland over the next three months, run by Womensport Queensland on behalf of the Department of Sport and Recreation.

"The Queensland Government has allocated more than \$150,000 to run the events.

"The sessions allow participants to learn first-hand from elite athletes, coaches, officials and administrators how important it is to make sport and active recreation an integral part of their every day life."

Special guest speakers at today's event in Ipswich included weightlifting champion Deborah Lovely, dietician and personal trainer Leanne Hammond and Paralympic swimmer Karni Liddell.

Karni inspired the group with her story about the power of belief and triumph of the human spirit.

"After being diagnosed with a degenerative muscle disease at 12 months of age, doctors told my parents I was unlikely to crawl, walk or even see my teenage years," Karni said.

"Physical activity became an integral part of my rehabilitation, enabling me not just to walk but to compete in swimming at the Paralympics.

"Striving for what you want and achieving your goals is one of the greatest pleasures in life. Most of all – never say never!"