



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPINAL INJURIES ASSOCIATION

Congratulations to the Spinal Injuries Association on celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2010.

Spinal injury can occur in an instant - from a car crash or an accident on the sporting field. Or it can develop more slowly, from diseases like polio. Each year, hundreds of Australians sustain spinal cord injuries and must learn how to rebuild their lives afterwards. Despite the devastating and permanent nature of spinal cord injury, it is vital to realise that individuals with this condition can still lead independent, fulfilling lives within our communities.

This is where organisations such as the Spinal Injuries Association play such an important role. As the peak body in Queensland, over the past 50 years the Association has supported and empowered its members by providing invaluable services such as in-home personal assistance, advisory and employment services, and a peer support program. Moreover, the Association has raised awareness among young Australians on how to prevent spinal cord injuries, with their Spinal Education Awareness Team reaching over a million school children in the past two decades.

I commend the important work of the Spinal Injuries Association and I encourage everyone to show their generous support for the Association's major annual fundraising events - the Classic Wallabies Rugby Luncheon in April and the Gala Fundraising Dinner during Spinal Awareness Week in November - which assist the Association to continue its important role in enhancing the lives of people with spinal cord injury. On behalf of the countless Australians who have and will continue to benefit from the tireless work of the Spinal Injuries Association, I say thanks - and happy 50th birthday.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Rudd'.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister of Australia