

Sporting Wheelies FAQs

What is the decision?

The Board of Sporting Wheelies has decided to transition the staff, assets and liabilities of Sporting Wheelies to the control of Spinal Life. There are no changes proposed to the locations from which Sporting Wheelies operates or the services the organisation provides – the aim is to operate on a ‘business as usual’ basis.

Why was the decision made?

For several years, Sporting Wheelies has attempted to develop new and bigger revenue streams, a more compelling membership proposition and to attract larger and more longer-term grants – with the aim of improving the financial sustainability of the organisation. The decision to transition all the staff, assets and liabilities to Spinal Life has not been taken lightly, but the decision has been made to ensure Sporting Wheelies can continue to support people with disability to participate in sporting and recreational activities. Spinal Life is an established provider of services to people with disability and is also a leading advocate for improved access and inclusion in the community, working with all levels of government. The organisation is in a strong financial position to continue to build on the foundations laid by Sporting Wheelies.

What will the decision mean for Sporting Wheelies members?

Existing members of Sporting Wheelies will be offered membership of Spinal Life. All members of Spinal Life can vote in the organisation’s Annual General Meeting, receive a copy of *The Advocate* magazine, and can access free individual advocacy services. If you are a customer of Sporting Wheelies therapy services, these services will continue to be provided to you and there should not be any disruption to your service.

Will Spinal Life still support participation in sports by people with disability?

Yes, one of the reasons the Board of Sporting Wheelies chose to transition to Spinal Life is the close alignment of the missions of the organisations. Spinal Life has fitness hubs at the Cairns and Brisbane Healthy Living Centres and is already supporting many customers who are sportspeople or desire to be sportspeople. Spinal Life seeks to help people with physical disability live empowered, equitable and accessible lives and continues to advocate for its members to remove barriers when it comes to accessing sports and recreational activities.

Does Spinal Life have plans for Sporting Wheelies?

Spinal Life recognises the value of the contribution made by the Board and members of Sporting Wheelies over its long history. Spinal Life is keen to encourage and support the people with disability to participate in sport and recreation socially and professionally – building on the legacies and skill sets of both organisations. Spinal Life believes that the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics represents a huge opportunity to expand the sporting arena for Australians with disability and will increase the visibility of sportspeople with disability on the national and world stage. In addition, Spinal Life supports grassroots efforts to encourage

children with disability to participate in sporting and recreational activities to enhance their health and wellbeing and to strengthen our local, state and national sporting teams.

What will happen to the new clubhouse in Milton?

We are supporting Spinal Life to negotiate the lease to be transferred to their organisation. The new clubhouse will remain operating and will be accessible to all members and customers as it is now. Services and therapies provided from the building will continue largely unchanged.

Will Spinal Life continue to apply for grants to conduct activities for the disability community?

Spinal Life is highly experienced in applying for, securing and managing grants of all sizes from small grants of several thousand dollars from local governments right through to multi-million-dollar grants from the Commonwealth Government. Spinal Life understands the value of grants to provide much-needed funding to deliver better outcomes for people with disability.

Why did the Board choose Spinal Life to transition to?

Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association has its origins in the 1960s as a small sports club that started within the Paraplegics Welfare Association in Queensland – the organisation that has now become Spinal Life. In a sense, the transition of Sporting Wheelies to Spinal Life is a ‘homecoming’ back to the organisation where it all started. The two organisations share much in common, from members, customers and a desire for a more inclusive Australia. Importantly, both organisations are well established not-for-profit entities, with the mission to support people with disability to live the life they choose, working collaboratively to understand a person’s goals and what they wish to achieve.