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MEDIA RELEASE

There's no stopping Melissa!

20 year old Melissa Northcott from Seville Grove may have faced many challenges in her life, however living with cerebral palsy has not stopped her from achieving her goals and helping others in the community.

Born prematurely, Melissa's parents were told she would not live more than a few hours past birth. Melissa not only proved the experts wrong, she overcame considerable adversity and has used her experiences to help others with disabilities.

"Having CP doesn't affect me. I may have it, but I can still get on with my life, achieve my goals and dreams, and if anything, it has given me more passion and drive to get through life and to advocate for people with disabilities".

Whilst completing a Diploma of Business - Public Relations, and now Frontline Management, Melissa is also the Chairperson of the City of Armadale Youth Advisory Committee, and a member of the City of Armadale Disability Advisory Team, which looks at improving the lives of people with disabilities in the Armadale area.

Recently, Melissa was appointed as the Research Development Coordinator for the St John Australian Youth Council, and after being a member of The Centre for Cerebral Palsy for over ten years, Melissa was elected as The Centre's newest Board Director, representing over 1000 people living with CP in WA.

"As a passionate person with CP, I feel very privileged to not only be able to highlight the great work that The Centre for Cerebral Palsy does, but to have a voice for people with CP and to be part of the bigger picture and decisions that impact on so many", Melissa said.

Melissa is heavily involved with a number of not for profit organisations including The Centre for Cerebral Palsy; St John Ambulance, and over four years has achieved bronze, silver and gold levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Although her list of achievements is outstanding, if you ask Melissa, one of her proudest moments was introducing 'Radio Lollipop', an international children's radio station, into Armadale Hospital, to entertain children who spend extended periods of time in hospital. As a 14 year old, Melissa worked closely with local and State Governments and the Armadale and Princess Margaret Hospitals, so that she could "give the children something to look forward to".

"I would like to thank everyone who has assisted me in making my life better" says Melissa. "I may have CP – but believe me – I can't be stopped!"

Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week runs nationally from 3-9 Wednesday, 9 July 2008 August. Judy Hogben, CEO for The Centre for Cerebral Palsy said "Our aim is to celebrate the achievements of people living with CP; raise awareness, understanding and acceptance of CP and provide a forum for people with CP to share insights and exchange ideas. Importantly the week is about bringing the WA community together through community and fundraising activities to ensure better lives for those living with CP."

There are many ways the community can support CP Awareness Week. For further information, please visit www.tccp.com.au.

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For further information or to arrange a photo or interview please contact:

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FACTS ABOUT CEREBRAL PALSY

- *CP is a permanent physical condition that affects movement.*
- *In Australia a child is born with CP every 18 hours.*
- *Australians under 18 are three times more likely to be diagnosed with cerebral palsy than cancer.*
- *There is no pre-birth test, no known cure and severity is on the increase.*
- *For most the cause of CP is unknown.*
- *CP is not a disease, it is not contagious.*
- *CP can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to almost complete lack of movement.*
- *Since 1951 The Cerebral Palsy Association has forged an enviable reputation as one of the leading disability service providers in WA. In line with the outstanding work we do in the area of CP management and support to those with disability, on 13 March 2007 we adopted a new name The Centre for Cerebral Palsy and colourful new logo.*