

Our first ever **Bronze Awardee** Melanie Tran

Mel is 16 years old and became the first person in the world to complete the Bronze Award in The Duke of Ed pilot program for people with a neuromuscular condition.



“I’ve never really had the courage to think about my dreams because I’m very limited with what I’m

able to do physically. The Duke of Ed opened a whole new world to me and showed me all the possibilities that I have.”

For her Skill Section of the Duke of Ed, Mel was the first student in Australia to complete an online training course on Product Design with a university in America. Mel learned how tricky it was to bowl with a ramp for her Physical Recreation Section, and became a permanent volunteer for MDNSW after updating their website in her Volunteering Section. For her Adventurous Journey, Mel went on a 5 day independent living experience to Port Stephens which was the first time she had ever spent a night away from her family.

Mel thinks her biggest personal achievements so far include learning to speak up more and gaining courage to go away without her family for the first time. “It really is a huge step for all of us and I’m extremely happy that I did it! It makes me feel stronger and braver and more confident.”

The Duke of Ed has not only impacted Melanie’s life, but also her family. Mel’s mum Monica says “Having Mel take part in The Duke of Ed has really brought our family closer together. We have grown to become more supportive of Mel in terms of being able to help her achieve what she wants.”



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The MDNSW Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

A unique initiative improving the quality of life for young people with a neuromuscular condition



www.dukeofed.org.au



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The **Duke of Edinburgh’s** Award

***This project is proudly supported by
Ageing, Disability and Home Care***

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THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD



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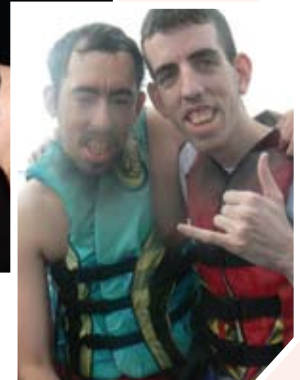
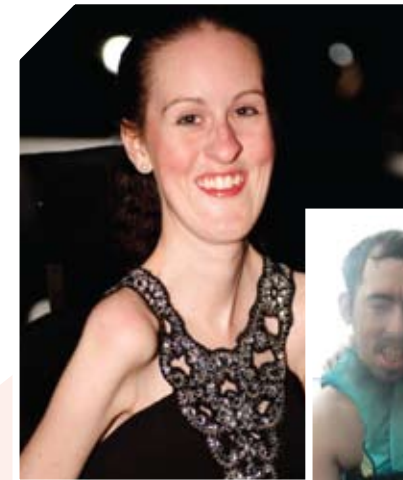
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award currently operates in over 130 countries around the world. Historically, people with neuromuscular conditions have not participated in The Duke of Ed perhaps due to a perception of it being outside of their physical capabilities. MDNSW has been working closely with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia, piloting how we can make the program more inclusive to those with high support needs. Conducting a program such as this one allows our Dukies to participate in The Duke of Ed whilst being supported by people who understand that their physical restrictions need not impact on their desire to challenge themselves and achieve remarkable things!

The concept behind The Duke of Ed is one of individual challenge. It offers young people aged between 14-25 years a non-competitive program of self-directed activities, encouraging personal discovery, growth, self reliance, perseverance, and service to their community. The program is structured so that Participants design their own unique program centred around their interests, passions and abilities.



Participants can choose to do their Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, and each level requires that they undertake an activity of their choice in each of the four Sections of Skill, Physical Recreation, Volunteering and Adventurous Journey. They participate on a regular basis over a set period of time for each Section and take ownership of as much of the planning, decision making and record keeping as possible.



What our Dukies have to say about

The Duke of Ed program



This program is a great idea. It lets individuals explore new skills in the confinements of their own abilities. It's not often that we get these types of opportunities granted to us.

Gold participant, Hayley Bellamy, 22yrs

It encourages people to go beyond their limits by challenging themselves to go one step further, yet allows you to do the things you love the most. It also teaches you lifelong skills that are so important for the future such as planning, commitment and communication skills. I also love it because I have met such wonderful and strong people on the way and it inspires me to keep going.

Bronze Awardee, Julie Duong, 19yrs

The Duke of Ed has given me more confidence to be more independent by organising things myself and also has given me the chance to do things I never thought I would be able to do. Hopefully this program encourages other people with muscular dystrophy to do The Duke of Ed and eventually inspire other disability organisations to run the Award too.

Bronze Awardee, Nathan O'Connell, 22yrs

