

MEDIA RELEASE

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Luke Missen named in Australian squad for World Dwarf Games

East Gippsland Water's Luke Missen has been named in the Australian squad to compete in the World Dwarf Games in Germany later this year.

Thirty-year-old Luke a Senior Treatment Operator with East Gippsland Water, will be representing his country in basketball, badminton and soccer at the Games – to be held in Cologne, commencing 28 July.

These Games are the premier sporting event for those with dwarfism and are usually held every four years - though COVID caused a two year delay this time round. This has done nothing to quell global enthusiasm for the event, with 2023 anticipated to see the highest ever number of competitors – making it the greatest dwarf-sporting event in history.

For Luke this will be his second World Dwarf Games. He previously competed in Canada in 2017, where he and his teammates in the Australian basketball team scooped a bronze medal. They are looking to do even better this time round!

Luke, who now lives in Eagle Point, East Gippsland, grew up in Denison near Heyfield, and attributes his success in both basketball and para-badminton, in part, to his background playing tennis, which he says provided him with good hand-eye coordination.

The reigning Australian national champion in the short stature SH6 class for para-badminton, Luke has in fact claimed the national title every year since 2015. He has also represented Australia in the Para-Badminton World Championships in the UK (2015), South Korea (2017), Switzerland (2019) and Japan (2022).

He will be competing in the singles and doubles in para-badminton in Germany, and will most likely play interchangeably as shooting guard or a small forward in basketball.

A very excited Luke says the Games are a pretty special opportunity and great experience, and he cannot wait to represent his country again on the world stage.

"When I started on this sporting journey eight years ago I never thought I would have the opportunity to compete for my country on the international stage and so many times," Luke says.

"These events are such an adrenalin rush and I cannot wait to see first-hand the excitement of my teammates, both new and old, and the other competitors from around the globe competing again. Add to that the drive of the basketball team to go better than the bronze we got last time round and these games promise to be phenomenal."

Even though Luke is not looking for funding to help him personally, he would like to encourage anyone interested in making a financial contribution towards Team Australia's participation in the World Dwarf Games in Germany, to help athletes with the cost of travelling and competing at these Games. Please visit the Australian Sports Foundation website at asf.org.au/projects/short-statured-people-of-australia to make a donation.

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East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, says that all the staff are very proud of Luke's achievement.

"This is a great success story and everyone has their fingers crossed for Luke at the Games," says Steve.

"We may be thousands of kilometres away, but we will be following his progress closely and barracking for him at every opportunity. You never know, they may even hear us in Germany!"

Luke's grandmother's family, on his father's side, originally hail from Germany, so the opportunity will also be taken to catch-up with a number of German relatives face-to-face for the first time!

NOTE TO EDITORS AND PHOTOS:

To arrange an interview with Luke Missen please contact East Gippsland Water's Communications and Community Engagement Manager, Paula Strong, on 0499 625 422.



Caption: Luke prepares for basketball action in Germany



Caption: Luke (pictured front row, centre) with the rest of the Australian basketball squad heading to Germany