



Office of the  
Children's Guardian

Home > Child safe  
organisations > Information for  
parents > Child safe  
sports > Child safe sports  
supporters

## Gabrielle Vassallo supports Child Safe Sports



In 2009 triathlete Gabrielle Vassallo was training for the biggest race of her life - the Busselton Ironman - when a cycling accident left her fighting for her life.

While riding solo on Sydney's Southern Cross Drive early on a Saturday morning, Gabrielle was hit from behind by a car.

"I woke up five weeks later with spinal injuries to my neck and back, brain injury, punctured lungs and a partially amputated leg which the surgeons thankfully sewed back on," said Gabrielle.

The car's impact also tore a hole in her aorta so she now has a stent in her heart. Yet less than 17 months after the incident and the horrific damage, Gabrielle competed in an able-bodied triathlon, as a parathlete with modified equipment (a three wheeled bike as her balance is affected from the brain injury).

The 40 year-old is currently training for the National Paracycling Championships with a goal to represent Australia.

The parathlete's experiences provide Gabrielle with a unique understanding about the importance of keeping safe in sport. She is also a strong supporter of the Child Safe Sports child protection campaign being run by the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG).

"Sports are such a great outlet for kids to socialise, develop coordination skills, and ultimately create a platform for them to sustain a healthy lifestyle," said Gabrielle.

"By ensuring sport is a safe environment, we can keep our kid's happier and healthier."

Gabrielle is one of the athletes featured in the OCG's Child Safe Sports [video](#) that aims to raise community awareness about managing risks to children in sports environments, not just from physical threats but also emotional and sexual abuse.

To read more about Gabrielle click [here](#).



Parathlete Gabrielle Vassallo knows that you should never give up and always maintain a child safe environment.