

Media Release

Triathlon for Prem Olivia

18 February 2015

Michelle Carey of Carine will be competing in the TriEvents SunSmart Women's Triathlon on Sunday 15th March, in the name of her baby Olivia who was born three months premature.

Born in January 2012, Olivia is one of nearly 3000 babies born prematurely in Western Australia each year. Olivia's mum Michelle is thankful for the Women and Infants Research Foundation (WIRF) who are working to discover how to prevent the early delivery of babies such as Olivia. Michelle will be raising funds from her triathlon for the Foundation's preterm birth research.

Michelle was just 24 weeks pregnant with Olivia when her waters broke (also known as PPROM – premature rupture of the membranes). She was taken to King Edward Memorial Hospital and placed on strict bed rest to try and prolong the pregnancy. "I was on hospital bed rest over the Christmas and New Year period and being away from my young son and husband was incredibly hard", said Michelle.

By 28 weeks Michelle had become sick with chorioamnionitis and delivered Olivia via emergency Caesarean section three months early. "Olivia weighed just 1.115 kg when she was born", said Michelle. "She required assistance from a CPAP machine for breathing as her lungs were not fully developed and she stopped breathing several times during her ten week stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit".

WIRF is working to discover what causes premature birth and how it can be prevented, through the combination of research with clinical care. Much of WIRF's research focuses on discovering new ways of fighting infection and inflammation in utero that can lead to conditions such as chorioamnionitis.

WIRF's Professor Jeffrey Keelan said "we know that intrauterine infection and inflammation is a major cause of preterm birth before 32 weeks. We are testing new antibiotic drugs which are showing to be more effective in treating intrauterine infection than current medications. We are also developing a test to identify women who may be at high risk of developing intrauterine infection during pregnancy".

The Foundation has recently launched the WA Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative (PTBPI), a state-wide program combining research with clinical care, aimed at raising awareness and safely lowering the rate of preterm birth in WA. The Foundation is seeking community support to run the PTBPI and will benefit from funds raised at the Women's Triathlon. More information on the PTBPI can be found at www.thewholeninemonths.com.au

Michelle is encouraging other women and mothers to register for the triathlon and raise funds for WIRF. You can support Michelle in her triathlon by visiting her My Cause page at www.mycase.com.au/page/88109/triforolivia

To enter a team into the Women's Triathlon for WIRF, visit www.wirf.com.au/triathlon. Participants, who raise at least \$50 for WIRF by 6th March 2015, will receive a complimentary WIRF running shirt (sponsored by Beyond Bank). The highest fundraiser will also win a day spa voucher.

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