

**MEDIA RELEASE
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CLARIE GETS BACK IN HER BOAT

Having been forced onto crutches after a serious car accident just three years ago, few people expected Victoria schoolgirl Claire Jones to row again.

But the former rowing champion was determined the accident which changed her life forever would not prevent her from competing. Each night as she lay in bed, she looked up at the posters of her heroes world champions Silken Laumann on her bedroom walls and vowed she would return to training and racing.

That day came this week when Jones, now 16, returned to rowing for a light training session with her old teammates on Victoria Harbor under ABC Rowing Club coach John Smithers.

“It was awesome. I’ve been waiting for this day for so long,” exclaims an emotional Jones.

“Ever since the accident I have wanted to be back rowing. It’s good to be back on the water – it played a significant role in my rehabilitation both physically and mentally.

“I always knew I would eventually achieve my goal of training and racing again.”

Smith, who wants to compete in Victoria’s coxless fours under 18 team in June next year, plans to steadily build up her strength over the next few months and begin full-on training again by the middle of the year.

“I might not be able to walk very well, but I reckon my arms can only be stronger after so long on the crutches. I love being back in the boat, and I plan on working toward the Olympics one day,” Claire said.

“For me it will be a harder goal to reach, but after my accident, I now know I’ve got the internal strength to do it!”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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