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*****Media release*****

Melbourne Storm help farewell inspirational teenager

All the rain in the world wouldn't stop 17 year old Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre patient, Hayden Hore, from going to see his beloved Melbourne Storm play at Olympic Park on Saturday night.

While the heavens finally opened for Melbourne on 21 April, Hayden, who has quadriplegia, relished the opportunity to watch his favourite Rugby League team on his second last night in Melbourne before returning to his hometown of Wagga Wagga on Monday.

Hayden was flown to the Austin Hospital in November last year with shattered C4, C5, C6 and C7 vertebrae in his neck after diving into a shallow part of the Murray River in Albury. He was later transferred to the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre where he has spent the last five months undergoing rehabilitation.

Hayden has been waiting for a bed to become available for him at Wagga Base Hospital so that he can be closer to his family, and when confirmation finally arrived last week that a bed was waiting for him, Melbourne Storm decided to celebrate by giving him a final farewell.

Fullbacks Billy Slater and Steve Turner visited Hayden on Tuesday at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre and spent over an hour talking with him before presenting him with a signed jersey, cap and bag...and free tickets to Saturday night's clash with the Penrith Panthers.

Hayden described the match as "cool – I've never been to a live game before", but even 'cooler' was when he was taken onto the ground after the Storm's win to meet the players and cheerleaders.

"It was mad!" said Hayden, "but weird at the same time, seeing the crowd up high on the grandstands above me; I'm not anyone flash".

While Hayden is excited about going home, he is keen to stay in contact with some of the patients at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre and will particularly miss the staff.

“They’re all fantastic. I wish I could take some of the nurses home to look after me in Wagga,” he said.

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