

# Grade III Para Rider:

## RACHEL STOCK

and

## BATES RIMINI PARK EMMERICH



What makes me a Paralympian is a degenerative bone disease that I have had for a large part of my life. I have no cartilage in my hands, knees, hips, ankles and parts of my spine. When your body has no cartilage it makes it very painful to use these joints and over time they drastically reduce your range of movement until you have almost none left. Some of my fingers do not open or close, my hips, knees and ankles do not move the same way as a normal joint would, and makes it very difficult for me to do normal day to day activities. Riding is very risky business for me, I have broken my back in three places and both of my hips so I am very fortunate to ride the beautiful Bates Rimini Park Emmerich, who is not only wonderfully talented, but has a beautiful nature and trainability. Our highlight together was competing in London in the 2012 Paralympics and we have such a close bond, that we have been fortunate to win many New Zealand Regional Championships in Able bodied Dressage competition too. People ask why sometimes I am in a wheel chair, sometimes I have crutches, sometimes just a cane? It depends on my pain levels, this can be relative to how much I have been doing physically, what treatment I have been having or levels of medication. It is like trying to force my legs through broken glass to insist my body puts one foot in front of the other most days, others it is completely unbearable. In my life outside Para Equestrian I am a General Manager of a large Manufacturing Company, a mom to two teenage daughters and a daughter myself. I have an incredibly close family and my battles with my health and all the hard work in achieving the goal of going to London for the Paralympics have involved everyone along the way. Without the support of my amazing family, none of the great things in my life would be possible. My career and family life mean a lot to me and are a great balance to my sport and passion for my horses. Eventually as my condition deteriorates I won't be able to ride competitively, there will also come a time when I will not be able to ride at all. I hope to be in a position that I could put my knowledge and understanding of the sport and what it entails to good use in the capacity as either a sport official or horse owner for another Para Equestrian who has dreams like mine.

