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LOCAL BODY IMAGE ADVOCATE LAUNCHES DEBUT CHILDREN'S BOOK

"... the other kids are really mean," said Jessica. They laughed at me because I only have one hand and because I look different. I don't like being different, I just want to look like everybody else."

PERTH, WA

Local inspirational body image advocate and Paralympic swimmer, Jessica Smith, will debut her first children's book "Little Miss Jessica Goes to School" in July 2015.

The book will be the first in a series that focuses on the adventures of 'Little Miss Jessica' - a young girl with one hand.

Smith, a 2015 WA state finalist for Young Australian of The Year and renowned motivational speaker, has been working on the publication for the past year.

Recently nominated for a Pride of Australia Medal for 2015, Jessica is an avid advocate for positive body image, dedicating her life work to focusing on youth health and development.

Little Miss Jessica is a character based on Smith. The first book in the series "Little miss Jessica Goes to School" follows the adventures of a young girl with one hand and her first day at school. Made to feel 'different' and excluded by some of the other kids because of her disability. But thanks to her teacher, both Jessica and the other kids soon realise that everyone looks different, no one person is the same as another. Finally Jessica accepts that her appearance isn't something to be sad about, because being different is OK.

SMITH: "I thought back to the characters that I grew up with and realised that the sheer lack of diversity was a concerning issue. There is of course nothing wrong with characters such as Barbie, Cinderella, Batman or Superman – these are the characters that ignite our imagination and encourage us to fantasize. But children also need to see and read about characters that represent what they see in real life. Characters with imperfections and characters with differences."

Smith is the ambassador for Layne Beachley's 'Aim For the Stars' foundation & the Australia Day Council and is the WA representative for The Butterfly Foundation.

The book is available to purchase online for \$19.95 + P&H : <http://little-miss-jessica.myshopify.com/>

~ENDS~

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