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MEDIA RELEASE

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SCIC recipient wins second Deaflympic gold in 5,000M

SCIC cochlear implant recipient Melinda Vernon last night strode to victory in the 5,000 metres to add a second Gold medal to her collection as she completed her domination of the distance events at the 2009 Taipei Deaflympic Games.

An inspiring role model for the hearing impaired, Vernon was born profoundly deaf who at the age of 6 became the 50th person to receive a cochlear implant through SCIC - Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre.

Vernon, who won Gold in the 10,000 metres last Monday, produced another emphatic victory breaking the 5,000 metre world record, held by Deaflympic legend and current Australian Athletics team manager Joanne Lambert by almost 45 seconds to claim the Gold in a time of 16:23.

In a similar fashion to her 10,000 metres victory Vernon went out hard and opened up a commanding early lead in the hot and humid conditions and was never headed finishing almost one minute ahead of the silver medallist Russian Olga Yakubovskaya. The victory was a gutsy win by Vernon who has struggled with illness following her energy sapping performance in the extreme heat and humidity in the 10,000 metres, which caused her to pull out of the 1,500 metres on Wednesday so she could focus on recovering for the 5,000 metres.

"Winning tonight caps off a great few weeks at the Deaflympics and I am so happy to finish off strongly tonight. The 10,000m earlier in the week took a lot out of me so it's a big relief that I was able to perform well," said Vernon.

"The Deaflympics has been a fantastic learning experience for me and I am very proud to win two Gold medals for Australia," said Vernon.

As an elite athlete, having a cochlear implant has created unique challenges for Melinda, however with SCIC support she has been able to overcome many of these enabling her to focus on her training and her intense competition program.

There is little time to rest for Vernon who will return to Australia for a few days before jumping back on a plane to compete in Los Angeles in the United States in a road event which was part of the prize for winning the 2009 City 2 Surf.

For more information about SCIC visit www.scic.org.au or phone 02 9844 6800