

Sam Puts Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd Into Therapy!

By Alison Rehn from News.com.au, January 25, 2009 02:10pm

A YOUNG Australian of the Year finalist stunned Kevin Rudd by detaching his prosthetic arm, leaving it dangling from the Prime Minister as the two shook hands.

Sam Cawthorn decided to play a practical joke on the unsuspecting Prime Minister at an official function at The Lodge today.

The Tasmanian motivational speaker, whose right arm was amputated above the elbow after a car accident, accepted a dare by his young daughter and left his artificial arm hanging from Mr Rudd's when the two shook hands.

Mr Rudd told the reception to honour Australian of the Year finalists he had not recovered from shock and was still "in therapy". Meanwhile, cricket legend Glenn McGrath was being modest about his status as a favourite to win Australian of the Year.

"Others deserve it more than me," a humble McGrath said Mr Rudd's Canberra home.

McGrath and other Australian of the Year finalists gathered at The Lodge for scones and quiches and were joined by Mr Rudd and his wife, Therese Rein.

Buoyed by all the goodwill among the finalists, Mr Rudd decided to have a little fun himself, and grabbed one of the photographer's cameras and started taking photos of finalists and his wife.

On a serious note, Mr Rudd paid tribute to all the finalists, describing the group as an "extraordinary array of talent".

"Each of you are leaders within your communities and therefore leaders across the nation," he said.

"You are here for things you have done and for the things you will do." McGrath, who has been nominated for his work with the McGrath Foundation - a major fundraiser for and supporter of people with breast cancer - said he was honoured to be included among the finalists.

Looking to 2009, he said he was currently focused on making the most of his life with his children.

"I guess the way I look at it, I'm just trying to get through life at the moment and make the most of it. McGrath's wife Jane lost her 11-year battle with cancer in June last year, leaving him to care for their two children.

Other Australian of the Year finalists include indigenous leader Professor Mick Dodson, indigenous singer and songwriter Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, indigenous community worker Ivan Copley, gardening expert Peter Cundall AM, African-Australian community leader Dr Berhan Ahmed, geriatrics specialist Dr Penny Flett and literacy advocate Bronwyn Sheehan.