

Wednesday, 27 July 2022

SUNNYFIELD GETTING OUT AND ABOUT IN ARMIDALE IN A FRESH NEW VAN – WITH A CATCHY NAME!

With a beautiful, bright paint scheme, it will be hard to miss Sunnyfield Disability Services' fresh new set of wheels cruising the streets of Armidale and the New England region.

And with a catchy, clever name, you'll even be able to call out g'day as you see the *van go* by.

Following a grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, this week Sunnyfield officially unveiled the vehicle that will ensure clients travel to and from their Community Service Hub in Armidale in safety and style – and can have a more active role in the community in general.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation chair Jennifer Leslie said the van isn't just about getting clients from point A to point B, but creating opportunities for Sunnyfield's local clients to engage in the community.

"This brand-new Toyota HiAce has been custom-fitted with wheelchair modifications, allowing Sunnyfield staff to transport two clients in wheelchairs at any one time, or up to ten people when wheelchairs aren't in use," said Ms Leslie.

"The Sunnyfield team has been trained by a professional on how to use the hoist and safely secure clients in wheelchairs ready for their commute.

"Purchased from an \$85,000 Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation grant, the van will deliver new transport services for people living with a disability in Armidale and Uralla, ensuring they have every opportunity to learn, work, be social, and live a fulfilling life of their choosing."

So, what about this name?

Since the van came about from the partnership between Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation and Sunnyfield, it was decided the best way to come up with a name was through 'collaboration and a bit of competition'.

Staff at Newcastle Permanent put forward their ideas for a name, then staff and clients at Sunnyfield Armidale chose the name they wanted from that list.

And the name they picked is (drum roll please)...

Van-Go!

The name was the brainchild of Branch Manager Kirstan Ward, who explained how inspiration struck.

"I chose the name because it's a play on words – a van that will always be on the 'go', getting people where they need to 'go'," said Ms Ward.

“Also because the van has nice, bright artwork like the artist Vincent van Gogh.

“Hence the name Van-Go!”

Ms Ward was particularly chuffed her chosen name was the winner, given she has a special connection to the town of Armidale, as it’s where her two of her grandchildren, Lucas (three years old) and Mason (six months), live with Ms Ward’s stepson and his partner.

“It’s lovely to think that in the years to come, Lucas and Mason will see Van-Go out and about and can smile and wave to the people on-board, knowing their Mimi gave the name to a van that’s such an important part of their community.”

The new van is already a hit with the passengers on-board.

“Van-Go has given me back access to my friends and my community, helping me to cope better with my disability,” said Steve, one of Sunnyfield Armidale’s clients.

<ENDS>