

BBQ under Big Blue & The Great Wheelchair Challenge!



Five local Wyalkatchem residents took on the Challenge set out by the Wyalkatchem Community Resource Centre and participated in the Big Wheelchair Challenge for International Day of People with Disability.

The 5 included prominent decision makers, Shire President, Quentin Davies, Shire CEO Peter Klein, CRC Chair Nicole Hawser, CRC Treasurer Joan Phillips and new CRC & Museum committee Member Nikki Towell.

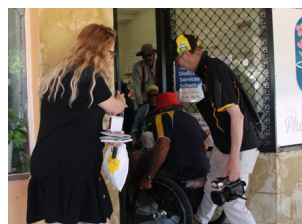
The “Great Wheelchair Challenge” saw all 5 attempt to complete simple tasks while in wheelchairs. Each participant was allowed one helper and it proved they were required for even the basic challenges.

Starting outside the Wyalkatchem Shire offices, the 5 meandered their way to the local café to buy a coffee and newspaper. CRC Manager, Craig Cooper admitted prior he was worried about spillage at this point but was surprised to see it was the Shire President who was un-ceremonially dumped from his chair and not the coffee he was stressing about.

Back in the chair, a visit to the pharmacy and butchers followed with the simple one step entrances seeming to become a large impediment to all but the proficient Nikki Towell who has been wheelchair bound since sustaining life changing injuries in a car accident 5 years ago.

Visiting the Local post office became an entanglement of wheelchairs as the participants mulled over how to get up the number of stairs leading up to the entrance but were relieved when the CRC staff relented and collected the packages they were to deliver at the bottom of the steps, we understand this is something the Postal staff do regularly. The CRC will approach and work closely with Glenda, Dennis and the Shire to look at what funding can be found to remedy this ongoing issue.

The visit to the general store seemed to come without too many troubles unlike the next part of the journey which, required crossing the Main Road for a visit to the public toilets, causing the first traffic jam in Wyalkatchem for a number of years but thanks to Don Faulkner planting his gopher in the middle of the road the five navigated their way successfully and safely much to everyone’s relief.



Exhaustion was on the faces of not only the participants but also the support crew as they made their way towards the CRC and finish line under the big Blue Umbrella but to get there, they had to navigate the ramp leading from the museum into the CRC and here even Craig was surprised. The CRC being a very new building has always been promoted as ‘wheelchair Friendly’ but both disability toilet doors were found to be very difficult to open from a sitting position and will require some attention.

Afterwards the 5 participants sat and discussed the challenges with the Shire members noting the footpath issues were something they could remedy very quickly, and the CRC agreed to start looking at finding funding to assist some of the work and changes required to shop fronts to make it simpler to navigate. Nikki explained she had several other small issues around town which everyone took note of and all agreed it was a very beneficial exercise to participate in and something they will reflect on when making future decisions.

