



MEDIA RELEASE

Powered Mobility Devices

28 April 2017

Community Scooter Forums have been run in the Sunraysia community for a number of years, most recently coordinated by Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS). These forums are a great first step for people in the community who are considering the use or purchase of a scooter or powered mobility device. Candice Shore (occupational therapist at SCHS) is excited to be able to present the next Community Scooter Forum in RedCliffs at 11am on Wednesday the 3rd of May at the Red Cliffs Civic Centre, Jamieson Ave, RedCliffs. As with previous Community Scooter Forums there will be presentations by a range of local community services including: VicPolice; Roadsafe; RACV; Mildura Rural City Council; SunAssist; Sunraysia Community Health Services; Country Care and Mobility; and Aidacare.

Older Australians are striving to maintain independent and connected lifestyles through the use of powered mobility devices such as scooters and electric wheelchairs. In 2012 the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reported that there were as many as 231 000 Australian people using powered mobility devices. Candice Shore, occupational therapist at Sunraysia Community Health Services identifies that powered mobility devices enable people to be active in the community once they are not able to walk long distances or hold a drivers licence. Ms Shore has assessed many clients who are wanting to be able to travel to the supermarket on a daily basis and pick up milk and bread including Mr Stewart Thornton. Mr Thornton says “the beauty of my mobility scooter, is it has given me more independence. I would recommend the training I got from Candice at SCHS as it made me feel more secure when driving my mobility scooter”.

Currently in Australia there is no formal licensing for people operating a powered mobility device. Anyone can self purchase and operate a powered mobility device on a road, footpath, shopping centre or at home. While there is great benefit for individuals having access to a powered mobility device, there are also risks associated with the operation of such a device if the skills, knowledge and capacity of the operator are not sufficiently matched to the operation of the device. This risk is not only to the operator of the powered mobility device but also to the general public who are using roads and footpaths. Mr Colin Dyke from Roadsafe Mildura reports that in a two year period between 2006 to 2008, there were 442 powered mobility scooter fall injuries that resulted in hospitalisations, most of which occurred in the community on roads and streets.

Ms Shore (SCHS Occupational Therapist) has been running a regular scooter assessment and training programs at SCHS since September 2016. The program involves 3 stages of assessment including physical, psychosocial and functional assessment including using a standardised powered mobility scooter assessment route. Tailored training and education is then provided depending on the persons needs. “We are very fortunate to have support from local suppliers to allow clients to trial the use of a variety of mobility scooters on the standardised route” states Ms Shore. The scooter assessment and training program has been developed based on five years of research and



development into assessment and training requirements for individuals who are wanting to own and operate a powered mobility device, by Kathryn Townsend, occupational therapist from Austin Health in Melbourne.

Running the Community Forum in RedCliffs will allow people who live in RedCliffs and have difficulty with transport to attend. It is not too late to RSVP to Candice Shore on 50225444 or simply attend on the day at 11am on Wednesday the 3rd of May at the Red Cliffs Civic Centre.

END

Media enquiries to:

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