

MEDIA RELEASE

8th May 2017

SENSORY SPACE LAUNCHES AT TUGGERAH LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

On **Wednesday 10th May at 11am** Life Without Barriers' (LWB) Amaroo Centre at Tuggerah will launch a new Sensory Room for clients with disabilities thanks to a \$64,500 grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation. The Sensory Room provides a space that's safe, stimulating and engaging for clients with intellectual, sensory and physical disabilities who attend the Tuggerah day programs centre.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Sensory Room Opening

Date: Wednesday 10th May 2017

Time: 11.00am

Venue: 3/1 Morton Close, Tuggerah NSW

The Sensory Room is based at the Amaroo Centre and its operating hours are from 7.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

Manager of Day Programs at Life Without Barriers on the Central Coast, Christine Peruch says, "Life Without Barriers Central Coast provides services for people living with disabilities, providing most effective programs to meet each person's specific needs. People with disabilities can often have a combination of intellectual, physical and sensory impairments, affecting how they interact with their external environment and make sense of their surroundings.

"The Sensory Room provides a controlled way to help support client's skills and abilities by providing an environment that helps them interact with specific objects and people. Time spent in a sensory room has also been shown to increase concentration, provide security, focus attention, improve alertness, awaken memories, improve mobilisation, creativity, social relations and communications, and general awareness," she said.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Chairman, Phil Neat, said the project helped improve the lives of people from the Central Coast living with disabilities.

"Everybody needs stimulation and enjoyment, including people with disabilities. I'm proud that the Foundation could help bring this project to fruition and in turn provide what will be a very important support service for the 79 clients of Life Without Barriers' Day Programs at Amaroo, and all the other clients who will eventually get to benefit from this fantastic facility."

A **Sensory Room** is an environment designed to stimulate the senses through light, sound, touch and smell. Essentially, it aims to create a feeling of safety, and to provide novel sensations, with stimulation under the user's control. Limitations of and other problems create life obstacles. Multi-Sensory Environments provide opportunities for bridging movement, vision, hearing, cognitive ability, constrained space, behavioural difficulties, perception issues and pain and assist develop with cognitive and fine motor skills, language and social interaction.

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The Sensory Room features:

- A 150-strand fibre optic curtain;
- An LED musical touch wall;
- Sensory activities such as blowing bubbles, foot and hand massages;
- Tactile experiences such as touching and feeling tactile panels, touch wall, sensory balls, and tactile floors;
- Cause and effect items such as the use of switches to allow the client to control items within his or her environment, and equipment that provide visual effects, vibrate, make noise, or have a tactile feel;
- Soft items on the floor such as mats, pillows, or beanbags;
- Aromatic items such as aromatherapy fans and oils; and
- Body socks which can provide pressure and resistance whilst you relax in a hammock.

“LWB plans to operate day programs for 51 weeks a year out of the Centre at Morton Close (Amaroo). In addition to this, there are individual one on one supports provided on the weekends, in the afternoons after school, during school holidays for clients ranging from 5 years to 65 years. All these clients would have the opportunity to use the sensory room and sensory programs through the NDIS. We also plan to make the room available to special needs schools and units on the Central Coast,” concludes Christine Peruch.

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Media Enquiries

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About Life Without Barriers: Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia's largest leading social purpose organisations, working in more than 300 communities across all states and territories. Its major areas of operations include family support and out-of-home care, mental health services, youth justice, disability services, community based aged care, homelessness services, support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and support to refugees and asylum seekers.