

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

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Shirley's a standout

Mercy Health Home Care client Shirley Wade has lived with vascular dementia for more than five years but it's not put a stop to her participating in adventures and outings around her town of Scotsburn, just outside Ballarat.

More than a year ago Shirley's daughter and carer Joanne Wade noticed a declining interest in her mother's willingness to walk, exercise or take part in outdoor activity.

So in consultation with the Mercy Health Home Care team at Ballarat, Joanne came up with a master plan – to identify and purchase a state-of-the-art, bright red Dutch Cargo bike.

"Mercy Health had mum assessed by an occupational therapist through her Mercy Health Home Care package and eventually she received the green light to become a front-seat passenger on the bike.

"Through her package I was able to access the funds to make the purchase.

"Initially mum lacked confidence but with the knowledge that she had the occupational therapist's approval, it provided the impetus she needed," Jo-anne explained.

Shirley and Joanne have been on the bike for a year now but not so long ago, a third member of Team Wade from time-to-time chose to join the action.

"We obtained a rescue dog, a Labrador who we've named Emjay who takes up the bike's third seat alongside mum.

"Mum loves the riding. We talk about what we are seeing – it really helps to revitalise her."

Despite coming from a commercial business background, Joanne says she initially found navigating Home Care packages challenging.

"I found much of what was on offer disjointed but a breakthrough was aligning with the Mercy Health Home Care team at Ballarat and their fantastic staff.

"They broke it down for me and made it clearer," she said.

Mercy Health's Home Care Services Regional Manager Margaret Anderson says the Wades are excellent clients.

"Joanne's devotion to her mother is evident for all to see but also her capacity to understand the Home Care package and work with Mercy Health has been beneficial for everyone, particularly her mother."

In a recent interview with the Ballarat Courier newspaper Jo-anne said there would undoubtedly always be "cloudy and sunny days" and, while the relationship had been a bit tricky at the start, they continue to support each other.

Shirley said she enjoyed the bike rides and quipped Jo-anne was "all right" as her driver.

With warmer weather finally arriving in Victoria, Shirley, Jo-anne and Emjay aboard the cargo bike are likely to be standouts on the footpaths of Scotsburn.

– ENDS –

About Mercy Health's Centenary

In 2020, Mercy Health proudly celebrated the 100-year milestone of the commencement of the Sisters of Mercy providing health services in Victoria.

A century ago the first Mercy Hospital in Victoria, St Benedict's, was opened in part to respond to the spread of a new virus, pneumonic influenza (the Spanish flu) which struck about 40 per cent of the Australian population.

Today it's a familiar story!

Now with a team of 10,000 staff and across four Australian States and one Territory, Mercy Health provides acute and subacute hospital care, aged care and home care services as well as many other programs.