

# The Armidale Express

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Monday, August 27, 2012

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# Award-winning house offers new lease on life

AN ARMIDALE accommodation facility for people with disabilities has received a special housing project award for the difference that it makes to its residents' lives.



staff writer  
Victoria Nugent

The Dumaresq Street facility saw national affordable housing provider Community Housing Limited (CHL) take out the 2012 Northern NSW Special Purpose Housing Project of the Year at the HIA Shiro Commercial Northern NSW Housing and Kitchen & Bathroom Awards.

The project received the award for its success in providing more appropriate accommodation to men who had previously lived in aged care or high care facilities for anywhere from one to 10 years.

Support services for the house's tenants are provided by House With No Steps with four men currently living in the home.

The house also includes air-circulating mattress beds, specialist shower chairs, comfort-designed day wheelchairs, new community access wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and ceiling hoists to help residents get in and out of bed.

Resident Matthew Heagney ended up in a wheelchair after being struck by a car in March 2011.

The accident saw him sustain significant injuries to his skull and the right side of his lower body.

Mr Heagney said before his move to the House With No Steps facility, he was living in a nursing home in Narrabri.

"It was the only place they could get me into with 24-hour care," he said.

"I was the youngest there. Other people were 102, I'm 42."

Mr Heagney said the move to the Armidale facility has given him more independence and greatly improved his quality of life.

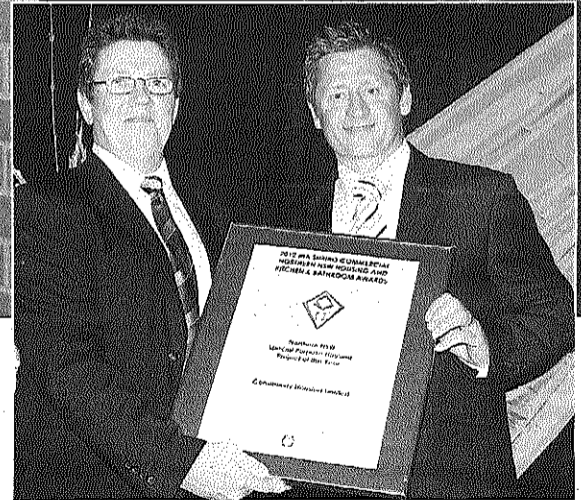
"It was a big relief because the facilities are here that I need, such as water therapy at a heated pool," he said.

The service focuses on providing residents with supported independent living and also helps them to get back into the community through various excursions.

The facility was funded via Ageing, Disability and Home Care Services of the Department of Family and Community Services under the Young People In Residential Aged Care program, a national initiative being driven by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.



ABOVE: House with No Steps staff members Sam Petralia, Dwayne Kennedy and Kylie Craig with resident Matthew Heagney.



RIGHT: Don Goulding from Perry Homes handing the award to Martin Carter from Community Housing Ltd.

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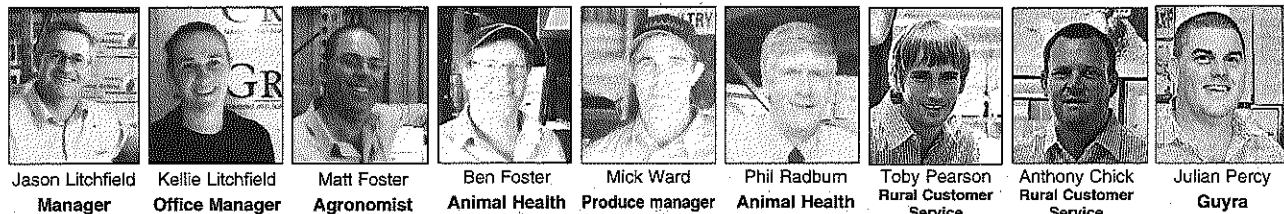
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