

## WHEELCHAIR PROJECT

Rotary Club of Surfers Sunrise, District 9640 Australia  
and Rotary Club of Port Alfred, District 9370, South Africa.

February to May 2021

### REPORT FROM PORT ALFRED

We are glad to report on a very successful and beneficial joint venture – a positive project for us in times when the covid pandemic has had a severe effect on South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, and on our club's activities nearer home.

As part of the Surfers Sunrise Wheelchair Project, we received a donation of twenty boxed wheelchair kits in February 2021. They arrived in Durban, shipping sponsored by two of our Rotarians at R2000 each, and transported to Port Alfred free of charge by Big Foot Express Freight. In the same delivery, our neighbouring club Kenton-on-Sea received ten kits.

Convivial workshops were held to assemble the chairs; initially slow slightly-puzzled efforts soon paring down to about 20 minutes per chair. What we did see at that stage was a need for safety belts to be fitted for the benefit of disabled adults and children, and this was done as illustrated.



Over a period of several weeks, Project leader PP Martin Allison personally delivered fourteen of the chairs in his pick-up to outlying areas including Mpekweni Village deep into the old Ciskei, nearby Bathurst and in Port Alfred. In all cases, the recipients were chosen on the advice of local health clinic sisters which proved to be effective. With Martin were Rotarians Fred Tyson, an IsiXhosa-speaking former farmer whose knowledge of the local language was invaluable for goodwill and explanations, and Club Secretary Heather Howard with her camera and clipboard for records.

Our President-Elect Colin Murphy, a member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, took four chairs on behalf of the Society and donated two to Healing Horses Therapeutic Riding Centre and to two other deserving cases. And IPP Ray Oliver and PP David Hawkins delivered two others.

The chairs have proved so beneficial and popular here, that Kenton Club has donated two of its chairs to us for distribution. In all cases, the chairs answered an urgent need, and almost every recipient expressed heartfelt gratitude which was at times very moving. ***We are hoping very much that your Club will allow us to receive another load to meet the needs of our local people.***

We are most grateful to Surfers Sunrise for including us in their wide-ranging programme. We shall be doing follow up interviews with some of the township recipients to find out how well the chairs have performed in that environment and whether they have been effective.