

## **Pedaling To Independence – John Curtin College of the Arts Celebrates World Environment Day**

This year's Your Move event ambassador, Year 12 student Rocco Turazza, will be celebrating World Environment Day on June 8 2021 by riding to school on his customised cargo bike and is calling out to the college community to use active travel options to come to school.

At the age of eight, Rocco suffered a brain aneurism and after eight months in hospital he was discharged in a wheel chair to continue his rehabilitation as an out-patient.

Since arriving in Year 7 as part of the Gifted and Talented Drama Program, Rocco's journey at John Curtin College of the Arts has been inspirational and with the support of his parents and college staff he has participated in most college activities.

Last year Rocco discovered a new sense of freedom and independence on a customised cargo bike modified to support his needs and he has clocked up to 2130km of riding time in this short period of time.

"At first it was difficult to navigate the bike and ride the fastest route to school, but now I arrive at school in 30 minutes, which is a huge improvement from those initial 90-minute rides," said Rocco.

"Feeling the wind in my hair and the thrill of the ride each day as I ride to school is one of the highlights of my day," he said.

Rocco credits his father into persuading him into riding a cargo bike.

"For this I will be forever thankful, because it gives me the same freedom I previously had."

Rocco's father and owner of Ocean Cycles Fremantle, Mario Turazza said that the bike has been a huge step in Rocco gaining his independence.

"We naturally tend to travel the slow route that a car takes, but once you start riding you can go all the short cuts and get around quicker than by car," he said.

“Rocco never queried why he had the aneurism and he’s accepted that ‘it just happened and the challenge was not to defeat me,” he said.

“He faced many challenges including the stamina to attend full time studies where becoming more independent was extremely important to him as he went into adolescence.”

“Through his perseverance and determination to achieve both academic and personal goals Rocco’s mobility has improved allowing him the independence he has today,” he said.

Rocco will be one of the many students and staff volunteers who will be handing out raffle tickets to students who use active transport on World Environment Day on Tuesday, 8 June 2021.

Students will be in the running for a \$50 Rebel Sports voucher and some other great prizes awarded to the college by the Department of Transport’s Your Move Program for achieving Gold Status in 2020.

Staff are supporting the event by signing up to a carpooling roster that will pair them with a colleague they can drive to school with. Transport contributes to 18% of Australia’s emissions and one of the ways to restore the environment is to reimagine and recreate cleaner healthier transport options.