



The staff at Eco Café on Wyndham St.



Damon Vasterink prepares a cake for a customer.

Eco Cafe's first six months

By Djembe Archibald

Shepparton Access will celebrate 30 years of operation next year, but smaller milestones make up those three decades.

One such milestone belongs to Eco Café on Wyndham St, which is celebrating six months of latte art and tasty treats.

Shepparton Access chief executive Brigid Herring-Neumann said the cafe aimed to address challenges faced by people with disabilities.

"Shepparton Access and our social enterprises of Eco Café, Eco Store, Eco Park, Eco Catering and Eco Gaming are fostering an inclusive environment and encouraging connection," she said.

"We are addressing social isolation and disconnection which takes a concerted effort from individuals, organisations and governments."

However, the organisation has run into some road blocks with recent changes in government processes she said.

"With the NDIS's recent Annual Pricing Review decision and increasing costs of operating in the current economy, it is becoming more challenging for group-funded providers like Shepparton



Pasquale Pellegrino and Amy Brennan at the front of the store, ready to welcome in new customers.

Access to continue the vital and wonderful work we do within our community without philanthropic and community support," Ms Herring-Neumann said.

"We ask community members to support us by coming in and having a coffee at Eco Café or visiting our website to consider donating to build a stronger, more resilient

community."

• Last week, *News* journalist Djembe Archibald went along to enjoy a coffee and meet the team at Eco Cafe. Here's who she met.



Maddie Hunt loves to serve customers.



The Eco Cafe is just one of the Shepparton Access initiatives, with Eco Store being another, where people can purchase home-made goods.



Geoffrey Swales serving at the till.



Melita Tremellen is an expert at serving coffee.



The Eco Cafe has a variety of artisan goods to purchase.