

10,000 hampers all boxed up

By Sharlene Baldo

This year, Shepparton Access marked 30 years of providing invaluable support, learning and lifestyle opportunities for adults with disabilities.

And among Shepparton Access' many initiatives, its EcoStore social enterprise has gained a strong reputation for its delicious range of jams, chutneys, sauces and relishes — all presented in handcrafted pine hamper boxes donated by Kensington Gardens' Residents Workshop.

To mark the milestone of 10,000 hamper boxes, the Residents Workshop hosted a small gathering on Friday, March 28.

Residents from both Kensington Gardens Shepparton and Shepparton Access came together to acknowledge their collective efforts, and the determination of a man who made it all possible.

The hampers' popularity stand as a tribute to the commitment of Kensington Gardens residents, particularly Graeme Thomson, who has handcrafted 10,000 boxes tirelessly at the Residents Workshop for the past seven years.

"I think it was around 2016 when we were approached by Shepp Access," Mr



Shepparton Access and Kensington Gardens workshoppers.



The end result of the handmade boxes.

Thomson said.

"Our manager, the village, was approached to see if we can make 300 or 400 boxes, and they were going to show us how to make them.

"Anyway, we took it along, and it was just progress from there.

"It was about 2017 when we started to record the numbers that we were making, but we got up to 10,000, and it's just been a combined effort of the Residents



Kensington Gardens resident Graeme Thomson and Shepparton Access' Adam Neumann.

Photos: Rechelle Zammit

Workshop... just a few others helped me to build the boxes."

While Mr Thomson is stepping back from his hamper-making efforts, Kensington Gardens is committed to continuing his legacy.

Glen Thomas from

Kensington Gardens and Adam Neumann from Shepparton Access agreed the partnership, exemplified by Graeme's selfless efforts, was a wonderful reminder of the power of community and the impact of collaboration.

"His dedication has made a real difference, and

Shepparton Access is deeply grateful for his ongoing support," they said.

"Thank you, Graeme and Kensington Gardens, for your tireless efforts, generosity and community spirit — your work truly embodies the values of kindness and inclusion."

● For more information on Shepparton Access, visit the Facebook facebook.com/SheppartonAccess/ and the website sheppaccess.com.au/

● For more information on Kensington Gardens Shepparton, visit the website at kensingtongardens.com.au/

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