

# Good sports help Jimmy

## Fundraiser to buy wheelchair-accessible car

**Barry Kennedy**

HE IS known for navigating Sunbury in his electric wheelchair but this Saturday Jimmy Moffat hopes to raise money for a new set of wheels.

Mr Moffat has lived with multiple sclerosis since he was first diagnosed with the condition in 1996, but his symptoms have progressed over the past year.

To get to vital medical appointments and other activities beyond Sunbury he now needs a vehicle reconfigured to carry his wheelchair.

But the retiree would need at least \$40,000 to buy a second-hand vehicle to suit, and selling his current car would only cover a fraction of that.

To help his cause, a sportsman's night will be held at Boardman Stadium featuring a former protégé of Mr Moffat's, AFL great and radio personality David Schwarz.

Mr Moffat was heavily involved in establishing basketball in Sunbury as a volunteer.

Mr Schwarz, who has enlisted fellow broadcaster and professional golfer Mark Allen and former Test cricketer Rodney Hogg for the event, said he agreed to take part as soon as he was approached in February at a junior basketball event in Sunbury.

"When I came to Sunbury as an eight-year-old from Beechworth, I hadn't even heard of basketball, it was all football," Mr Schwarz said.

"I ended up playing for Sunbury Saints and Jimmy coached me the whole way through juniors to

A Grade. He was a father figure for many years for me, he pulled me into line when I needed it, but was also encouraging and pushed me."

Mr Moffat and his wife, Sandra, were guests at Mr Schwarz's 30th birthday and have remained in touch.

"Jimmy has given so much to the community of Sunbury, but it's his turn for some help and I hope we pack it out because he's a special bloke," Mr Schwarz said.

Mr Moffat said he had reluctantly agreed to the event.

"It's pretty unfamiliar for me to ask for help but if we get a vehicle for the chair I'd be more independent and have a bit more quality of life," he said.

Mr Moffat is heavily involved in the Sunbury (Hume) Men's Shed and a steering committee planning the build of a hydrotherapy pool at the Sunbury Aquatic Centre. He is also a life member of Sunbury Community Health.

Mr Moffat said he knew something was up when he found himself losing his legs and falling over, the first time while refereeing basketball.

"It didn't add up and living with MS has provided some dark times but it could have been a lot worse," he said.

"I was in my 50s at least; there are a lot who get it sooner and (have) a lot more aggressive symptoms."

The fundraiser for Mr Moffat is at Boardman Stadium Function Room, Wilsons Lane on Saturday, April 29, at 7pm. Cost is \$50. Details: Lesley Thomas on 0407 361 885 or Michelle Field on 0412 349 885.



Jimmy Moffat with a picture of David Schwarz, who he coached at basketball. Picture: KYLIE ELSE