

Sensory experience launched

MEMBER for Lyne Rob Oakeshott has welcomed the community's co-operation in developing a multi-sensory room for support unit students at Chatham High School.

Mr Oakeshott officially opened the room, nicknamed 'the Cave,' after three years of design, development and hard work.

The room creates an environment designed to stimulate the senses of sight, touch, smell and emotion, catering for high needs students with vision impairment and a range of physical and intellectual disabilities.

The development phase included input and support from Chris Scott from Technical Aid for the Disabled (TAD) and Taree Lions Club, following an idea originally suggested by itinerant support teacher vision Annette Gleeson, who thought a multi-sensory room would greatly benefit the students.

After contacting Chris Scott and gaining support from the Taree Lions Club, a design was developed and modifications began.

Over the next two years a range of options were tried and tested until the final design of the room as it is seen today was decided upon.

Mr Oakeshott said it was great to see so many facets of the community working together for the benefit of the students.

"The more schools that can be

integrated into the community, the better and stronger they will be," Mr Oakeshott said.

The room provides students with the opportunity, through a range of switch adapted lights and devices, to exert an effect on their environment and produce pleasurable experiences for themselves.

Motor development, cognitive development, language and social interaction skills are all developed through this resource, while the equipment provides visual, auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic stimulation.

The room has a range of special lighting including black lights, a mirror ball with spotlight, fibre optic sprays, coloured lamps, lava lamps and flashing lights.

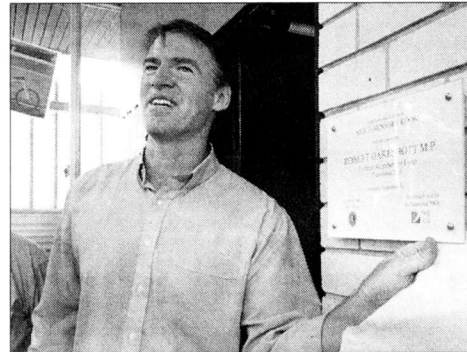
Bubble blowers and fans are also used along with an activity wall with a variety of tactile items.

The switches in the room are operated through a range of switch latch boxes developed by Chris Scott and TAD. These boxes allow devices with different voltages to be used safely and easily by the students.

The majority of the lights in the room were purchased through money donated by the Taree Lions Club, who also provided the volunteers who made the initial modifications and did the building work in the room.



Student Michael Honeyman explores the sensory room with Chris Scott of TAD.



Member for Lyne Rob Oakeshott officially opens the sensory room.



John Brumby and Allen Pidgeon of TAD with Peter McKellar of Taree Lions Club.