

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Boutique op shop turns one

Toowoomba's boutique op shop, Collectables, is celebrating its first birthday this week.

The social enterprise is operated by not-for-profit organisation YellowBridge QLD and provides work and training opportunities for people with a disability.

YellowBridge chief executive officer Penny Hamilton said the community's response to the initiative over the past 12 months had been beyond their expectations.

"This is our first social enterprise so we have been on a steep learning curve since we opened our doors last June," Ms Hamilton said.

"We knew that running a retail store, even a not-for-profit one, was no easy task but we believe so strongly in the underlining purpose – helping people with a disability," she said.

"The Toowoomba community has been phenomenal. They've embraced our little shop and the reason we exist.

"We have been so humbled by their generosity and support, from donating items that we then sell in store to being one of our treasured customers."

Customers are greeted by trainees who are supported by a YellowBridge disability support worker for the duration of their work shift.

They learn a range of practical retail skills including customer service, operating the cash till and bank card machine, researching and pricing stock, preparing stock displays and working as a team.

"People with a disability are often very keen to work but can struggle to find a job," Ms Hamilton said.

"Collectables not only helps them learn new skills that are practical and useful, it also makes a huge difference to their self-esteem."

"They love coming to Collectables and it makes them feel happy and part of the community. To see them learning, smiling and laughing is the ultimate reward."

Ms Hamilton said their goal was to generate enough income from shop sales so they could offer trainees a paid position.

"That is our ultimate goal but we need more people to donate or shop in our store to help us get there," she said.

"The community has been terrific and we hope more people will hear about our cause and choose to support our little shop."

Collectables is open from Tuesday to Saturday and is located at 2 Station Street.

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