



UNIVERSITYof
TASMANIA

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Engineers take a seat for Jack

Future wheelchair adventures promise to be a bit more comfortable for children such as Launceston's 13-year-old Jack Duffy, thanks to the budding engineers at the University of Tasmania.

Teenager Jack, who has cerebral palsy spastic quadriplegia, which limits speech and use of his arms and legs, has recently been involved in a series of high-profile fundraising events, including treks through the Overland Track, and being pushed by a team of volunteers over the Melbourne Marathon course in a competition wheelchair.

But Jack's long stints in the saddle have not always been a smooth ride.

That is where the University's Engineering Department has sprung into action, running a project in the Design and Build unit for 2nd Year students which aims to keep electronic tabs on Jack during future races.

"The project was presented to us through contacts at the Just Like Jack Foundation and requiree the students to develop a comfort-monitoring system for a wheelchair," Project Engineer Lecturer David Morley said.

Also involved in the project, researcher Dr Dean Giosio said he hoped this was just the start of many more similar projects.

Nearly 120 students, working in 19 design teams, have spent this semester designing and testing their prototypes, with the winning comfort feedback system to hopefully one day be incorporated into Jack's wheelchair.

The final presentation will take place today (Tuesday 22 October) between 1.00 pm and 6.00 pm, and judged by a panel of industry representatives, as well as by Jack's father, Chris Duffy.

Organisers wish to thank sponsors Howarth Fisher & Associates, and Tassal, for providing the cash prize for the winning team.

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