

## **Motorised wheelchairs continue to raise safety concern in Cootamundra.**

Cootamundra Shire Council have received recent complaints from concerned residents regarding the unsafe practices of some motorised wheelchair operators.

Only people with a disability that substantially impairs their mobility can, by law, use a motorised wheelchair. A motorised wheelchair user is considered a **pedestrian** under the Australian Road Rules.

### **Some of the issues raised were;**

- Speeding on footpaths,
- Travelling too close to shop front and doorways in the main CBD
- Not complying with the road rules which relate to pedestrians when on the roadway.

### **Some of these rules are;**

- A person who operates a special mobility vehicle that cannot travel over 10 km/h (on level ground) is defined as a **pedestrian**.
- A pedestrian:
  - must not travel along a road if there is a footpath or nature strip adjacent to the road, unless it is impracticable to travel on the footpath or the nature strip.
  - travelling along a road must keep as far to the right side of the road as is practicable and must **not** be in the traffic lane
  - when crossing the road, must cross by the shortest safe route and must not stay on the road longer than necessary.

Prior to purchase of a motorised wheelchair it is advisable to undertake an assessment of your ability to operate a special mobility vehicle. People who may be able to assist in providing this assessment include:

- Occupational Therapist
- Doctor
- Community Health Workers

All special mobility users are reminded that it is their obligation to safely **SHARE** the road and footpaths with other users.

Cootamundra Shire Council's Road Safety Officer conducts bi-annual workshops that provide information on the legal rights and responsibilities according to the Australian Road Rules, the skills and abilities needed to operate a Special Mobility Vehicle and the safe operation of a Special Mobility Vehicle.

If you need information or have any safety concerns regarding the use or misuse of a motorised wheelchair please do not hesitate to contact the Road Safety Officer, Bruce Barrett by calling Council on 69402100.