

# Greyhounds and Parkside branching out

TASRACING'S Greyhound Adoption Program has teamed up with the Parkside Foundation to offer special needs clients an opportunity to become involved with greyhounds.

The Parkside Foundation is a non-profit organisation that provides personal support services to people in a wide range of circumstances.

For the past two months GAP Tasmania coordinator Susan Gittus has been working with Parkside to grow its involvement with Parkside's Branching Out Program.

"Working with Parkside is part of GAP Tasmania's community engagement strategy and visiting the dogs has certainly grown in popularity with Parkside clients," Mrs Gittus said.

"This association with the Parkside Foundation forms part of our plan to grow opportunities to place greyhounds into the community."

Parkside's senior services coordinator Michelle Oates said the partnership was proving successful.

"We look at a number of volunteer programs and assess what we and the clients would like to achieve and one project was to try and source where we could go to have some special clients interact with dogs," she said.

"So we contacted Greyhound Adoption Program Tasmania and they were only too pleased to work with Parkside.

"This is part of our Branching Out program that started with a couple of clients wanting to participate and, not surprisingly, the popularity has grown enormously within our client base."

Parkside support coordinator Dion Saxon said there were plans to expand the Branching Out Program.

"Our clients have the same needs as us but there are not many outlets where the clients can give back to the community," Mr Saxon



Parkside Foundation client Jacob O'Bierne with GAP dog Turbo at Luxbet Park at Elwick.

said.

"With GAP Tasmania our clients not only get to interact with the greyhounds they also are reaping a lot of benefit in that they are given a sense of self-worth through helping with the awareness of the

greyhound adoption program."

Mrs Gittus said Gap Tasmania was keen to work with organisations like the Parkside Foundation going forward.

It gives us the opportunity to remind the community of the

suitability of greyhounds as pets," she said.

"They are gentle and affectionate animals and thrive on human companionship.

"The greyhounds we use for community services like this

one have already been temperament-tested.

"Every greyhound that enters our program is temperament tested, de-sexed, vaccinated, micro-chipped and has their teeth cleaned and nails trimmed."