

Joel's World: Art, Harmony, and the Power of Support

Tuesday 24 June 2025

When Joel Awty talks about his life, he doesn't focus on the challenges. He focuses on kindness, art and the important things, like always having a good dad joke at the ready and putting your coffee cup in the sink straight away.

Eight years ago, after finishing high school, Joel moved into supported accommodation with Vivid. He acknowledges it wasn't always easy and it took time to find his voice, remember his manners and learn to live with others with patience and consideration. "I still swear under my breath sometimes," he admits, "but I know it's always better to be kind".

Today, Joel lives with purpose, supported by Vivid and a caring community that he believes sees him for exactly who is: a thoughtful, creative soul, with a penchant for gaming, anime and helping others. "They're lovely people and they genuinely care about the individual," Joel says. "Vivid has just made a big difference in my life."

Living independently through Vivid's supported residential program matters to Joel and he values the balance that Vivid supports. "I need to be independent and have a bit of help too and they encourage me to do things independently because it's good to have help sometimes whilst still maintaining independence."

Every Thursday, Joel attends Vivid's artist-in-residence program where he has discovered a love for anime and storytelling. With guidance from artist David Barrett, Joel has developed a host of anime characters who represent his love for the fantasy genre and include elements he says reflect him as a person. He says that

just like him, his main character carries different opposing powers inside, constantly at play.

“I’m a very strong-willed person,” Joel explains. “The message I want to put across in my work is that everything needs to be in harmony.”


This philosophy runs through all of Joel’s work. He believes wholeheartedly in the power of art and story to bring people together. “When people look at my artwork,” he says, “I want them to be open to the world that anime offers. And see my passion.”

And this passion will be on full display during Echuca’s new arts and culture festival, Ripple Fest, where Joel will debut his anime characters and art under the banner of his own animation label, Studio Periscue. Though Joel assures us he’s not in it for the fame and purely because he has a passion. “I’m very pleased I get to do it. I like finding purpose through anime, it’s subtle but powerful,” he says.

This recognition as an artist is new but meaningful to Joel who says he wants to inspire people in a time where the world has potentially forgotten how to live in harmony.

Inspired too by the stories he grew up loving, and his favourite gaming worlds - Dragon Ball Z and Pokémon - in collaboration with David, Joel’s ideas and figurines are being transformed into an anime-style short, bringing his world to life. This project has fueled his desire to one day travel to Japan, eat all the Japanese food he can manage, see the cherry blossoms and immerse himself in the culture of anime that has inspired him for so long.

And his inspirations and talents stretch beyond art and travel, with Joel’s ultimate ambition to become a chaplain, working with young people or the elderly,



supporting them to feel seen, heard and connected. Joel's self-confessed superpower is to listen and be kind.

"Down the track, I want to explore a world where people are united by the job they do – and at the end of the day, show love and respect," Joel says. "There's so much good in the world, and people don't always see it."

That's why, to Joel, art is so important. He says it brings him a feeling of peace and purpose and a way to express what words sometimes can't.

For Joel, Echuca is home. Vivid is family. And when asked what advice he'd give his younger self, nervous, unsure and about to move into assisted living with Vivid?

Joel would tell him, "It's all gonna be ok. We just want a brighter future and this is the place to do it."

And his go-to Dad joke, because of course you've been dying to hear it...

What did the butcher say when he introduced his wife?

Meat Pattie!