



Media Release
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ARTHRITIS TASMANIA MOVES ON FROM BAPTIST CHURCH BAN

Arthritis Tasmania says it has moved on and secured a new venue in Wynyard for its Tai Chi classes for arthritis sufferers, following the decision of the local Baptist Church to ban the activity from its hall.

Arthritis Tasmania Chief Executive Officer Jackie Slyp said the sessions, which had been conducted at the Church hall for the past two years, had never changed, and had always been the specially developed gentle *Tai Chi for Arthritis* exercises sessions. The sessions would continue from next week at the Wynyard Senior Citizens' centre.

Ms Slyp said the decision of the local Baptist Church was disappointing and demonstrated a failure to understand the benefits the program provided to people who could not participate in more energetic forms of exercise.

She said the *Tai Chi for Arthritis* program was developed more than 10 years ago by Sydney medical practitioner Dr Paul Lam and was a proven medically safe and effective form of exercise for people with arthritis and other health problems.

Studies have shown that tai chi can help reduce pain and stiffness in people with arthritis.

“Our program leaders are trained and accredited. They volunteer their time to bring the benefits of this program to their local communities and it is unfortunate as we are about to celebrate National Volunteer’s Week, that the Baptist Church in Wynyard has taken this position.

“It is inconsistent with the approach of the broader church as evidenced by a simple Google search that shows that Tai Chi is offered by many Baptist Churches around Australia and internationally. They appear happy to provide their premises for this type of exercise and support for their local communities.

“What we are offering are gentle exercises for arthritis sufferers, nothing more.”

Ms Slyp said Arthritis Tasmania had received numerous calls of support and offers of premises for the Tai Chi classes.

“The positive from this is that we can continue to offer this valuable exercise activity for people in the Wynyard area in more modern and comfortable premises.

“We respect the right of the Wynyard Baptist Church in refusing to allow the classes to continue in its hall, but hope that its commitment to the wider community might encourage it to adopt a more benevolent and understanding approach regarding the needs of the less physically abled in the Wynyard area in the future.”

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