



McLean Care®

MEDIA RELEASE

VR Technology steering older drivers in the right direction

Virtual Reality (VR) Technology currently has over 171 million worldwide users. It is the latest technological development, aiding people for a variety of purposes from leisure to education. VR technology operates through combining a series of images, sounds and sensors to create a 'virtual' environment, transporting people into a different world. The VR driving simulator is the first of its kind and will allow people in the New England and Northwest Region to experience driving in a safe and controlled environment.

With a new partnership, McLean Care® and Deakin University's School of Engineering are taking the latest VR technology to create a driving simulator that will rapidly change the way older drivers maintain road skills. Funded by the Department of Health, the new, innovative VR driving simulator will assist older people with real life driving experience right here in our region.

Currently in NSW, it is compulsory for older drivers to take a practical driving test, every 2 years after their 85th birthday. Due to various factors many older people are forced to relinquish their licence, losing their independence, which can create negative social impacts.

"The de construction of the Holden Captiva shell was completed by local Inverell Business, Hot Rod Lane over the past 2 months and now, this week takes the next journey as it travels to Deakin University in Geelong for its initial VR technology fit out" says Sue Thomson CEO McLean Care®.

Once the VR simulator technology is installed the simulator will return to Inverell, NSW at the McLean Care® Residential Aged Care® Facility for its first phase of testing. This will involve a selection of older people in the New England and North West Region, to trial the technology and gain feedback before the simulator will return to Deakin University for ongoing development for the second stage of testing. By November 2018, the final phase of testing will be complete and the VR driving simulator will find in its permanent home at McLean Care®, Inverell.

"The Virtual Reality Driving simulator will provide a 'virtual' environment in which older drivers will have the opportunity to practice their driving skills in a safe and low risk environment. The simulator will have the capability to monitor and record driver performance information using a series of health and performance metrics during the virtual driving experience. Users can use this information to help inform if they will pass driving tests and be eligible to drive on the road" said Associate Professor Ben Horan, Director of Deakin University's CADET VR Lab. "For the first VR driving simulator, the technology has been specifically generated to replicate the streets of Inverell, featuring many local landmarks, to make the experience as real as possible" said Sue Thomson

Still to be given a name, McLean Care® is running a naming competition for high school students in Armidale and Tamworth, to name Australian's first VR driving simulator. The simulator has a number of innovative features making it's the first of its kind simulator for supporting elderly drivers!

It is very exciting to have the technology designed and developed in Australia and upon completion available for use in regional NSW.

For interviews or more details please contact:

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