

A COLLABORATION OF HANDS

LIFTING SOULS

While the June long weekend would traditionally be spent catching up with industry buddies, networking with hair idols and sharpening skills at Hair Expo, 9 Brisbane hairdressers decided to spend Expo Sunday 2020 a little differently.





Instead of glitz and glam, this team spent their day giving back to their community by providing free haircut services to residents living in temporary crisis accommodation at the Atira building in Toowong and Roma House in Brisbane. These much-needed homes create a safe space for the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Mission Australia, who provide ongoing homeless support services, contacted Cobelle Creative owner, Kristie Kesic to come to the aid of residents who identified the need for a haircut. On board from the get-go, Kristie reached out to other local salons, Urban Chic, Ella & Jade and AJO Salon, and the Collaboration of Hands Lifting Souls event became a reality.

Said Kristie, "With mental health already a big issue in our society, coupled with the added impact of the current COVID-19 crisis, many individuals are being hit hard; especially those less fortunate. We've come together to give people who are homeless a hair experience that some may never have had before. Our goal is to share a smile and boost confidence".

"The role hairdressers play in helping people to build confidence and self-worth is something we should all be really proud of. Our industry has the ability and skills to make people not only look good but to feel beautiful, and that has a positive impact on mental health"

A thorough plan ensured that COVID safe practices and social distancing were followed on the day, including essential sanitisation protocols. Initially planning on doing 40 haircuts on the day, as word spread, the team were delighted to perform a total of 60 haircuts, including a full transformation makeover!

Connections were made and stories shared, and it became clearly evident that to these residents, this was so much more than just a haircut, it was about social interaction and feeling included and valued. Amidst the many shared laughs and funny moments, we're not sure who actually gained more from the day - the stylists or the residents!

The absolute joy on the face of one resident, Paul, as he looked in the mirror was heart-warming as he asked for a photo to put on his Facebook page and show his kids. He was so impressed by William Webb, Amanda O'Connor and Elle Schoemaker being Qld Hairdresser of The Year winners and that William had cut his hair that he stated, "I'm so grateful I could cry. Really grateful!"

What made the day so special was that these residents had no idea just how talented these hairdressers were, with some being asked more than once if they were qualified and knew what they were doing, which had the room burst out in giggles!

Cobelle's Kristie and Elle performed their cut and colour wizardry with a complete makeover for lucky resident Lia who was truly transformed right before their eyes. As her confidence grew and grew, she was even happy to be the face of the event as media outlets took photos!

All residents left with goodie bags filled with samples, brushes and homemade cupcakes with one resident jumping for joy. "I haven't owned a brush in probably 3 years" she said.

"I truly believe that we have a unique ability to change people's perception of themselves and lift their mood through our skill and that needs to be shared and celebrated. I'm so excited to be a part of this day and to get back to the core of doing what we love and making people feel great about themselves."

Elle Schoemaker, Cobelle Creative

"I feel so lucky to have a skill that gives me the ability to help others see themselves differently. Never underestimate the value of human contact and a great haircut. I'm not sure who walked away feeling better, me or the awesome people I met."

Alannah Read, Director of Ella and Jade

"I know that this day was just as important to these 9 Hairdressers as it was to the residents. We were all reminded of why we chose this industry in the first place- to make people feel beautiful. Our industry has a gift to be able to help people and that is truly something every hairdresser should be proud of."

Amy Gaudie, Director of Urban Chic