

# Jackson delivers a way in from the fringe

By Nina Olle

A LOCAL family has developed their own small courier business to create employment for their intellectually disabled son, and to encourage the community to support and interact with disabled people.

Twenty-one-year-old Jackson West is classified as having a profound intellectual disability with autism. He was born with an extra terminal band on the long arm of the 22nd chromosome. When he was diagnosed in 1986, he was the only person on medical record in the world who had this particular chromosome abnormality.

"Many people like Jackson live in the community but are not of the community. Jackson, like so many disabled people in our society, is in danger of becoming a hidden person, a person on the fringe. This is not good for him and it also diminishes our society. He should be highly visible and he needs to be included in a community that values him and the unique gifts he brings with him," says Jackson's mother, Sally Richards.

More than 7000 Canberrans received a disability support pension in December 2005, according to the latest ABS report on the ACT.

JACKmail is a mail delivery and logistics business which came into being when Sally was contemplating a future for her son as he finished school. "He loves riding in cars and listening to music. He's a good walker and he can carry small things with assistance. Combining these loves and abilities, we came

up with JACKmail, which gives Jackson the opportunity to be employed, contribute to the community, and meet people," says Sally.

The courier service provides collection and delivery of mail from Post Office boxes direct to businesses and vice versa. The courier service also extends to "one-off" deliveries such as important/confidential documents or small parcels. A support worker will drive the JACKmail van and support and guide Jackson as he makes deliveries.

*To find out more about JACKmail visit [www.jacksonwest.org](http://www.jacksonwest.org).*



Jackson West... leading by example for the "hidden people".