

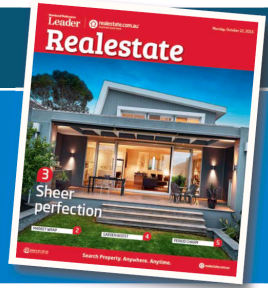
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Can-do attitude



Picture: ADAM ELWOOD

BULLIED TEEN NOW A MENTOR

Peter Reynolds

HAVING been bullied because he was different, Coburg's Dave Serpell is making sure youngsters with the same affliction have a positive role model.

The 16-year-old was born with two fingers on his right hand, but he has not let that stop him achieving his dreams.

Dave plays guitar, is learning to drive and is training to become an electrician.

He is also mentoring children born with a hand difference, letting them know there is nothing wrong with them and they can do anything they set their minds to.

"I know at their age I would have loved to have a positive role model to look at, to give me hope as I did get bullied a bit," Dave said.

"I find it really rewarding to make a difference in their

lives and I think it is helpful to them. They are developing a lot more confidence.

"I feel often people are too worried about what other people think of them. I just be myself and I encourage others to do the same and let people see and like them for who they are."

Dave said he used to try and hide his disability when he was younger, particularly while talking to girls.

However, he no longer feels this is necessary and has embraced his difference.

"I don't look at it as a disability, it's just part of who I am," he said. "I feel like a normal person. I have a lot of the same experiences and deal with the same issues as everyone else, like friendships, relationships and family."

Continued PAGE 7

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