

Family footy day for young Oscar

Three-year-old Dick Smith grant recipient Oscar Beadle was all smiles on August 24, when he saw his first AFL game.

Oscar and his parents, Alan and Jenny, were guests of the North Melbourne Football Club at Blundstone Arena on Hobart's Eastern Shore, where they saw North Melbourne score victory over Melbourne in the final minutes of an exciting game.

Oscar has a rare and terminal childhood condition called Krabbe disease. Krabbe disease is a type of Leukodystrophy, which are a group of progressive, metabolic, genetic diseases that affect the brain, spinal cord and often the peripheral nerves. While developments in genetic therapies provide hope for the future, there is currently no cure for the condition.



Until recently, Oscar was not eligible to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As his full-time carers, Alan and Jenny sold their family home to move to Melbourne so Oscar could receive a hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) to slow the progression of the disease. However, Oscar's condition continued to deteriorate so rapidly that after the first few consultations it was decided a transplant was no longer a viable option.

With what little capital that remained from the sale of their house taken by the bank to cover the mortgage fixed interest break fee, the Beadles found themselves facing a tough road ahead.

Administered through the Rotary Australia Compassionate Grants (RACG) program, the Dick Smith grant has helped cover basic necessities and medical costs, including rental bond,

a special bed, specialised disability prams and car trailer for Oscar's other equipment, medicines, private health cover, gaps in medical practitioners' and health professionals' fees, as well as supermarket supplies.

The footy trip was a wonderful day out for the family, giving Alan and Jenny great pleasure in creating special memories of their time with Oscar.

While they were initially apprehensive as to how they would get Oscar there in terms of access and mobility for his specially made pram, the footy club assigned them a chaperone for the afternoon, who ensured their needs were more than adequately met. They were greeted at the entrance to the arena and taken to seats on a concourse behind the goals in the late winter sunshine, where there was plenty of room for Oscar's pram.

The family witnessed a very close contest in the club's final home and away game for the 2019 season, with North Melbourne scoring a goal in the final minute to beat Melbourne by just five points.

And as icing on the cake, after the final siren they were ushered into the NMFC clubrooms under the Ponting Stand, where they watched the players sing the club song to celebrate their win, and farewell retiring club stalwart Scott Thompson.

This is a wonderful example of how Dick's million-dollar donation to Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) is making a difference to the lives of everyday Aussies doing it tough. •



ABOVE: Blundstone Arena, Hobart.

LEFT: Oscar Beadle and parents Alan and Jenny were special guests of honour at the North Melbourne vs Melbourne game on August 24.