



Hitting the waves: Michael Carbine is helped into the surf by David Arter at Ocean Grove. Picture: BRUCE MAGILTON

Surf lovers get a helping hand

SURFERS with disabilities will not be left beached this summer thanks to an innovative aquatic cruiser. The Disabled Surfers Association (DSA) has helped develop a special beach wheelchair to glide over sand and waves. As the chair is pushed from the beach into the water the large rubber wheels turn into floating pontoons, keeping handicapped surfers afloat.

MITCHELL TOY

They can then get on a board and catch a wave, depending on their level of disability. DSA Victorian branch secretary Julia Beshara said a team of selfless volunteers operated four chairs during summer at Ocean Grove and Point Leo. "The volunteers get just as much out of it as the surfers," she said. "To see

someone who would otherwise be left on the beach able to get out and do something they love is a thrill." Paraplegic Michael Carbine took to the surf at Ocean Grove last week, with volunteer David Arter. Mr Carbine, who has used similar chairs for three summers, said it would be "virtually impossible" to get out and surf without the cruiser. "Before this kind of help,

I hadn't been out in the surf in 20 years," Mr Carbine said. "It is good for people with disabilities to know this service is available. "Volunteers have a thorough understanding of your disability and your limitations to make the whole experience better." The chairs, manufactured by Yabby Industries in NSW, have been in production since 2008. Visit disabledsurfers.org



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