

monday

in the middle

the beat

Determined drummer boy

By NINA BERTOK

As a musician with cerebral palsy, professional drummer Andrew Hewitt has faced many rejections only to become even more determined to succeed.

And on October 21 Hewitt will travel from Sydney to Horsham to inspire budding Wimmera drummers as part of the Awakenings Festival.

"People telling me I can't do something has made me more determined to prove them wrong," he said.

"Life is too short to be sitting around waiting for things to happen.

"To succeed, you need to make things happen."

Hewitt first started playing the drums at the age of 10.

"My parents got me a drum kit and now I have been playing for 28 years," he said.

"In the past five years I have appeared in drumming magazines from Australia to the UK to the US to Canada.

"I have also won official

endorsement from manufacturers DW Drums, Zildjian Cymbals and Vic Firth Drumsticks and Billy Hyde Music."

Hewitt said he looked forward to running his workshop and performance at Awakenings.

"It will be a lot of fun for everyone, including myself," he said.

"That's the whole idea of it.

"If I can just give one person a bit of hope to become a drummer in the future, that's part of my job done.

"You look at people with a disability and some of them have quite severe disabilities.

"But then you put a drum stick in their hand and their face just lights up, it's such an amazing feeling to see that they are really getting into it so much."

Hewitt said people often wondered how he played such a demanding instrument while having cerebral palsy.

"I've overcome that challenge with a positive

attitude and persistence," he said.

"Cerebral palsy is a condition that interferes with body movement and function.

"It mostly affects my muscle control and strength in my arms and legs.

"Because of this I walk on crutches and sometimes use a wheelchair when my legs are a bit temperamental and this makes drumming a very serious challenge.

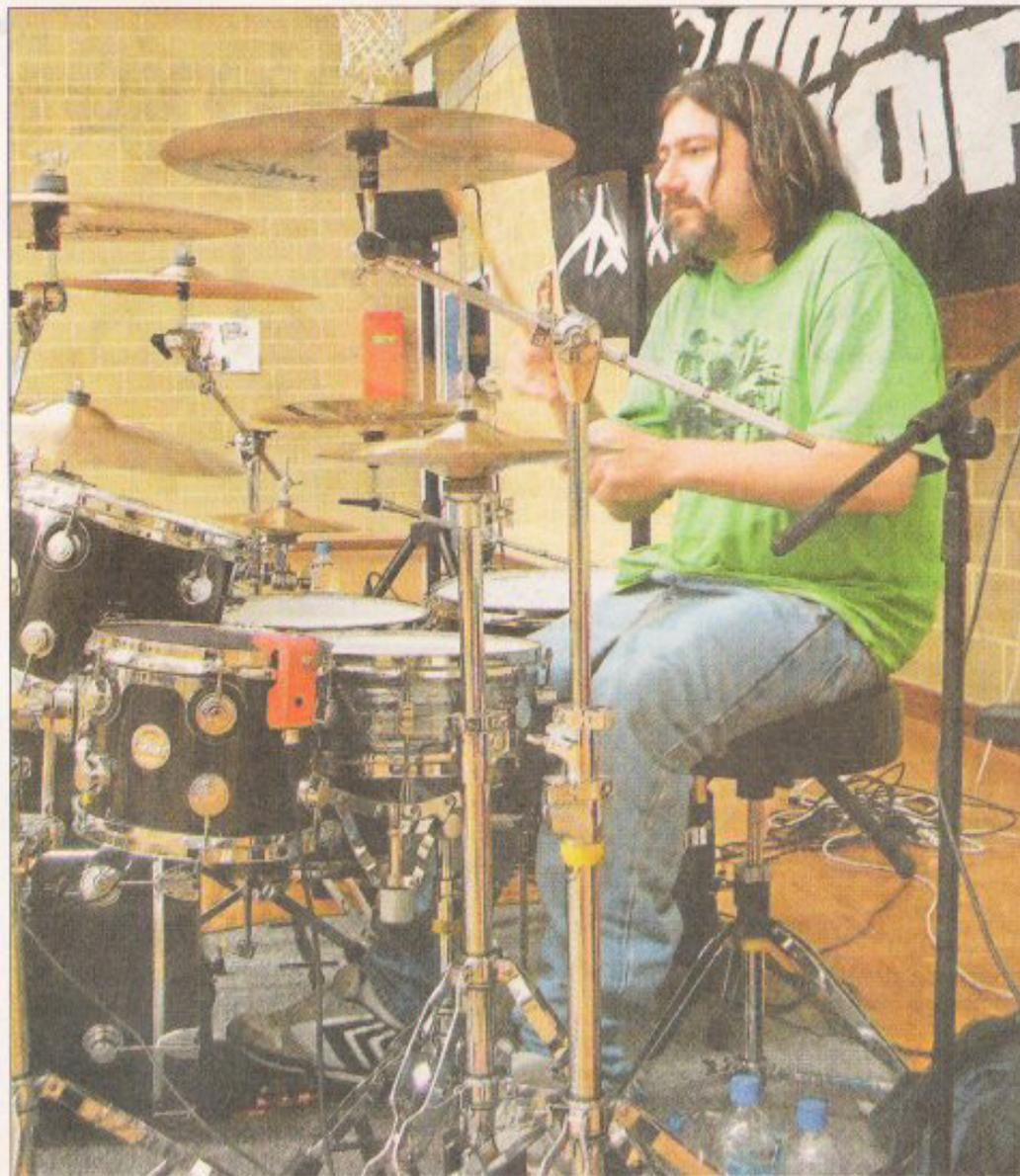
"I play a normal acoustic drum kit but I have a couple of small set-up changes.

"I use electronic triggers on my bass drum which send off an electronic sound.

"This means no matter how hard I kick the drum pedal, I always get a consistent sound."

Hewitt said he enjoyed nothing more than helping people with disabilities find their creative element.

"I haven't been to Horsham before so it's exciting," he said.



PROVING THEM WRONG: Andrew Hewitt is a professional drummer who suffers cerebral palsy. Picture: CONTRIBUTED