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Peter's Finally Home



Peter was not happy with where he was living. He wasn't interacting with staff or other people in the home and wanted to stay in his room and sleep, instead of going outside. Peter wanted to live in a place where all his needs were met.

Peter's Ability Options Support Coordinator, Tammie, had been working with his daughter, Amber, to transfer him over to Dynamic Support Services, a Disability Support Service Provider who specialise in Men's mental health. Tammie mentioned to the staff at Dynamic that the provider Peter was previously with didn't celebrate his birthday. Dynamic assured Tammie

that they will make sure that Peter's needs and wishes are met.

When Peter officially moved into his new home, he was welcomed with a big banner and a birthday cake. The staff even made him his favourite meal, a T-bone steak.

Dynamic's soft empathetic approach is already winning over Peter. Amber was very thankful to Tammie for all the hard work she put in finding a suitable place and helping with the transition.

Peter is now in a better place and enjoys socializing with both the staff and other people in his new home.

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A Message from our CEO

Dear Readers,

I hope you enjoy reading our Spring Edition of TheVoice.

The Editor of TheVoice Newsletter for participants, families, and guardians reminded me that my Spring article was due and asked me to work on a new theme: **Trust**. I really enjoyed thinking about Trust while writing this article.

Choosing Ability Options to provide your services or services for your loved one is a huge expression of trust. We know that it is important that we are honoured by it and that we work to grow and keep that trust.

Trust is one of our **Five Core Values**. We define it as:

"We deliver on our promises, encourage feedback, and work with honesty and openness."

There are three aspects to this definition – doing what we say we will do, actively welcome and listen to other voices, and be transparent in all we do. These are hard questions, and we aspire and work to meet them every day.

It's good from time to time to sit and think about things. So, I left myself a little time over a lockdown weekend after walking the dogs, cleaning up, ironing, and all the other things we do, to sit and consider what Trust means for me and how I approach

leading and supporting our teams to provide great services which are trusted and valued by our customers, participants, families, and guardians.

I am one of four kids. The eldest and the only girl. Those who know me will say I fit the bossy and protective older sister mould perfectly. My dad was a bus driver in my most formative years. My mum stayed home until at age 11, I got a part-fees scholarship to a private school, an 'assisted place' for kids from working class backgrounds. The remaining fees were still beyond my family, so mum returned to work as a school health nurse. To help her, I needed to take on a role which my mum described as a trusted job; picking up my brothers on my way home from school and starting the prep of our evening meal in the days when everything was cooked from scratch. My mum trusted me with my brothers and not to burn the house down. I felt that role mattered and, mostly, I took that trust very seriously. I felt responsible. In many ways, I still do, despite the fact that my brothers are all grown and with families of their own living on the other side of the world far away from me, my husband, and children.

Trust and **honesty** were and are still valued in my family above anything I can think of. If we lied, or didn't keep our promises, we felt the full emotional force of our mum's disappointment in us. We felt terrible and we hated feeling that we'd let ourselves and her down. For that reason, I think I'm hard-wired for honesty and I still feel my parents alongside me in the way I try to live my life. Of course, life is complicated. Did I tell my



toddlers I had no idea what their paintings were when they told me they'd drawn a car, a house, themselves, or me? Of course not. Did I come clean about the Tooth Fairy? No. Have I kept every promise I've made? No, I haven't. No one's perfect or always right and neither am I (don't tell my kids!).

In my professional life, and most particularly, as a Leader, I always start by trusting my colleagues.

Once we are clear on our values and purpose, and the support and resources needed, this trust is proven correct 999 times out of 1000. There are, of course, times when that isn't the case, and for those moments, we have Governance; Systems, Processes, Training, Risk Management Frameworks, and clear lines of communication and accountability. These things are in place not because we mistrust people, but to make it easy and valued to do the right thing. Trust is very difficult to rebuild once lost, and I'm fortunate that the overwhelming majority of people I've come across in my 34-year career have been trustworthy.

Trust and honesty were and are still valued in my family above anything I can think of.

At the moment, we are relying on the Values, Mission, and Vision we share and our underpinning systems, processes, roles, and responsibilities to make sure that the trust we have in each other and the trust customers, participants, and their families have in us, are repaid over and over.

In recent weeks, many of our employees have stepped up to help in challenging and worrying circumstances.

They've stayed on shift, supported additional COVID testing, isolated when we've asked them to, and gone above and beyond to provide supports when information has been scarce, or restrictions changed. They've been incredible and I know, sadly, we are likely to continue to need that courage, another of our values, for the next few weeks and months.

We have found many ways to support customers, participants, families, and staff throughout the pandemic. There have been ideas that have worked really well and others that haven't. We are very conscious that visitors are one of the many ways we check in with people. These can't happen right now, so Zoom meetings, audits of records, lots of clear communication, using our Perfect Ward app, doing extra training, having roster changes and new staff onboarded, surveys, and reminding everyone about how to raise concerns, seek help, and highlight questions are really important. Staying in regular contact with families and guardians is key to this and our recent survey suggests

much of that is going really well and that there is more we can do.

We are trusting and strongly encouraging staff to get vaccinated against COVID-19. To help them make the right choices and get access to vaccines, we've organised many vaccination hubs offering vaccines to hundreds of staff and participants in recent weeks and months. We've also arranged in-reach vaccines into our Accommodation Services. We've recommended people to speak with their GP to help with any concerns, and we've communicated options for both Astra Zeneca and Pfizer. We've done lots of training in infection control and updated it as knowledge about the virus and how its variants have developed. We've kept everyone employed despite drops in demand for services in both 2020 and 2021. We provide protective equipment and supports to staff. They have what they need. We also share credible information to counter the nonsense that can be shared about Coronavirus and vaccines, particularly on social media.

We are working hard to meet the three aspects of our Value of Trust:

- Doing what we say we will do.
- Actively welcome and listen to the voices of participants, families, guardians, and employees.
- Be transparent in all we do.

We have found many ways to support customers, participants, families, and staff throughout the pandemic.

Tell us if we meet your expectations. Most importantly, tell us if we aren't. We will act on those concerns.

If you have any suggestions about how we can meet your needs, let us know by emailing **qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au**

Stay safe and thank you for your trust in us.

Best wishes,

Julia Squire

julia.squire@abilityoptions.org.au

I really hope you enjoy reading TheVoice. We are always open to suggestions, comments, and feedback of any kind to Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista, NSW, 2153 or marketingteam@abilityoptions.org.au

The Puzzle Pieces Cemented by Trust

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo



Trust is like glue in our relationships. Each person may be fragile or not so perfect on their own, but when they come together for a shared purpose cemented in trust, something marvellous could happen. Take an infant, for example. Parents place their best interest in the welfare of their children. The children respond to their love and care. They smile, cry for help, and thrive. As the children grow, so do the parents. **Trust helps two parties work together to make both sides stronger.**

Trust is built through **open communication, acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses.** One doesn't need to be perfect, but when we communicate with honesty and sincerity, and express that we are genuinely interested in something in common, the other party will reach out to make things work. It is a bit like odd puzzle pieces. Alone, it is only a piece of cardboard, but together, they form a picture.

The current COVID-19 pandemic seems to be testing our community's ability to create a big picture based on trust. We are all feeling vulnerable. Both our leaders and citizens are travelling through uncharted waters. **It is hard to know what to trust.** One thing for sure, though, is that when trust is lost, people become withdrawn and disconnected, just

like scattered puzzle pieces. It is only when people, though scared we may be, come and communicate with honesty, and know that we are all precious puzzle pieces, that together, we can create a roadmap forward. A puzzle piece is every one of us, and **we all count.**

Trust can be scary, because being honest and open makes you feel vulnerable. We could be worried about being judged, so it is sometimes easier not to reach out or to be reached. Surprisingly, though, **when we are honest, people don't judge, but rather, accept you for who you are,** and then try to find solutions together.

Trust takes a lot of courage. I used to try and solve problems by myself, perhaps out of my shyness, rather than what I perceived to be disturbing others. Working in isolation feels safe, but it achieves very little.

In this unprecedented time in history, it is a good chance for us to express our thoughts and feelings with honesty. Based on open communication, it is an opportunity to acknowledge ourselves and appreciate each other. It is time to trust that by being connected, we can complete an amazing picture.

With trust, we can do all this.

Michael Maxwell's Commitment to **Making a Difference**



Promoting social and financial inclusion for disadvantaged communities has always been Michael Maxwell's passion. Ever since he started working in the social welfare and community services sectors, Michael has worked with a number of social service organisations, including as a Director on the Ability Options Board.

As someone who is concerned 'for those who don't have access to the things that the rest of us have access to,' Michael has been using the **skills and knowledge** he has learned through his post-graduate studies, to work towards achieving **social inclusion in the Australian community**, by developing employment and education opportunities for all kinds of people, including migrants and people with disabilities.

Michael is no stranger to disability, as he has lived experience as a parent of a person with disability. His son, Josh, who has Down Syndrome, has helped Michael to appreciate 'the funny side' in any life situation. Michael feels so proud of his son, that he often tells people that 'if I ever grow up, I want to be like Josh.' Being a parent for Michael was not easy. Like many parents of children with disabilities, Michael faced many challenges throughout his parenting journey. These challenges helped Michael to enhance his parenting style to accommodate his son's needs, while also learning to embrace him as a family member.

As a Board Director at Ability Options, Michael has combined both his professional and personal experiences to **make a difference to people's**

lives in the community. Throughout his years as a Director, Michael has seen Ability Options grow and develop as an organisation, through the many challenges it has faced, including the introduction of the NDIS. What really makes Michael's career rewarding is to hear 'the stories from people on the frontline,' **who work hard every day to provide support and guidance to the 'people we help.'**

Michael has been a keen observer of the Disability Royal Commission, since it first began. He believes that the disability sector, as a result of the Royal Commission, is **'going to change significantly for the good,'** hoping that there will be a 'general uplift in terms of **integrity, honesty,** and **genuine client participation** in the **decisions that shape their lives.'**

Working in the disability sector, as Michael knows, **'is not for everybody.'** For Michael, it's more than just an ordinary job. It is an occupation that will challenge a person both at professional and personal levels. His advice for anyone who wants to get into the disability sector is to always be **'honest with yourself,'** since they will be working to make a positive impact on the people they provide support to.

Quality Practice & Outcomes



PROMOTE VOICE

In August, we held our third Human Rights Community of Practice, joined by Nicole

Lee from the Council of Intellectual Disability.

Nicole discussed inclusive governance and the importance of including people with disability at all levels of organisational governance, including advisory boards, governance committees and on the board of directors, and how to support people with disability to have their say in these environments.

We thought we should explain some aspects of governance and how it may benefit you. We would like to hear from you if you are interested in engaging in governance roles within Ability Options.

1. What is governance?

Governance are the rules, processes, and/or laws an organisation must follow to meet the needs of stakeholders, including employees, staff, and governing bodies.

2. Why are your views important?

To achieve good governance in an organisation, inclusiveness and equity is needed. Your views are important and offer organisations to improve their rules, processes, and services to best meet the needs of all organisational stakeholders.

3. How could getting involved benefit you?

Your involvement is mutually beneficial. Not only do you have the opportunity to change the approaches and services that affect you, but organisations get diverse perspectives, which leads to best practice and better outcomes for all.

If you or your support person would like to get involved in the Human Rights Community of Practice and contribute to achieve better outcomes for participants and the community, please email Rebecca Collins at rebecca.collins@abilityoptions.org.au or call 0404 433 070.



DEVELOP PEOPLE

In the last issue of The Voice, Quality, Practice & Outcomes introduced the Clinical Nurse Educators to our team.

Alongside the Practice Support Coordinators, these teams have been delivering face-to-face training to our frontline staff, ensuring that the goals of our participants are always met, best practice supports are implemented, and quality service outcomes are achieved.

Throughout the most recent lockdown, which has impacted all our employees and participants alike, the Practice Support and Clinical Nurse Educator Teams have and will continue to deliver training via ZOOM!

Through delivering training in this way, we recognised that ZOOM is a great way to connect with people whom we cannot see or be with at the moment. We would like to share with our participants how to access ZOOM, so, you, too can connect with your friends and family.

Below are some links to assist you in downloading and accessing ZOOM from any personal device.

Getting started on Windows and macOS

Getting started with iOS

Getting started with Android

If you would like further support setting up ZOOM on your personal device, please email

qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au



TAKE ACTION

The Quality Practice & Outcomes team have been approached by councils in the Sydney area to review and make recommendations on their Disability Inclusion Plans, which assist local councils in improving the lives of people living with disability in their communities.

This was brought to the Human Rights Community of Practice and working groups were established consisting of participants and employees. Individuals from this working group come from different areas across the state and upon further discussion, the working group has decided to also look at their own local council Disability Inclusion Plans, in addition to the Sydney council plans. If you would like to be involved or have any questions, please email Rebecca Collins at rebecca.collins@abilityoptions.org.au or call 0404 433 070.

From August 2021, the **Quality, Practice & Outcomes team** have taken on the responsibility of addressing any feedback or complaints submitted by our participants. This is to improve overall customer satisfaction and provide our participants with best practice solutions in a timely manner.

If you would like to provide feedback regarding any aspect of your supports from Ability Options, please go to the website link below.

abilityoptions.org.au/about-us/feedback-and-complaints

Peter's Finally Home – continued from page 1

He even has a new housemate, whom he is building a great friendship with.

Coordination of Supports (CoS) is a service offered by Ability Options, which aims to support people with disability to find the right providers that meet their NDIS goals. Our experienced Support Coordinators live and breathe our values, listen to people's needs, and work to ensure that NDIS participants receive the best support and advice about their plans. To find out more about CoS, visit the link below.

<https://abilityoptions.org.au/ndis/coordination-of-supports>



Thank You! 2021 Voice Satisfaction Surveys

Ability Options wants to thank everyone who participated in the 2021 Voice Satisfaction Surveys. The feedback we have received is going to improve the supports and services you receive.

We had an overall response rate of 20% for the parent/carer survey (74 responses in total).

We had an overall response rate of 32% for the participant survey (151 responses in total)

The results are being analysed now and we look forward to sharing these with everyone soon.

Action planning groups made up of participants, parents, and carers alongside Ability Options representatives are being established and will run from late September until the end of October.

Invitations to join action planning groups will be extended to participants, parents, and carers. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining the action planning groups, you can also get in touch with the Quality, Practice and Outcomes team for more information.

qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au

The winner of the TV prize was Glenn S. Congratulations Glenn!



Matt's Journey Towards Independence

Karen is a Support Coordinator who works as part of our Coordination of Supports team. She has been supporting Matt, a participant with MS, for four years.

As Matt's Support Coordinator, Karen's role is to assist and guide Matt in his journey towards independent living. She does this by helping Matt 'build his capacity to better understand his NDIS plan and the NDIS process and procedures.' Karen also supports Matt work on his life goals, while also 'assisting him in finding the right service providers.'

When Karen first started working with Matt, she saw that there were a number of gaps in his NDIS plan. One of the issues Karen noticed was that Matt 'had not been funded for Therapy, which is needed for his disability.' Karen wanted to solve the problem with Matt and 'get to the bottom of what was going on' to 'ensure that he was receiving the supports he needed.'

Thanks to Karen's support and guidance, Matt's journey towards independent living has seen 'a lot of wins.' Through funding, Matt has received a number of assistive equipment and adjustments, including having his 'bathroom renovated,' to give him more

independence with his personal care, and a 'powered wheelchair,' which allows him to move independently without having to rely 'on his wife and support staff.'

The support Ability Options have been providing Matt with has not only allowed him to move forward with his life, but it has also given him a sense of hope. Karen remembers that 'during the times when Matt had to advocate for basic equipment and supports' he needed, she told him not to give up, as he is not just fighting for himself, but for many other people with disabilities.

<https://abilityoptions.org.au/ndis/coordination-of-supports>



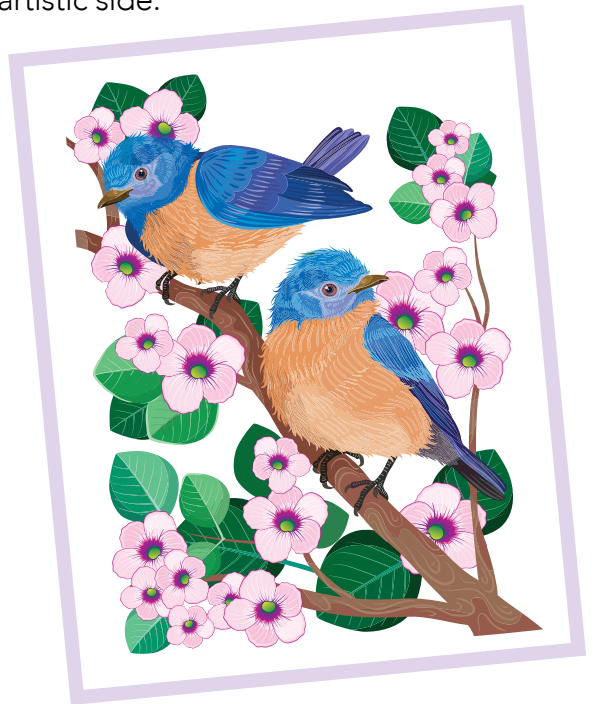
Drawing Competition

Are you a passionate artist? Are you someone who likes to visually express your thoughts?

Look no further, as TheVoice Newsletter's Drawing Competition is your chance to make good use of the current situation and explore your artistic side.

The subject of your drawing should be **SPRING**.

Email or post us a drawing, together with a 100 word description of your drawing to marketingteam@abilityoptions.org.au or post to Marketing Team, Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive Bella Vista, NSW 2153 for your chance to have your work featured in the next issue and win a **\$50 Gift Card**.



We look forward to seeing your drawings.

Royal Commission Update

We are pleased to share that The Royal Commission's Amendment (Protection of Information) Bill 2021 passed on Wednesday, 25 August in parliament.

The bill is aimed at improving the trust of people with disability and potential whistleblowers to come forward to share evidence.

It will ensure that information provided to the Commission would remain in confidence after the inquiry ends, and guarantee stronger protections for those who expose failures within the sector.

All persons wishing to engage with the Disability Royal Commission can be confident that they can tell their stories or provide information in a way that protects their privacy.

The laws also ensure that sensitive information provided to the inquiry outside private sessions will be given the same confidentiality as those within.

We encourage everyone to come forward and share their experience of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation with the Commission.

Robert **Pr**oposes to Colleen

With the current lockdown and restrictions still in place, participants are finding new ways to connect with each other, while also staying at home. Robert is a resident at Eaton House, Marayong, who lives with four other house mates. He, like everyone else, is finding different ways to interact with his house mates.

Robert recently proposed to Colleen, another resident at Eaton House, who has known him for more than 20 years. Known to other residents as 'love birds,' both Robert and Colleen have been living together in the home for seven years.

After picking up some flowers while on his exercise routine, Robert presented them to Colleen and asked, 'will you marry me?' Colleen replied with 'Yes.'

Staff at the home asked Robert when he was going to marry Colleen. Robert replied, saying that he will 'need to buy the ring first.' Staff also asked Robert whether he was going to buy a gold or silver ring. Robert said, 'Silver.' Colleen laughed, and the two of them hugged each other.

Will they be getting married soon? We will see what the future holds.



Volunteering in the Wetlands

Malcolm and Grant, who access our day program, have recently begun volunteering at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, a not-for-profit organisation, which aims to conserve and educate people on the wetlands' wildlife and natural environment.

Through their day-to-day duties, which often involve lots of walking and manual labour outdoors, Malcolm and Grant have developed both self-confidence and independence in working autonomously. They have also experienced what it's like to work in a team. Both Grant and Malcolm now know the routine and do not hesitate to begin work straight away.

By the end of each day, Malcolm and Grant were tired from the manual labour and walking throughout the day. As the weeks went by, both Malcolm and Grant were visibly fitter, completing the same jobs with ease. Not only that, but water consumption has increased for both participants, creating great hydration habits. In addition, Malcolm and Grant have

built on their interpersonal skills, working with different people every day.

Overall, Malcom and Grant are enjoying their experience at the wetlands. They have established a great foundation to having the confidence in applying the skills they have learnt in their day-to-day lives, whether that be working in their own backyard, working as part of a team, or just putting into practice the confidence that they have gained as part of their work.



WorkReady Works Up a Sweat!

In May, WorkReady Western Sydney sites were given the opportunity to complete an Industry Day with One55 in Rooty Hill. The day saw the participants gain an insight into the operations of one of the biggest gyms in Western Sydney.

This is the first Industry Day that allowed participants to explore the fitness industry. Participants were given a tour of the gym and were shown the different training sections, including the opportunity to observe a HIIT class.

The group was then shown the gym café, where the guide explained the role of the food and beverage attendant. The group was given a live demonstration on how to make a protein shake, which even included a taste test.

Participants then heard a breakdown on how the reception team operates and the different tasks they are required to complete. They also heard about the IT team and how they contributed to the day-to-day operations at the gym.

After the tour, the participants were given some free time to trial some of the cardio equipment. The team at One55 guided them through a series of exercises.

After working up a sweat, participants got to hear from one of the personal trainers at the gym. The group heard about what the role involved and the pathways for getting into this career.

This was a fantastic opportunity for participants who had expressed an interest in a career in fitness, hospitality, or customer service. It was also a great experience for participants who had expressed an interest in incorporating fitness into their lifestyle for their physical and mental health.

The team at One55 were incredibly supportive and welcoming to our group. We are thankful to them for providing such an invaluable experience.

Our WorkReady service not only supports young people prepare for work or further study, but we also support adults with disability who feel ready and motivated to move into work or further education. To find out more, visit <https://abilityoptions.org.au/employment-options/work-ready>



Jean's Jab

by Jean M, Coffs Harbour

We had a vaccination bus out the front near our driveway. I went outside to look at the hospital bus. There were about six nurses. We came into the house.



I sat on the recliner chair, while my brother held my hand. I was a patient, I got stabbed by the vaccination. The nurse was comforting me. My hand was a bit shaky after the jab.



Upskill and get job ready

We understand it's been a difficult time during COVID, but are you looking to sharpen your skills and learning to be prepared for the job market? **A quick skill builder program is a great way to reset and get prepared.**



We can recommend a **range of courses and skill builder programs** across **various industries** that are looking to hire and also match your preferred interest. These **courses** and services are available at no cost to you as a participant of **jobactive**, **ParentsNext** and **Disability Employment Services (DES)**.

Our Employment Consultants in Employment Services encourage anyone who is looking to develop their skills and training and study options, to use our **Skills Builder courses** as an opportunity to help you future-proof your resume or build an exciting new career.

Whether you are a recent school leaver, looking for work, a stay-at-home parent, or simply looking to learn something new, **Ability Options Employment Services** can help you find a career that matches your skills and interests.

Contact your job consultant on **1300 422 454** or email your expression of interest to **jobseeker@abilityoptions.org.au** for more details.

Auslan: Through Gabrielle's Eyes

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo

Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is the sign language used by the Australian Deaf community. Like many other sign languages, Auslan's grammar, structure, and vocabulary is different from English, as it is a natural language that has gradually been developed over many years. Instead of using sound to communicate, Auslan uses manual communication and gestures to express the speaker's own thoughts.

Gabrielle is a participant who uses Auslan to communicate with others. She gave her own insights into what it is like to use Auslan on a daily basis.

What are some things you have noticed after learning how to communicate using Auslan?

It's a lot easier to communicate with people in different situations, because I know Auslan.

How has using Auslan made a difference in helping you to effectively communicate with others and navigate through different social settings?

Sometimes, hearing people don't understand me, so, I use very basic signs to help them understand certain words or the message I'm trying to get across. Obviously, they can't sign properly, but I can use basic gestures and signs to help them understand me.

What are some of the challenges of communicating using Auslan and what are some strategies you have taken to overcome these challenges?

Well, there's a challenge for people to understand me clearly. For those who don't understand me, I might write messages or notes, use facial expressions, lip read, use simple gestures, and type messages on my phone to them to help them understand.

How has using Auslan helped you to self-advocate within the Australian community?

I feel confident when I meet hearing people. I have no problem trying to communicate with them. I am not afraid to talk to hearing people in the community.



What advice would you give to someone who wants to have a better understanding of Auslan and the deaf community in Australia?

People need to be more aware of the deaf community and what's involved in being deaf. There are courses that you can do if you want to learn Auslan or, maybe in the future, you want to become a professional interpreter, to open your mind up to the deaf community. There are pictures about the alphabet in Sign Language. They could look at those pictures and can learn how to spell in Sign Language. There are TAFE courses that you can do to learn Sign Language and to improve your skills. There are also courses that talk about the deaf culture and community, so they can learn about that, too.



Are you a **person with disability** who has support workers in your home?



Our training can help you to:

- ✓ Build your decision making skills
- ✓ Know your rights
- ✓ Get good support
- ✓ Share how you feel
- ✓ Tell people what you want for your life

My Right to Decide works with people with disability, their support workers and families.

If you would like to know more about My Right to Decide training, please contact Cathy at **cathy@cid.org.au** or **1800 424 065**.

➔ What is Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)?

We want a community where all people with intellectual disability are valued. We work to build a community that protects rights, includes everyone and supports people well.



Find out more at
www.cid.org.au



This project was funded under the Australian Government's Information Linkages and Capacity Building program

'Bring your Pet Day' at Rossmore

Who doesn't love animals and pets? They bring so much joy to our hearts.

Rossmore Accommodation Services Team Leader, Ivanka, wanted to bring some cheer and joy to the group home residents, by introducing a 'bring your pet to work day' for all staff at the home. This day allows staff to bring their own pets into the home to interact with the participants. This has been a highlight for many participants, as they love to spend time with all kinds of animals.

On one weekend, support worker, Sina, brought her pet snake, Noodle, a 2.5-year-old female Stimson Python. Sina said that although 'there were a few screams' at first, all the participants 'loved Noodle.' One participant, Brandon, was excited to see Noodle, and enjoyed spending time with her.



Congratulations, Matt Levy



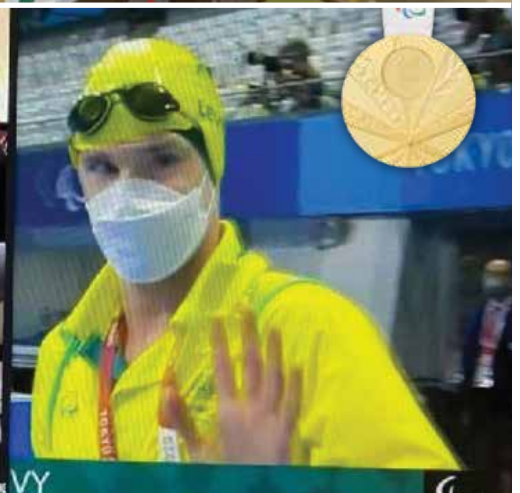
Our Board Director, Matt Levy, travelled to Tokyo as a member of the Australian Paralympics Team, to compete in his fifth Paralympic Games.

Matt competed in three swimming events, alongside other Paralympians from around the world, where he won a Bronze medal in the 100m Breaststroke and a Gold medal with the 4x100m Freestyle Relay team, who set a new World Record. We held watch parties across the organisation to cheer Matt along, which were great fun. Everyone felt very inspired and proud.

His events were:

- 100m Breaststroke – **3rd Place**
- Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay – **1st Place**
- 50m Freestyle – **5th Place:** Matt achieved a new personal best

Congratulations and well done, Matt and all from the Aussie Paralympic Team.



Staying Connected

To keep everyone safe during the current NSW lockdown, we have been delivering many of our services and activities online.

Here are some fantastic photos of the participants from our Seven Hills Day Program, enjoying an in-house baking activity, learning how to make blueberry muffins. We heard that the muffins were delicious too!



Farm Day at Casuarina Grove

Residents at Casuarina Grove had a terrific visit from some friendly farm animals. Everyone involved had a great time meeting the animals, including a very tame Alpaca. We especially love this photo of a resident meeting face-to-face with the affectionate Alpaca!



♥♥♥ We especially love this photo



Contact Us

Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista, NSW 2153 | Phone 1300 422 454 | abilityoptions.org.au

Connect with us *Facebook*, *LinkedIn* and *Instagram*

WE ARE OPEN FOR RESPITE



Take a Break

with our Respite Teams at Seabreezes, Port Macquarie or Bonville, Coffs Harbour

If you, or someone you know is aged between 7 and 65, has a disability and is looking for a short break then we can support you! Our respite service provides **short term accommodation** options for people with disability to **relax and take a break**, with either a planned holiday or simply somewhere to stay while family and carers take time away from daily routines.

When staying in one of our houses our residents can:

- relax in a comfortable and safe environment
- explore somewhere new
- meet and socialise with people of a similar age and interests
- take part in their favourite activities



For more information about our Port Macquarie accommodation, contact **Danielle Heazlewood** on 0488 296 021 or **Joanne Harrington** on 0414 652 695.