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Voice Survey

The Results are in...

Participants and Parents/Carers in our Accommodation, Respite, Community Programs, and Individualised Support Services were asked to complete a Participant Satisfaction Survey in July. We have been working through the survey's results and would like to share them with you. We would also like to invite you to contribute to our action plan. Keep reading for more details.

SATISFACTION

The Voice Project completed the overall analytics that provided us with an Overall Satisfaction rating.

There was overwhelming gratitude for the work of our front line teams. There is also some work for us to do...



86% of Participants are satisfied with the services they receive.
This means 8.6 of 10 people using our services are satisfied.



82% of Parents/Carers are satisfied with the services received.
This means 8.2 of 10 parents/carers are satisfied.

ENGAGEMENT

With a targeted engagement of 30%, we were satisfied with the response rate across all of our surveys. The industry benchmark sits at 28%, therefore, we are on par with industry.

Participant Survey – Disability Services



32%

Parent/Carer Survey – Disability Services



28%

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A Message from our CEO



Welcome to the final edition of TheVoice for 2021. I hope you enjoy it. All of us in the team here at Ability Options wish all of our participants, families, and partners **a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.** I hope you are able to catch up with loved ones and reflect on the year that has been, making plans and developing aspirations for the future. It has certainly been a very challenging year or two and like everyone else, I'd love for things to be a lot less unusual next year. As I write this, I'm most thankful that the rest, reconnection, and revitalisation we all need looks possible. I am not a superstitious person by large, but given the experiences in 2020 and 2021, I must admit I am typing this article with most of my fingers and toes firmly crossed. I know our teams are looking forward to their team Christmas lunches and to being able to coordinate celebrations for and alongside participants. I honestly think, for

the rest of my life, I will never again take being able to just **'be with' other people, especially those I love the most,** for granted.

Our theme in this edition of TheVoice is Courage, one of our five values. The others are Trust, Inclusion, Leadership, and Respect.

The courage to live our values every day is something we continually work on.

For our employees, supporting, training, encouraging, and requiring them to express their courage is underway in many ways every day. We expect, support, and have policies and processes to enable speaking up, reporting, calling out, and leading. We work to recruit employees who we think share our values and have, or wish to develop, the skills we need to deliver our Mission.

We expect, support, and encourage employees to provide active support to enable participants to meet their aspirations and to take their own actions to do so. **It does take courage to actively support participants towards achieving their aspirations.** It is very tempting and often easier to solve a problem or take the job on yourself. However, we know from emerging and published research that active support to

enable inclusion, aspiration, and independence will deliver the outcomes our participants want and need in order to be included in their communities. **The value of courage** is reinforced from our recruitment process right through the **employment journey** and we aim to **support our participants** to have the **courage they need to succeed.**

Courage is also reflected in our Strategic Plan – Towards 2030. The Plan has five Strategic Directions, each with its own actions and outcomes, and its long-term direction is delivered through our operational plans and key performance indicators each year. Those Strategic Directions are:

- **To have "Courageous Leadership"** in the not-for-profit sector, advocating for inclusion.
- **To "Amplify the Voice"** of our participants to enable choice, control, and quality services.
- **To "Innovate"** our services using technology and digital services to offer more options.
- **To "Partner"** with like-minded organisations to achieve our purpose.
- **To achieve "Sustainable Growth"** to create greater impact and meet our Mission.

The most recent survey of participants and families identifies that families, in particular, are not

Courageous Leadership	Amplify Voice	Innovate	Partner	Sustainable Growth
Made submissions to the Disability Royal Commission to contribute to improving our sector.	Shared many more participant stories where agreed with the Australian community and with funders and policy makers.	Provided a bigger range of digital services in Coordination of Supports, Therapy, and Counselling.	New homes for participants are being built by our partner, Casa Capace. The first two will open in early 2022.	More participants have chosen our accommodation services this year and have moved in, than in previous years.
Publicly Advocated for Disability Services to receive COVID-19 Vaccines in Phase 1 of the rollout.	Undertook participant and customer surveys in Disability and Disability Employment Services.	Implemented a new Quality Management System to make it easier for employees to know, understand, find, and use our policies and processes.	We have developed almost 30 new partnerships with large employers and other not-for-profits to provide employment opportunities to our participants.	Our WorkReady service has grown this year.
Contributed to policy consultations in our sectors and to our peak bodies.	Implemented a paid parental leave scheme for employees.	Invested in learning and career development for employees, including investing in a practice support team for frontline staff and a supporting new learning system for online and face-to-face learning.	In partnership with Tendable (formerly Perfect Ward), we now have a quality monitoring process for our Employment and Disability Services, which provides real time information, so that we can act on issues really quickly.	Our Coordination of Support services have grown this year.

as well informed as they'd like to be in our planning. They'd like to know more about our plans for the future, as well as the services we have right now. **We have a New Year's Resolution to not** just communicate better, but to listen more and then act.

For now, though, I'd like to share some examples of things we have done this year to meet those important Strategic Directions (see above).

We'll be back in 2022 with more news and information, to enable

you to contribute to our plans and services. Thanks to everyone for their support in keeping us all safe this year.

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

Courage: One Step Closer

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo



There are many different ways in how individuals show courage. This could be going to a job interview, overcoming adversity, or asking a friend for help. Having the courage

to do or say something is important, as it allows us to not only grow stronger as a person, but it also makes navigating through life's challenges a lot easier.

I believe that living with disability should not stop anyone from living their best life. Life, at any stage, can throw up unexpected challenges, but there are ways to get around them. All we need, is a bit of courage and confidence to help us solve any problems we encounter. Courage is a life skill that anyone, with or without disability, can learn to develop.

Independence is a goal that many people with disability want to achieve. Being independent lets us make decisions for ourselves without having to depend on anyone else. We all want to become independent and live our own lives. Being independent is great, but to achieve that, there are a number of steps we all need to complete before reaching that big goal.

The road to independence is not an easy journey. It is like an obstacle course. This journey requires time,

commitment, support, effort, and courage, as there will be many challenges that we will face along the way. These challenges, though hard they may seem, help us to stay focused on our goal, reminding us on why we are taking this journey. Courage and confidence make the journey smoother. By learning how to develop these human qualities, it becomes easier to get through each challenge we come across, whether it is learning how to cook, applying for a job, managing our own finances, or living independently. It is through courage that we slowly begin to get out of our comfort zones, learn new skills, and grow as individuals, bringing us one step closer to becoming independent.

The Disability Royal Commission has reminded us of the need for self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is important, since it assists people with disability to not only speak up for themselves when making their own life decisions, but it also allows them to openly talk about one's disability with others. Having the courage to learn self-advocacy skills is a big step forward towards independence, as it empowers people with disability to have their say in what they want in their lives.

Everyone is capable of achieving a goal. Any goal, big or small, not only requires hard work and dedication, but also courage, motivation, and support. For many people with disability, including myself, having a goal to work towards gives us a sense of purpose and meaning. There is no doubt that we have all been met by our own set of challenges, whilst pursuing our goals, but over time, we have learned that by being resilient and determined, anything is possible. If we have the right attitude and support network, we can achieve anything, even the impossible.



Celebrating International Day of People with Disability

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations observed day, celebrated every year around the world on 3 December.

IDPwD aims to increase global understanding and acceptance of people with disability, while also celebrating their achievements and contributions in society.

IDPwD is an opportunity for everyone to recognise, value, and celebrate the roles people play in society, regardless of who they are. It is also an opportunity to learn from people with disability and understand their individuality through their own experiences.

On Friday, 3 December, Ability Options hosted two all-abilities Disco events, Discobility for Under 18s and Club

All In for Over 18s to celebrate this special day. We also attended the Sydney Disability Expo and the Big Day Out at Riverside Park, Kempsey, where we, together with other disability service providers, provided information and advice to the public about the different services we provide. Our employees at our Bella Vista and Cessnock offices had the opportunity to come together and celebrate the event over a morning tea with guests from the Seven Hills Day Program.

Everyone who attended the events enjoyed celebrating together, while also doing their part in promoting positive change to the lives of the 4.4 million Australians with disability.

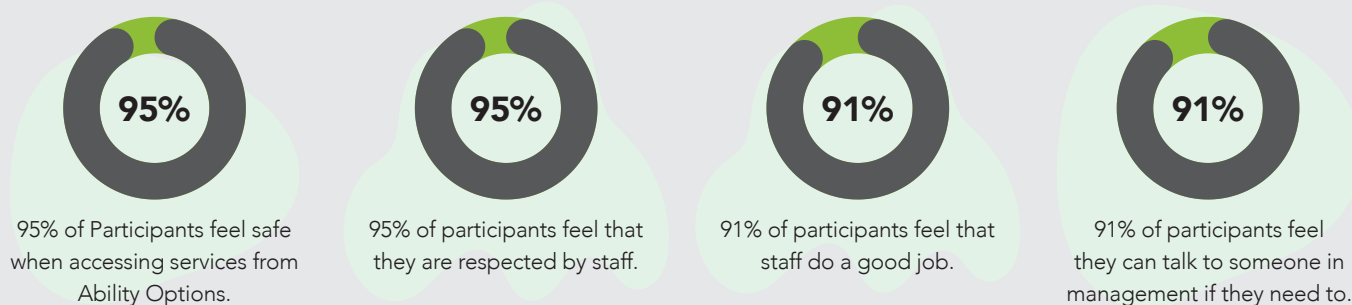


Voice Survey The Results are in... continued from page 1

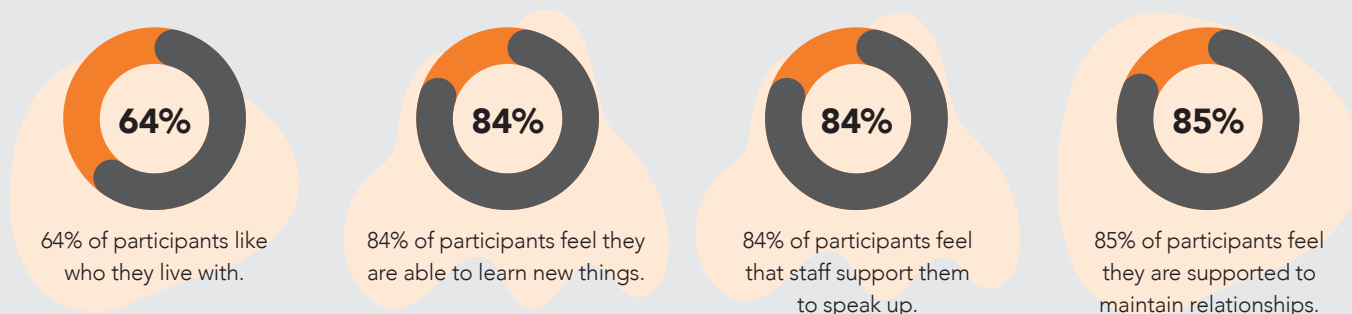
THE DETAILS – PARTICIPANT SURVEY

With an 86% overall satisfaction rate, we believe that any result over 90% is working, whereas any result that is less than 90%, we would like to improve.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY – WHAT IS WORKING



PARTICIPANT SURVEY – IMPROVEMENT IS NEEDED

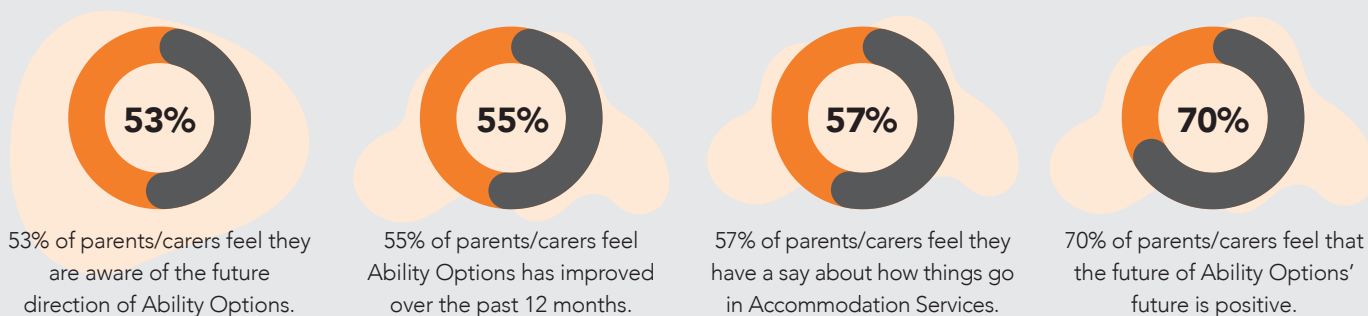


THE DETAILS – PARENT/CARER SURVEY

PARENT/CARER SURVEY – WHAT IS WORKING

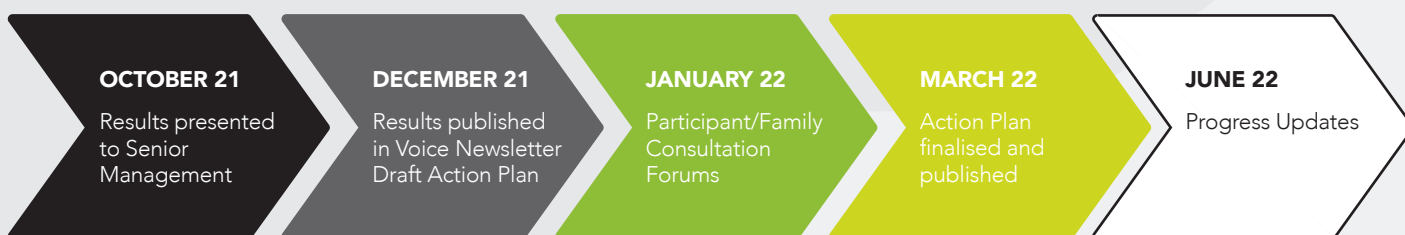


PARENT/CARER SURVEY – IMPROVEMENT IS NEEDED



NEXT STEPS

The Voice Project presented the overall results and analysis to the Disability Senior Management Team in October 2021 after a detailed analysis and review of the information. We would like to further consult with participants and parents/carers on the actions required to address some of the improvement areas as well as gain suggestions and recommendations on how to maintain the positive results. We will facilitate a number of participant/family forums in January to facilitate these conversations and finalise our Action Plan once these are complete. The action plan will be published in our Autumn volume of The Voice newsletter.



INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

We truly value the feedback already received through the Voice Survey and wish to thank all of those who participated. We have developed a draft action plan in response to the results and would like to present these to families for further workshopping in January.



Nambucca RSL
3 Nelson Street
Nambucca Heads
17 January 2022
4pm – 6pm



Westport Club
25 Buller Street
Port Macquarie
18 January 2022
10am – 12pm



Online via Zoom
Link will be sent via email
19 January 2022
10am



Club Charlestown
5 Lincoln Street
Charlestown
19 January 2022
6pm – 8pm



Wyong RSL
Anzac Avenue
Wyong
20 January 2022
6pm – 8pm

RSVP via email to
qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au
or contact: Kim Vella on **0420 940 793**

Matt Levy Launches New Book

In late November, our Board Director, Matt Levy launched his new book at a special online webinar, titled, **'Brandon Dreams Big: 7 Easy Steps to Get Where you want!'**

The book follows Brandon, a boy who at the age of 13, decides to work towards achieving one goal: to one day compete professionally in the Paralympic Games.

Brandon Dreams Big is an adaptation of Matt's autobiography, 'Keeping Your Head Above Water,' which follows Matt's life journey from birth to becoming a five-time Paralympian. In August, Matt competed in the Tokyo Paralympic Games, where he took home a Gold and Bronze medal. Matt's new book is aimed at younger readers, which aims to not only entertain, but to also inspire kids with disability to realise their potential and achieve their goals.

To order a copy of Brandon Dreams Big, visit Matt's website. <https://mattlevyoam.com.au>



Instructor **LED** Training

Over the last several months, the Practice Support Team and the Clinical Nurse Educator Team have been delivering face-to-face, Instructor-Led Training to our frontline staff, ensuring that the learning and development of individuals are addressed, the goals of our participants are met, best practice supports are implemented, and quality service outcomes are achieved.

From September to the end of November 2021, staff at Ability Options successfully completed 1,651 courses through Instructor-Led Training.

This is inclusive of Disability Services, Employment Services, and internal Ability Options training, such as systems, processes, etc.

Through the use of ZOOM, our team were able to continue providing training to all divisions of Ability Options during the COVID lockdown period. Moving into the new year, we are excited to begin providing our quality Instructor-Led Training in person once again.



Ability Options is Building a **New Website!**

Ability Options is currently building a brand new website, which will be introduced in early 2022. We can't wait to share this with you!

One of the most important parts of building a website is knowing what customers need from it.

Members of the website working group collaborated with various participants and asked them questions about what they need from an Ability Options website. We call this a Customer Reference Group.

Some of the questions we asked were:



What do you do if you want to find out more information about the service?



How would you prefer to contact the service?



Do you prefer talking to a professional in the business, or having a casual chat with those you know in the service?

We really enjoyed being able to hear from people about their experiences and received a lot of important feedback. We have been working on the feedback received to ensure we can build the best possible website for all our customers.

Those who participated in our Customer Reference Group will also be invited back to test the user-friendliness of our website before it goes live.

We are grateful for those who participated in the Customer Reference Group and would like to say a big Thank You. For those who participated, you will be receiving a gift voucher as a token of our appreciation.

Drawing Competition Winner

Congratulations to Erina R for winning our Drawing Competition.

Painting: Paint by numbers wall hanging
Tropical Lady

Congratulations Erina! Your **\$50 Gift Card** has been emailed to you.



A Conversation with our Patron, Trevor R. Parmenter AM

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo



Professor Trevor R. Parmenter AM is an Emeritus Professor at The University of Sydney's School of Medicine, who has been our Patron since 2011. As a long-time friend of our founder, the late Greg McIntyre, Trevor assessed Ability Options' progress during its early years to make sure that its services were running well and that the people receiving support were happy. As a researcher, Trevor, a former teacher, has published many papers about disability issues, focusing on a range of topics, including behaviour support and supported living.

I sat down with Trevor to talk about his involvement with Ability Options and his vision for the future of Ability Options and the disability sector.



When and how did you join the Ability Options Community?

*I got to know the founder of Ability Options, the late Greg McIntyre OAM, not long after he inspired the original development of Ability Options in 1976. Greg and I met through a meeting hosted by a research association that sponsored research in intellectual disability. Greg asked me at the meeting, to assess Ability Options' progress. **My overall assessment found that the homes were being run very well, each having a social educator as the lead support person, and that the people living in group homes seemed to be having a much better quality of life than those living on their own.** When I asked the group home residents what the best part was of living in the group home, the residents said that they enjoyed the activities together, particularly the leisure activities.*

Years later, Greg asked me if I wouldn't mind if he nominated me to be the Patron. Greg was an inspiration to me. What inspired me was his determination and inspiration for people with disabilities to lead a more inclusive life. It was a sad loss when Greg passed away, but that was certainly my beginnings with Ability Options.

How have your contributions helped Ability Options grow as an organisation and what is the most rewarding aspect as a long-standing supporter?

Over many years, I've been invited to join strategic planning meetings and have helped to give and share advice with the organisation's major team leaders. I also got to know five CEOs in my time with Ability Options, including the current CEO, who once invited me to share my thoughts, over a cup of coffee, on recent developments happening throughout the organisation. I've also given some talks at staff meetings on different aspects of supporting people with disability, and more recently, I was asked to assess the outcomes of the WorkReady SLES program.

The most rewarding aspects that I value the most are being able to keep up to date with decisions made by both the Board and the leadership team, getting to meet some of the employees, and indeed, meeting some of the people we support, because at the end of the day, that's where it all happens.



Throughout your academic career, you have published numerous research papers on disability issues, focusing on areas including employment, supported living, and behaviour support. In what way has your work helped in improving the disability sector, as well as changing society's image and perception of disability?

Before I joined the research community in 1974, I spent 21 years as a teacher. While I was the principal of a special school for four years, the school system saw my school as a dumping ground for people they didn't want in the regular school system. **The biggest breakthrough was to convince people through my research work and teaching experience, that people with a cognitive disability can learn.**

In my research, I researched different ways of teaching, including how teachers should organise their teaching material and how they can make sure that the person who's learned a skill will maintain it. It doesn't matter whether the person is 75, 85, or 10 years old. We all have the capacity to learn, and some of those basic teaching principles which work with people without disability, work even better with people with disability.

With the Disability Royal Commission still ongoing, what is one thing you are hoping to see change as a result?

The Commission were originally looking into areas of abuse, but they've moved across a variety of topics, which seem to go way beyond the original plan in what they were looking into. What troubles me is that what they're finding is not different to some of the abuses and terrible things that were committed against people with disability when they were living in those large institutions, which people like Greg McIntyre OAM helped to pull down. Nowadays,

people with disability are in the community, by large, but many of them are just living in a community but are not a part of it. Putting people in the community, in many cases, has still led to abuse, because they're not in a protective environment. **When we live in our community, we have a network that helps to protect us.** For people with disability, their network is limited, and it's often limited to the support people who come in to support them. I hope the revelations will lead us to some action to work on both the individual and the systemic levels.

What are your hopes for Ability Options' future after 45 years?

I hope to see many wonderful things at Ability Options as it reaches its 46th year, and it is also remarkable to see what the organisation has done throughout its 45-year history, which makes me proud to be associated with them. There are, however, a couple of challenges which will face the Board, the Leadership Team, and everyone else. One is that the Government is still going to try to reduce the costs in the NDIS and I have seen several attempts to pull the total budget back. Another challenge is going to be the ageing of the residents, and I was pleased to hear that Ability Options supported a research project I led, on ageing, which called for a system collaboration between health, aged, and disability care, to come together to make sure that people with disabilities, as they age, do not have to leave the disability support system, and move into aged care. The final challenge is going to focus on inclusion, which Ability Options recognises and is doing a lot of work to help. **Achieving inclusion will be the organisation's biggest challenge, and it's going to be a continual challenge to go out and to help build communities that will be more inclusive and welcoming.**

Gary and Paul Go Out Fishing

Fishing has always been a long-time passion for two Mid-North Coast participants, Gary and Paul, who have been fishing since they were very young. After fishing from the beach and rocks for two years, both Gary and Paul wanted to go out in a boat to all the good fishing spots along the Nambucca River.

Jason, a Support Worker, did not give up in advocating for them during those two years and was determined to make their dream come true. Jason tried on numerous occasions to request permission to organise a fishing trip for Gary and Paul on his boat. Due to safety and insurance concerns, the request was bounced back and forth for weeks and months from Jason's manager, Cherry to the executive team. Jason was determined as he knew how much both Gary and Paul would enjoy and benefit from being on a fishing boat.

After a very long wait, Jason finally received the news he was hoping for. His advocacy to take both Gary and Paul was finally achieved when he was given permission to use his boat to take the keen fishermen out fishing. Before the trio embarked on their long-awaited trip, Jason had to first fill out a risk assessment form to ensure that his boat was safe for both Gary and Paul to travel on. The participants were living their dream and had so much fun fishing and cruising along the river from the boat. During their fishing trip, Jason, Gary, and Paul caught a few fish. When they returned to shore, they generously

gave their fresh catch to other Group Program participants and staff to share amongst themselves. The trio were all delighted that they were finally able to access the local waterways and catch some good fish.

Gary enjoyed the trip so much, that he went out in the boat twice a week before he was able to organise a three day Respite at a campground beside the river, where he spent the full three days fishing and taking in the beautiful scenery and wildlife.

Note: We have changed the name of the second participant to 'Paul' to protect his privacy.



Brad's Dream Comes True

Brad was going to attend the Harley Davidson Motorcycle event in Tamworth in October, but the event was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Michelle, Brad's Support Coordinator, spoke to the event's organisers and asked them if they could arrange something special for Brad, as she knew that Brad is a massive fan of the Harley Davidson Motorcycles.

After a few conversations, Justin, one of the organisers, called Michelle to ask if Brad would be interested in being interviewed and featured in the club's newsletter. When Michelle told Brad the good news, Brad couldn't believe his eyes. He was crying with happiness and didn't stop shouting, 'no way' in the background, knowing that his dream to spend time with his favourite motorcycles had finally come true.



To prepare for his interview, Brad, together with his Support Worker, Paul, went shopping to buy his favourite outfit. At the end of the interview, Brad thanked Justin for the opportunity and even received a brand new high-tech helmet from the club.

We are one of the largest Disability Services organisations in NSW and are driven by our Values of: **Trust, Respect, Courage, Inclusion** and **Leadership**.



Our work is also underpinned by our Vision to create opportunity and services for people to participate fully in society.

We offer

Short, medium, or long-term Respite Services that are available under NDIS Funding for people with disability. These services are available in the Northern Beaches, Hunter Region and Mid-North Coast.

Our houses allow you to

- Relax in a comfortable and safe environment
- Explore somewhere new
- Meet and socialise with people of similar interests
- Participate in new activities or fun opportunities



For more information phone **1300 422 454**.

Emma Breaks Down Barriers

Emma is a Domestic Care Assistant at Casuarina Grove, who has been working with Ability Options for a year.

When Emma was in high school, she came out as a transgender woman. Many people at Emma's school did not agree with her new identity, and their attitudes made Emma feel excluded from participating in school activities, leading her to a dark place.

After finishing school, Emma decided to study hairdressing, but after a few months, she felt that it wasn't a career she wanted to work towards.



Since then, Emma has made a career change and is currently completing a Diploma in Community Services. From there, Emma is wanting to study counselling and eventually become a counsellor in the future.

Recently, Emma's life changed after she joined the Ability Options Community. Emma is enjoying her role at Ability Options and has created her own circle of friends at Casuarina Grove. Emma feels respected in the workplace for who she is and follows Ability Options' Values, leading by example. Since starting her role, Emma has been challenging herself in areas she previously wasn't comfortable working in and has made herself a list of tasks

needing to be done for each day.

Emma has also been a real support to staff who have recently started their roles, providing support in settling in and getting to know their roles. Emma is now wanting to pursue a management role in the future.

While she is not working, Emma has been working on a talent she has called, mentalism, which involves mind reading and hypnosis. Since high school, Emma has been performing this art in front of many different audiences. While COVID-19 restrictions were in place, Emma wasn't able to perform on stage and had to put her performance on hold. Now that restrictions are being eased, Emma is now planning on returning to the stage to perform.

Emma has also developed a passion for writing, having written two books, the first one on how to perform on stage and the second on how to think psychologically. Emma is currently writing a mystery novel which is getting published soon.

STAR Employee Awards 2021

On Friday, 22 October, Ability Options held our third Annual STAR Employee Awards Ceremony. The STAR Awards aim to recognise and celebrate the wonderful work our employees are doing to help achieve our Mission 'To support people who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community.'

Hosted by voice artist/broadcaster, Nick Bennett, the ceremony was broadcast online and was viewed by both staff and participants, who cheered and showed their support for the winners and finalists. We would like to say a huge congratulations and thank you to all our Winners and Finalists for their hard work and dedication in providing support to the people we serve. We would also like to say a special thank you to our major sponsors, Squeaky Group and Buildingwise Construction, and our award sponsors, Perfect Ward, Casa Capace, Interleasing, MOQ Digital, and Ability Options Deputy Chair, Heather Scheibenstock for helping us bring this special event to life.

OUR STAR AWARD WINNERS

Leadership Award

Winner: Ainslie Rommell – Support Coordinator - Maitland

Respect Award

Winner: Abigail Gomez – DES Employment Consultant – Mt Druitt

Trust Award

Winner: Racheal Huta – Manager – Quality, Practice & Outcomes – Bella Vista Head Office

Courage Award

Winner: Sue Carmichael – Manager – Business Support – Bella Vista Head Office

Inclusion Award

Joint Winners: Melissa Angelevski – Manager – Disability Services Group Programs – Bella Vista Head Office and Tenzin Legden – Claims and Compliance Officer – Bella Vista Head Office

Safety Award

Winner: Sylvia Sullivan – Registered Nurse – 4B Woodlands Drive

Team Award

Joint Winners: WorkReady: Emma Murphy – Manager – WorkReady - Chatswood and Employer Engagement Team: Julie Cox – Team Leader – Employer Servicing - Gosford

STAR Employee of The Year Award

Winner: Seven Hills Day Program: Melissa Angelevski – Manager – Disability Services Group Programs – Bella Vista Head Office.



Hamish's Design Journey

Hamish has been using our WorkReady service for the past four months. During his time with WorkReady, Hamish developed a passion for graphic design, having designed many logos for different companies. Sharron, Hamish's WorkReady Consultant, supported Hamish to enroll into a Certificate 3 in Design Fundamentals, after having seen his potential, following a group presentation he did of his design for the recent Tokyo Olympic Games.

Since he started studying the course, Hamish has been making great progress in his coursework, learning different design techniques and how to use new software to design his assessments. Hamish has also been researching different artists, such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, for inspiration. Recently, Hamish submitted his first assignment, a 1960s album cover, called 'Flower Babies.'

Hamish has become very inspired and motivated in following his passion, and both Sharron and Hamish's

TAFE tutor are very proud of his achievements. Hamish has shown a lot of promise around graphic arts and is wanting to turn his passion into a career. Sharron is determined to support Hamish to reach his career goal and is working on finding work experience for Hamish in a graphic design company in the new year.

About WorkReady

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>



From Participant to WorkReady Consultant: **Jakob's Journey**



On Monday, 20th September 2021, WorkReady participants from different sites joined an Industry Talk with WorkReady Consultant, Jakob, about his journey from being a WorkReady participant to working for Ability Options, as a person with disability.

During the talk, Jakob discussed many aspects of his personal journey. The discussion topics included:

1. My journey from school to being a participant.
2. Being unsure about what jobs are out there.
3. What options did I have?
4. Why attending one-on-one sessions are important.

5. Motivation.

6. How I got the job at Ability Options.

7. My different roles and current role within the WorkReady team.

During the discussion, participants were eager to ask many questions. Jakob encouraged the group to save up all their questions for the "Question and Answer Forum."

The participants' reactions were very positive, and they were fully engaged in the session, asking lots of questions and enjoyed the open forum format. At the end of the talk, the participants provided their thanks and kind feedback to Jakob for openly sharing his journey with them.

Tristan Celebrates His Birthday

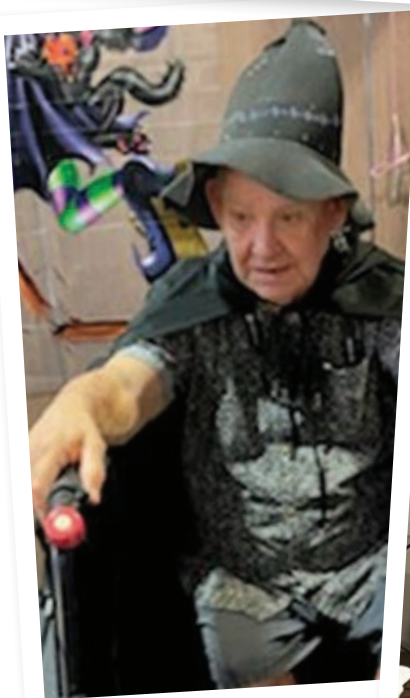
In September, Grevillea Respite held a very special birthday party for Tristan. Tristan had a great time and enjoyed celebrating his birthday with everyone. He was even excited to give a helping hand to his Support Workers, Bec and Maughan, in baking his very own dinosaur birthday cake. The artistic cake looks very delicious and creative.



Staying Connected

Who doesn't love a good Halloween costume party?

Here are some great photos of participants from the Hunter Day Program and Casuarina Grove celebrating the occasion in style, dressed as their favourite Halloween characters. Looks like they have just returned from trick or treating.



Out and Active

TheVoice enjoys receiving and sharing with you all, photos showing what participants are getting up to in their daily lives. Here are some photos of participants enjoying a fun day being Out and Active, interacting with the friendly alpacas at Iris Lodge Alpaca Farm. Dale N. also had an exciting day picking strawberries at Bilpin Orchard. Looks like Dale's enjoying eating the fresh strawberries he's picked. Thank you for sending these to us. We look forward to sharing more great photos in the New Year.



Christmas Closure Times

Our offices will close on Christmas Eve at 12:30pm and will reopen at 9am on Tuesday, 4 January 2022.



WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A

*Happy and Safe
Holiday Season!*



Contact Us

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