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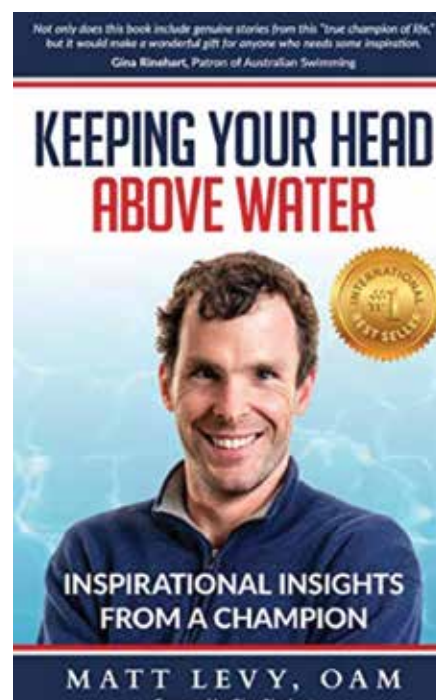
**NAIDOC Poster
included in this issue!**

Keeping Your Head Above Water: Matt Levy's Journey to Success

Matthew Levy is a person with many different talents. He is a Paralympic swimmer, a Change Analyst in the Design, Distribution, and Obligation Program at Westpac, an Ambassador for numerous organisations, and a current sitting Ability Options Director. Since 2004, he has competed in four Paralympic Games and five World Championships, having won several gold medals, and held four World Records throughout his swimming career. In 2014, Matt received the Order of Australia Medal for his 'service to sport as a Gold Medallist at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.' His recently published book, *Keeping Your Head Above Water*, explores his life and journey towards Olympic success.

Matt started swimming at a very young age. Although he 'didn't enjoy swimming at first,' swimming allowed Matt to move his body more freely. After watching the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, Matt not only developed an interest in swimming, but he also felt inspired to see many different Paralympians with a wide range of different disabilities compete in all kinds of sports 'at a world-class level.' This event motivated Matt to create and stick to one goal: to compete and represent Australia in the Paralympic Games.

For anyone, achieving any goal, big or small, not only requires time, dedication, commitment, and effort, it also requires resilience, as 'life has a habit of putting massive challenges in your path.' Matt's journey to achieve



his goal is no different. He, just like everyone else, has faced his own set of challenges.

As a person born premature with Cerebral Palsy, Matt had numerous brain operations, as well as delayed motor skills, yet that didn't stop him from chasing his dream. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, Matt has had many different experiences that have helped shape him as the man he is today. Through his past experiences, Matt not only learned to accept and live with his disability, but he has also learned to maintain a positive attitude, as well as be more resilient. This has allowed him to set small 'manageable goals' to 'get from Point A to Point B,' eventually leading him to his big goal.

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A Message from our CEO

This edition has the theme, **Respect**. It couldn't be more timely. I honestly think that, if our communities and country had a consistent, heartfelt, and unwavering commitment to **Respect**, we would be a happier, healthier, more compassionate society.

At Ability Options, we have:

- A **Vision**, which is about contributing to the kind of communities and country we want to live in – *"To inspire and lead communities, creating opportunity and services for people to participate fully in society."* Our Vision is about contributing to 'the many.'
- A **Mission**, which is about the individual people we serve – *"To support people who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community."*
- **Five Core Values** that we live, breathe, and work hard to stay faithful to:

Trust

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

Respect

We treat our participants, their families, communities, partners, and each other with dignity, appreciation, and recognition.

Courage

We act on our values, ensuring they are central to everything we do.

Inclusion

We embrace, encourage, and support diversity in everything we do.

Leadership

We are a sector and service leader by innovating, improving, and partnering with others.

We regularly remind ourselves about our Values, Vision, and Mission. Most recently, we have completed our third annual Employee Engagement Survey. This survey identifies that **respect** at work, for ourselves, each other, and especially, for participants, is a critical part of our daily lives.

All our values, like any relationship, need work, effort, love, and commitment, to stay focused on what unites us, when our worlds can become quite divided and divisive.



I always think that the true character of any organisation shows in times of pressure and stress. It is so much easier to be respectful when things are going well. It is much harder when they aren't. **Our world is under pressure.** Many countries, cities, regions, and towns are under pressure. Many communities, families, and individuals are under pressure. **Respecting** each other is a very important contributor to improving our immediate worlds at home, work, our communities, and our broader societies.

Watching the Disability Royal Commission's most recent hearings in Sydney on the COVID-19 Vaccination rollout, and looking into issues at another large provider of Disability Services, reminded me of many aspects of our values, in particular, **respect**.

Incensed by the lack of rollout of the vaccinations in Disability, the

minimal information provided, and the closed-door decision to prioritise Aged Care above Disability, which was outed at a Senate Hearing, I wrote to the Ministers responsible for the vaccination and for Disability, in the hope of influencing decisions at National Cabinet to develop a credible plan, deliver it, and share, openly and **respectfully**, the decisions being made.

We know that decisions about priorities were made and shared, in the beginning, but these decisions were subsequently undone. Nobody told us that Disability had become second order in the rollout.

Apart from the obvious health risks, it felt like a lack of respect for our participants, their families, and our employees. The oversimplification was astounding. People who are aging and living together are a clear priority, but you can be aging and have a disability. If you have a disability, you might also have other high risk health needs. If you work to support people with disabilities without a vaccination, you could be responsible for

unintentionally harming the people you work so closely with. My letter triggered a notice to produce a statement for the **Royal Commission**. Others from Ability Options also contributed to the debate. I hope the Report that is published makes respect for our sector non-negotiable.

Our approach to the Disability Royal Commission has been to welcome it, to undertake work to advance our sector and the improvements needed, and, of course, to ensure we learn from it. The issues raised in the recent Sydney hearings in May were shocking and heartbreaking. However, the processes, possible causes, and the need to evidence participant involvement, good recruitment and training, governance, communication, and respect, as well as compassion and consistency, can apply much more broadly. I have never in this sector met anyone who comes to work intending to do a bad job or to harm anyone. However, harm does occur, and we need to be vigilant about the risks, our priorities, and our values.

I recently heard an interview on Radio National by Professor Catherine Lumby from the University of Sydney who had researched the causes and impacts of sexual harassment in the workplace. Her research showed

that the best way to stop it was by educating the bystanders, not the perpetrators. Of course, we need to ensure that our services and people respect our participants, their families, and each other, but if we don't call out when our values aren't lived, that gives us consent to carry on.

At Ability Options, **our values demand that we call out issues.**

The Employee Engagement Survey shows that our staff know how to do this, that they are comfortable to do it, and that they do call out issues. We are working to make sure that this is consistently true, and that participants, families, and others can do similarly.

Ability Options is working closely with **The Voice Project and the Council for Intellectual Disability** to engage with participants to understand their thinking about the support they choose to purchase from us and how far it meets their needs, desires, outcomes, and Human Rights. We will do better in these areas and our focus on respect is as good a starting point as any.

If you have any ideas on this, or you'd like to be more involved in this work, do let me know.

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

Respect: The Key to an Inclusive Australia

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo



RESPECT is one of the most important values in any society. When we respect other people, we are not only treating everyone with dignity, but we are also recognising and celebrating their own unique talents, qualities, and achievements. By understanding and showing respect, we are able to create a society where everyone is both valued and included.

One in five Australians has a disability. Disability presents itself in many ways, each with its own unique characteristics.

Yet at the same time, people with disability are living in an environment where they still face physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. People with disability have also been underrepresented in both the media and literature.

"Growing Up Disabled in Australia" is a collection of 46 short stories all written by Australians with

disabilities. Each contributor gives a detailed account of their own personal experience as a person living with disability. Through their stories, the book explores the current social model of disability in Australia. The editor, Ms. Findlay, wanted to create a space where people with disabilities can have a sense of identity, pride, and belonging.

In each story, the contributors openly express themselves, talking about what disability means to them and how they are seen by society. One writer, Chantel, remembers one event during her high school years, when she attended a Careers Expo with the aim of going to university after finishing school, only to be told by her Special Education teacher while exploring her university options, "this place isn't meant for you."

We are now living in an interesting time, where disability is beginning to become recognised as part of a person's own identity.

I'd like to live in a world where people with disability do not need to hide their true selves in order to fit in and meet society's expectations.

Disability should not be seen as a problem that needs to be fixed, but rather, as part of a person's own identity.

By being vocal and opening up about disability, society is being

given a chance to not only listen, but to also work together to find a solution that will accommodate everyone.

Hiding one's impairment will not allow a person with disability to speak out about it. It will only let the rest of society put a label on that person. By using clear language and being frank, we are helping society to come on board to not only embrace differences, but to also solve the current problem together.

As a society, it is our responsibility to make sure that people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect, so that they can participate in every opportunity that Australia has on offer.

To do this, we must first overcome old attitudes towards disability before working together to remove barriers. It's not about whether you're black or white, with or without disability.

We are all, Australians, **unique in our own way.**

Keeping Your Head Above Water: Matt Levy's Journey to Success – continued from page 1

In his book, Matt uses each letter of the word, 'Success' in the first seven chapters to give readers an idea into what it takes to reach a set goal. The book acts as both Matt's autobiography and a guide, with each of the seven chapters exploring

the many different steps needed to commit to a goal.

Matt is currently training to compete in the upcoming Tokyo Paralympics Games, which is scheduled to be held in August. He is hoping to be

selected as a member of the Australian Paralympic team. His advice to readers is to take every opportunity that is presented to them and not 'take it for granted,' as every opportunity can lead to something bigger.

We have two copies of 'Keeping your Head Above Water' to give away.

To go into the draw to WIN a copy of the book, please answer the following question.

What year did Matt receive the Order of Australia Medal? Winners will be published in the Spring Issue.

When we respect other people we treat them with dignity.



But there are still barriers that stop them from having a voice and feeling respected.



Carly Findlay edited a book of stories called *"Growing Up Disabled in Australia"*.

Each story talks about the journey of someone with a disability.

The book encourages the community to accept others' differences.



Disability is not a problem, but part of a persons' identity.



It is our responsibility to make sure everyone is treated with respect.

Quality Practice & Outcomes



LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

The Royal Commission will be extended to 29 September 2023. The extension will mean that there is extra time to cover the broad range of topics in the terms of reference.

The Royal Commission's hearings on preventing and responding to abuse in disability services have recently finished up in Adelaide. These hearings dealt with personal stories of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, as well as placing a focus on disability service provision.

We want to create positive change and influence the industry direction for future generations. The Quality, Practice & Outcomes team are attending the hearings in Sydney and listening closely to those in other States; we are reflecting and acting on any lessons now, so that our organisation will be in a better position when final recommendations are given.

You can get involved in a few ways:

Complete an independent submission through the Royal Commission website.

disability.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions/Pages/default.aspx

or

You can share your experience with the Royal Commission in writing, over the phone, in a video or audio recording, or a private session. Ability Options can support you to make a submission, or we can make a submission on your behalf.

Contact the project team at Ability Options to support you directly via email.

royalcommission@abilityoptions.org.au

We want you to know that coming forward to share your experience is a big step. We want to make it as easy as possible. Please tell us about any support you need. Counselling and support is available to help you. Blue Knot Foundation offers free, specialist counselling support and a referral service for people with disability, their families and carers, and anyone affected by the Disability Royal Commission. **Call Blue Knot Foundation's National Counselling & Referral Service on 1800 421 468** (9am - 6pm AEDT Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm AEDT Saturday, Sunday and public holidays).



DEVELOP PEOPLE

The Quality, Practice & Outcomes team would like to welcome and introduce the Clinical Nurse Educators to our team.

As we continue to develop our staff across Ability Options, we are introducing Clinical Nurse Educators who will provide both clinical support and training to our employees.

This will support participants with a variety of chronic and complex medical health conditions. Having highly skilled Clinical Nurse Educators who work closely with Accommodation Team Leaders will ensure that the health goals of participants are always met, best practice supports are implemented, and quality service outcomes are achieved.

If you would like more information about how this team could support your service, please email **qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au**



TAKE ACTION

Ability Options is dedicated to the, reduction and elimination of restrictive practices.

A restrictive practice is any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability. The following points are what should occur for customers of Ability Options if a restrictive practice occurs.

1. There is a meeting called a Restrictive Practice Panel meeting.
2. No one can have a restrictive practice unless the Panel say yes.
3. Prior to a meeting, a person with restrictive practices will receive a letter from Ability Options inviting them to the Panel.
4. The letter will also provide the person with information about the restrictive practices.
5. A team leader will support the person with attendance at the Panel if they choose to go.
6. Usually, Panel meetings are held over the phone or by video.
7. The person can choose to attend from their own home or day program.
8. The person can also invite their family, a trusted person, or a guardian to the meeting as well.

REMEMBER: A person has the right to speak up about their restrictive practice. If you would like to discuss restrictive practices more, please email **qualitypracticeandoutcomes@abilityoptions.org.au** or call **02 8884 9270**.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNER



Congratulations to Samantha F for winning our Photography Competition.

My name is Samantha, and I am an NDIS participant. This photo was taken at Crescent Head. To me, the tree resembles family, with its outstretched branches looking like the arm of a family tree. Family is very important to me. It makes me happy because it involves the people I love. The blue sky represents my mum as it's her favourite colour and she is the centre of my family. The branches all entwined are like our family all sticking together and being supportive of one another.

Congratulations Samantha!

Your \$100 Gift Voucher has been emailed to you.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2021

Are you passionate about photography? Do you want to practise your skills?

We are pleased to announce that we are still running the photo competition in this issue.

This is your chance to showcase your talent to the Ability Options Community.

Email us a photo of a place that you feel connected to with a brief 100 word description about what respect means to you for your chance to win a **\$100 Gift Card**, and have your work featured on both our Instagram page and this newsletter.

So, what are you waiting for? **Pick up your camera, get inspired**, and send your entry to **marketingteam@abilityoptions.org.au**

We are excited to see your passion thrive.





EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



Join the Ability Options Community of Practice on Human Rights



We are looking for people with disability who are supported by Ability Options to **join** our new **Community of Practice on Human Rights**.



The Human Rights Community of Practice will meet once every two months. We meet **face-to-face** and by **video**.



We will **review** and **discuss** Ability Options customer survey results, policies and procedures, issues of informed consent, supported decision making, and complaints and their resolutions.



All members will receive **training and peer support** as part of their involvement.



We will **promote** and **protect** the **human rights of all people** who use Ability Options services and will report regularly to the Ability Options Board.



If you are interested, please contact **Rebecca Collins** to talk more about your involvement:

Email: rebecca.collins@abilityoptions.org.au

Phone: **0404 433 070**

Front Up 'Emerge' Exhibition Opening

In the midst of May's early and unforeseen COVID-19 restrictions, Front Up held the opening night of their Emerge Exhibition. This exhibition was the result of a 14-week course, which involved participants being mentored by professional artists to nurture, support, and develop their art practice. Front Up is an ever-expanding program of many upcoming exhibitions and initiatives.

Former Front Up artist, now co-ordinator, Rosalind Stanley, was kind enough to answer some questions about the exhibition's opening night and the future of Front Up.

How would you say Front Up has changed since COVID-19 hit last year?

We have had a change of management, with myself and Liam Benson now managing Front Up.

We have our usual programs set for the year, plus a lot more exciting projects that are in the planning with various other art organisations and galleries for 2020 and 2021. So, there will be quite a few opportunities for our artists to create work in our Seven Hills studios, and to then exhibit in various venues throughout Sydney.

What role did you play in this exhibition?

I was one of the artists working with the participants throughout the course, and alongside Liam, we both organised for the other artists to come in and talk about their work and the process involved in the creation, to come up with artists statements and bios.

We curated the exhibition by working out where and how each artwork would be placed. We then had to promote and organise the opening night event, which was a great success.

What was the most exciting part of this exhibition? Is there any standout artwork or artist that comes to mind when you look back on it?

The most exciting part was to finally have everyone's hard work come to fruition in an exhibition. It's always an emotional time, as it is a long and fulfilling journey from the start of the course until the end of the resulting exhibition.

I love all of the artworks as they are all unique and insightful.



How was the opening night?

The opening night was amazing. We had a great crowd, but luckily not too many people, as the COVID rules were enforced at exactly the same time as our opening. We had a great layout of food and drinks. We had speeches, and later presented all the exhibiting artists with a certificate of completion.

How has this exhibition elevated emerging and established artists?

For emerging and professional artists, exhibitions are an invaluable way for people to come and experience their artworks in a live setting, as opposed to viewing online. It is also great for an artist's resume to build up a portfolio of professional practices they have been involved in to help them in their careers.

Now that this exhibition has drawn to a close, what are your plans for the next one?

There are quite a few exhibitions in the planning, including the Biennale of Sydney. We will be having our own portrait Archibald prize for people with disability and are opening the entries in December, on IDPWD. We are also having more frequent exhibitions for our members who create artworks in the Front Up studio at Seven Hills.

Come along when we announce the next exhibition!

We are working hard behind the scenes to build Front Up into a thriving art studio space and fill the walls with more regular exhibitions. I am personally so excited to see Front Up prosper and grow this year for people with and without disability. Front Up is unique, and the impact it has had on people's lives is enormous. That, in itself, is priceless.



William: Driving for Success!



William has been attending **WorkReady** Hornsby for two years. Recently, he achieved a major life goal in obtaining his Provisional Driving Licence. This has been a personal goal of William's for a very long time. Like all learner drivers, William has showed both perseverance and dedication to complete 120 hours of driving, which was a massive endeavour and a fantastic achievement.

Once William had his licence, this allowed him to apply for many more jobs. He had shown an interest in landscaping, water, horticulture, and/ or labouring. These are all jobs which usually require applicants to have a drivers licence.

After he got his licence, it didn't take long for William to secure full-time employment, gaining a position as a labourer on the Central Coast. He is thrilled to be working full-time and has made significant progress in his new role. He has already completed many different tasks,

including loading and unloading materials, cleaning tools, operating machinery, preparing job sites, and digging trenches.

Even though William is completing full-time hours every week, he is putting his hand up to complete overtime hours too! He is so committed to working hard and going beyond the requirements of the job. In addition to the work and skills building, William is making great connections with other staff.

William has wanted a full-time job for over two years now. It is an incredible achievement for him to finally reach this goal!



Prepare • Connect • Support

About WorkReady: WorkReady is a service offered by Ability Options, which aims to equip jobseekers with the skills, knowledge, and real-world experience to enter or re-enter the workforce or further training with confidence. For more information on WorkReady and its services, follow the link below.
abilityoptions.org.au/employment-options/work-ready

Ability Options attends Garret to Gallery

In mid March, the Marketing Team at Ability Options travelled to the Artspace Art Gallery in Woolloomooloo to see the Garret to Gallery art exhibition. The exhibition, curated by artist, Rosalind Stanley, showcases artworks by 16 artists, who are all connected through the **Get Out of the Garret** project (GOG).

Get Out of the Garret is an initiative of Front Up, that supports professional and emerging artists living with and without disability. The project provides the artists with art studios at the Front Up hub in Seven Hills, allowing them to develop their professional talents, along with networking opportunities and a small exhibition.

While the rest of the team explored the exhibit, I sat down and interviewed Virginia, an emerging modern artist, who started painting at a young age. Virginia talked about her painting, titled, 'Cosy Café Club,' which started off as an exercise given to her while she attended art classes. She explained that the objective of the exercise



was to learn 'how to sketch people and make a painting out of it' in a café setting. Virginia says that while she was painting, she noticed a 'sense of independence' in each individual.

The Marketing Team thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition and its artworks. Thank you, Front Up for inviting us.

Job seekers share their Job Search Journey

"I have always wanted to be in the client facing industry. With Ability Options' help, I was able to get my much awaited certifications in the hospitality sector. This gives me confidence and makes me feel that I can achieve! – Sarah



"With my consultants, I have developed a trust that they will take care of me. I always like coming to the Ability Options office and meeting with the team. It was nice to be given the help and support I needed. – Shane



"I have liked my journey with the team. Visiting the site and meeting my consultant helps me improve my skills, be it resume writing, interview tips, or just looking through jobs. It gives me confidence. – Ron



To arrange a meeting with an employment consultant, call us on **1300 422 454** or email jobseeker@abilityoptions.org.au

World MS Day

Talking about MS with Matt

by Rafael Sanchez-Bayo

Multiple Sclerosis, also known as MS, is a chronic disease where the immune system attacks the Central Nervous System (including the brain, spine, and optic nerves), often causing inflammation and damage to the nerves, making it hard for the brain to send signals to the rest of the body. People with MS often experience symptoms, such as fatigue, chronic pain, and difficulty walking.

Matt is from Western Sydney, and has been living with MS for 18 years and currently receives Support Coordination from Ability Options. He enjoys reading, sports, live theatre, spending time with his family and friends, and promoting disability and inclusion in the community. I sat down with Matt to talk about World MS Day and his experience as a person living with MS.

What are some things you have noticed after receiving your MS diagnosis?

Well, let me start off by saying that as part of World MS Day 2021, I really want to stress the importance of connections, in managing MS. To me, that means establishing and maintaining a really strong support network. Since my diagnosis in 2003, having that extremely strong support network of family, friends, medical professionals, and other support services has helped me live well with the challenges of MS.

How has your MS diagnosis made a positive difference to your everyday life?

When I was first diagnosed with MS, you wouldn't have known. There's no MS brand on your forehead. It's an 'invisible' disease. Over the 18 years, I have progressed from walking normally, to using a walking stick, to a four-wheeled walker, and a wheelchair. Now that I have a power wheelchair, my independence has dramatically increased in terms of being able to get out and about without necessarily having to rely on somebody else, in this case, my wife as primary carer.

Now that I'm also medically retired, I've got much more opportunity and time to make a positive difference to those who are living with a disability. I'm an active participant at the NeuroMoves Gym, and that has really helped me in getting the physical and social interaction that sometimes people with disability can miss out on because of a feeling of isolation.

I try to get more actively involved, and I have a strong presence now within our local community, in our local health district, our local council, and other health service providers to help benefit consumers in their health journey, regardless of what their disability is. I'm also one of the NSW MS Ambassadors, so one of my key roles is to go out and educate the community about what MS is and my positive approach to living with its challenges.

What are some of the challenges of living with MS, and what are some strategies you have taken in order to overcome these challenges?

The obvious challenge in using a wheelchair is being able to get into a certain place. Some places aren't always wheelchair-friendly. Some symptoms I deal with include fatigue and heat intolerance, so I try to schedule my day. Most of the things I do are scheduled in the cooler parts of the day. Sometimes, plans I make with friends and family must be changed at the last minute. That can be particularly challenging when you've got a young family.



What are some steps you have taken to maintain a healthy lifestyle?

I really take on board some of the allied health service provider's advice in terms of consultation about my diet, portion-controlled meal preparation and delivery. I'm a lot more physically active in terms of the NeuroMoves Gym, as I strongly believe that this helps me to maintain both my physical and mental health. My support network offers real encouragement to me in these endeavours.

What are some tips and advice you would give to other people living with MS?

I really think that the first tip is to pick up the phone and register with MS Connect on 1800 042 138, as someone who is living with the challenges of MS. To me, knowledge is power.

To help you

- Make sure you get all the updated information you possibly can, so you can be informed about your condition:
- Listen to your own body because it will tell you when you've pushed things too far.
- Make sure you are prepared for your medical appointments and ask questions.
- Form a strong support network with others within the MS community who are also dealing with the same thing as you are. You'll find that there are some similarities, but as I said before, there are no two MS journeys that are the same.

For more information on MS Limited, follow the link below.
To register with MS Connect, call **1800 042 138** or visit <https://www.ms.org.au>

The Best Things to Do – Port Macquarie

There are a wide range of fun activities, with plenty of things to see and do. Whatever your interest, there's something for everyone in and around Port Macquarie. We have highlighted some major attractions to visit, and wonderful things to do on your relaxed coastal time away. We can help to make these experiences as accessible as possible, and also offer Respite Services at Seabreezes.

Lovely Beaches

Port Macquarie offers a wide range of superb beaches with iconic scenery. Boasting 17 beaches, the list is practically endless. Our top three choices are: Town Beach, for its central location, Shelly Beach, for its peace and quiet, and Lighthouse Beach, for its route to Tacking Point Lighthouse.

Koala Hospital and Port Macquarie Nature Reserve

Port Macquarie is home to the world's first koala hospital. The hospital is located in the Macquarie Nature Reserve on the grounds of the historical Roto House. Conveniently, it is open every day of the week. The reserve's friendly staff offer you tours, educational

displays, and group lectures between 8am and 2pm, although the best time to visit is during feeding time at 8-8:30am and 3-3:30pm.

Sea Acres Rainforest Centre

The Sea Acres Rainforest Centre/Sanctuary is a must-see location. This NSW Tourism award-winning destination offers a boardwalk, guided tours, enviro theatre, ecology display, rainforest café, and gift shop.

Port Macquarie Museum

The Port Macquarie Museum offers many exhibitions, collections, and stories. Learn more about the stories of those who have come before us and what makes Port Macquarie special.

ArtWalk

Held every year in the beginning of October, ArtWalk is the biggest cultural arts event in Port Macquarie. The event presents an exciting range of displays, such as exhibitions, activations, illuminations, live performances, artist markets, workshops, and creative installations spread throughout the CBD. Don't miss this chance to see Port Macquarie come alive from 1-4 October.

Take a Break with the team at Seabreezes Respite, Port Macquarie.



If you, or someone you know is aged between 7 and 65, lives with disability, and is looking for a short break, 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 **Samantha Hannon** on 02 6561 8362.

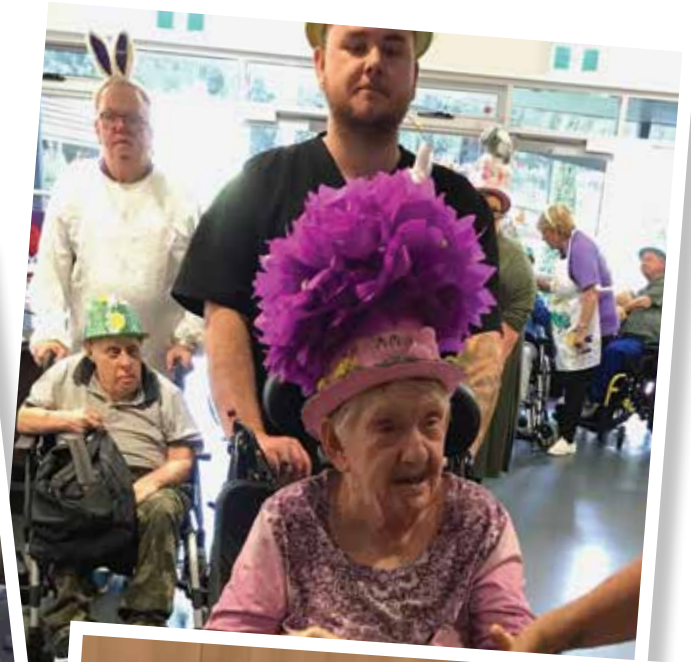
Craig enjoying a fun day of activities near his new home in Jensen Rd

Craig, a new Jensen Rd participant, enjoying a fun day full of activities.



Staying Connected

Some fantastic images of the residents at Casuarina Grove enjoying and participating in an Easter Hat parade during the Easter break.







Artwork: *Care for Country* by Maggie-Jean Douglas (Gubbi Gubbi)



When creating 'Care for Country' I kept in mind that this meant spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally – I chose to create a bright and vibrant artwork that included the different colours of the land but showed how they come together in our beautiful country and to make people feel hopeful for the future. I've included communities/people, animals and bush medicines spread over different landscapes of red dirt, green grass, bush land and coastal areas to tell the story of the many ways country can and has healed us throughout our lives and journeys.

facebook.com/NAIDOC @naidocweek @naidocweek

NAIDOC Week

4-11 JULY 2021

#NAIDOC2021 #HealCountry



Acknowledging the 50th Anniversary of the Aboriginal Flag. Reproduced with kind permission and copyright of Harold Thomas. Torres Strait Islander flag reproduced by kind permission of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. Designed by Mr Bernard Namok.



I miss and love her.



It's a happy day to spend with mum.



My mother means the world to me.



It means happy times.



Go out for dinner, could buy anything. Miss Mum. Love her.



Mother's Day is a day that celebrates the dedication, love, and achievements of all mothers. We asked participants to tell us what Mother's Day means to them. Here is what some of them had to say.



It means love and ownership.



It means flowers and chocolates.



It means love and marriage.



Seeing my mum and spending time with her. Take mum out to lunch and buy her a gift.



Mother's Day means everything to me.



Love mum. Wish her love in heaven & I miss her. Remember me.



Being Happy. Staff might buy you flowers.

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