

NEXUS INK

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Thank-you to all those who have contributed to this edition of Nexus Ink.
For article ideas or contributions, or for copies of this newsletter, contact Alona in the office - 6278 1771 or alona.hunter@nexusinc.org.au.

Ahoy there....

On a recent holiday in the Whitsundays (right), Michael was congratulated by the ship's captain on his natural sailing ability. Michael is at home on the water, and loves being a part of water-borne adventures. House staff have been supporting him to build his sailing skills through Sailability for some time now so this holiday was a perfect fit for him.



From the CEO's desk ...

Christmas break ... what Christmas break? Normally in the disability service world we have a bit of a natural lull after Christmas, but not this year. The whole disability industry is still running on super-charge with the NDIS stoking the boilers, and lots of changes still to come. Many of these changes are creating great opportunities for people with a disability (now called participants) but the administration is still a bit challenging for everyone.

I recently presented at a conference in Sydney called "Growing a Quality NDIS Workforce" and met many service providers from other States who have literally had no exposure to the NDIS yet but their whole service is about to transition in. Very scary for the managers and confusing for staff, participants and clients. How the NDIA ("the Agency") responds to this will have a great impact on the anxiety levels that people experience and the ultimate success of the scheme. Have no doubt that the task Government has set for the Agency is enormous, massive and any other big term you can think of. My great fear is that in attempts to save a buck, the Agency is becoming less personal and less responsive to the vast complexity of people living their everyday life with a disability.

If you are concerned about how the Agency is responding to you please let the Staff at Nexus know and we will help you in whatever way we can. The odd negative experience aside, our overwhelming contact with NDIS staff has been positive and often we can work with them to resolve misunderstandings.

On a more positive note, the conference paper I presented talked about the way staff are the critical element in the success of any disability service. Finding staff with the right attitudes and engendering the desired culture is essential. Nexus has been looking at these issues for the past couple of years and continues to look at how we can challenge staff to constantly improve the experience of the participants we support. At our recent Board Strategic planning day (ironically held on 1st April!) we identified this as a critical strategic issue for Nexus and will look at continued investment in our current and prospective workforce. We have begun our second 7 week Autism Training program with staff and have invited staff from Montagu Community Living to attend as well. It's been great having the cross-organisational discussion between staff exploring how each service works with clients.

Getting the right staff for each participant's need is important. Our support to young people with a disability and/or traumatic background has been growing and we have been appointing new staff with a youth work and community service background. This is an exciting area for Nexus because I believe that our approach to supporting their transition, and growing independence is something lacking in this youth space at present. Our approach is to help young people explore their strengths, and work with them as they learn to be responsible members of their community. This can be challenging at times, but providing positive early intervention is known to get great results.



Winter is coming

This year is looking like a bumper flu year so staff are reminded to consider their flu shots. Nexus will pay for the medicare gap if you get your GP to do the shot or you can attend your pharmacy and get a shot there. Chemist Warehouse has a booking system (book at <http://rsvp.chemistwarehouse.com.au/>) at a cost of \$10.99. Davey Street Pharmacy also has a walk in service that you can use. Renee at the office will reimburse you.



Moira....Discovering her abilities

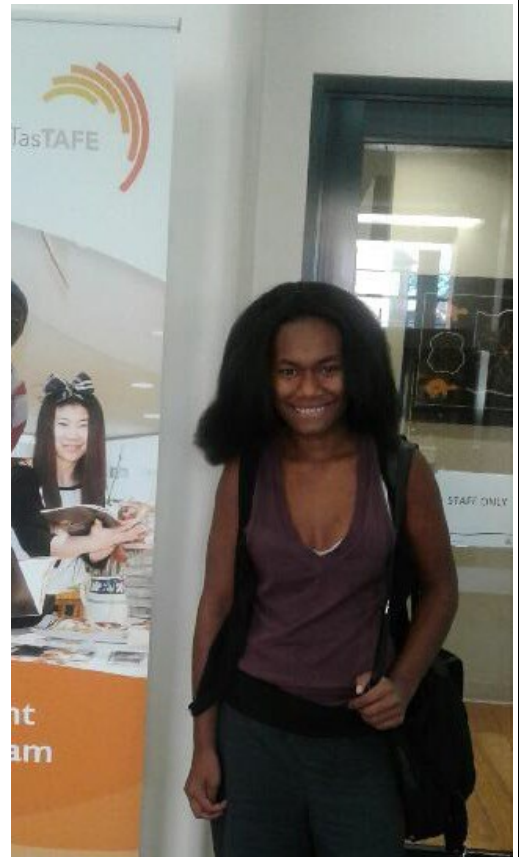
Capacity building is all about learning new life skills. Moira's aim is to build her skills for successful independent living and employment

Moira has been busy exploring options in the volunteer world, and training courses, all with a view to employment down the track. Staff have supported her recently to enrol in a course at TasTAFE...

Certificate 1 in Skills for Vocational Pathways which has seen her up and out of home early, eager to learn and make some new friends and connections.

Moira is also joining the volunteers at The Hobart Cat Centre, getting active at her local PCYC, and pursuing her natural talents at Youth Art's creative art workshops.

Moira hopes to inspire other young people to overcome challenges by successfully achieving her own goals.



Damien...unearthing skills towards an independent future.

Damien wants to live independently in the near future, and will need to furnish his new home, so was motivated to restore this table to use it in the lounge room in his own place. Damien learnt how to operate a power sander and about the various grades of sandpaper, sanded back the table, then treated the timber with oil.

Damien has also been busy learning new bus routes in his local area with one of his goals being to learn to use transport so he can become more independent in his community.

The Fruits of our Labour

All around Nexus people are bringing in the harvest as we head into Autumn. We had some success with (gnarly) carrots, tomatoes and a very nice looking pumpkin at Kelly's house.



Fred loves spending time in the garden at our Bligh house. The beautiful mild weather over summer, along with the rain has meant the garden is lush and green and has had a bumper crop of butter beans, peas and broad beans. The excess was sold within our organisation and will mean some money for more seeds. Alona bought some of the butter beans and lightly steamed them then tossed them in a little butter and a sprinkle of sumac and salt to serve with slow roasted lamb shoulder—delicious! (but they were eaten too quickly to get a photo!).



The new garden at Rowbottoms (right and below) is also coming along nicely. We hope to have the new day support building in place soon, with a rainwater tank established to supply the garden throughout the warmer summer months.



Out and about in the Community



Malcolm and Dorothy (above) have regular catch-ups since Dorothy moved out of our Kingston house and into an Aged Care facility.

Kelly (right) continues on her path to fitness, still loving participating in fun-runs around Hobart. Here she is at the end of the 5km Run the Bridge event with Lindy. Fantastic work Kelly!

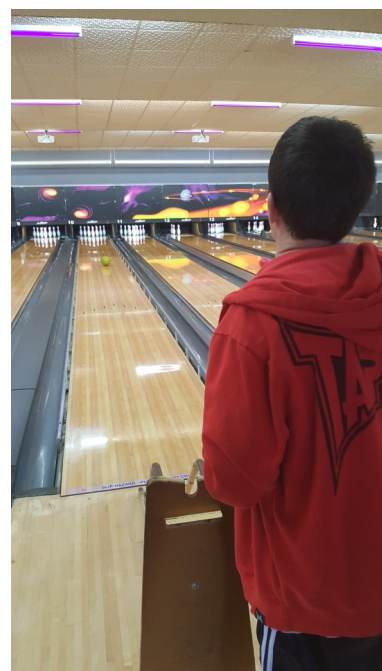


Fred (left) enjoyed going on his day trip to Ida Bay. He really liked going on the Ida Bay railway and was so relaxed he even dozed off for a while! It was a beautiful day.



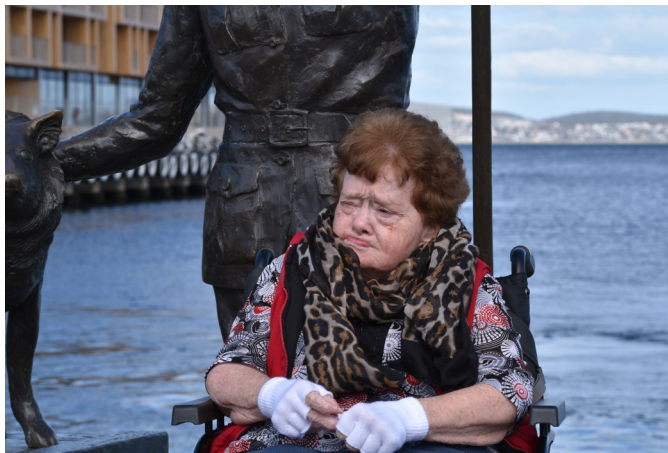
Simon (left/right) has started going bowling again and has had an absolute blast! He wants to play game after game and laughs whenever the ball hits the pins. He also just loves sitting and having a cup of tea in between games and watching other people around him play. This also gives him a good giggle!

Corey went to some Big Bash Cricket games at Bellerive over summer, he loved watching the matches and enjoyed seeing lots of friends he has known for years and having a good chat. He also loved his first ever visit to Mona.



Out and about (con't)

Ivy (right) had a successful overnight stay at the Quest Savoy in Hobart, went and saw "wicked" musical production which she very much enjoyed, did spot of shopping and ate some fine foods. Enjoyed a trip over to Mona in the "posh pit" on the Mona ferry. Overall had a very relaxing delightful time on her mini holiday.



Hi my names is Mark (left) I have a good news story to tell. I have recently made contact with my mother that I hadn't see for a long time. My mum lives at the Freemason's Home. When I first saw my mum is was very overwhelming for both of us. My brother Paul was also there at the same time. He was happy to see me too. Then on another visit I also meet my brother Wayne and we went around the garden for a walk. It was good and I had a big smile on my face the whole time. I had ice cream with my nephews, Wayne, and mum. I am now having regular visits with my mum which makes me very happy

A Big Welcome.....

Linda moved into our Johnston group home in December , before that she was living with her mum. Linda is 45 years old and has lots of interests such as colouring which she is really good at especially the relaxation ones. She also likes to write stories and improve her learning doing literacy at Mosaic. She used to do martial arts when she was younger and practised on her brother, but keeps reminding staff that she is not allowed to use her skills on anyone. Linda loves to shop, especially for bags and gel pens which she has an amazing collection of. She has settled in really well and enjoys helping her house-mates, offering to make drinks or assist them with other jobs. Ann really enjoys having another woman in the house, particularly one who loves to share a joke.





Living The Dream - down on devil gate drive

Earlier this year Phil bought himself VIP tickets to the Suzie Quatro concert at Wrest Point. This is something he has dreamed of since he was 14, when he (along with millions of other teenagers) had a massive crush on Suzie. He certainly got the VIP treatment, having exclusive time with Suzie before the concert with the opportunity to have his photo taken with her, and chat. In the weeks leading up to the show, all you had to do was mention it to brighten his day, and after the concert you couldn't wipe the smile off his face - and it was a massive smile at that!

Staff have been supporting people to use the great private pool at Barossa Lodge. Phil recently used the pool there and said "It's quite good, apart from when you first get in - it's a bit cold. It's good fun relaxing in the bubbles and getting my legs working properly" an experience he is keen to repeat, as it gave him the chance to relax and be out of his chair and weightless for a short time.



Mark's East Coast Holiday

February 8 was a red-letter day for one of our favourite clients (they're all our favourites really!), Mark. He set off on a three-day holiday, the first time he has been on a trip of this length for a number of years.

Mark travelled up the East Coast to enjoy a two-night stopover at the Bicheno Cabin Park.

One of the highlights of his stay was a visit to the Nature World wildlife sanctuary, which featured close-up viewing of some of the local residents including Tasmanian devils, kangaroos and wallabies, possums, snakes, quolls, eagles, geese, and pelicans.

Mark also spent half a day at Coles Bay where he enjoyed going on some of the paths and walkways and taking in the sounds and scents of the water, despite the drizzly weather.

Of course, any outing with Mark is not complete without a sampling of as many of the local coffee outlets as possible... he is now an expert on what the East Coast has to offer in a cup.....and he did pretty well trying the seafood and other local offerings as well.

A stop-off in Richmond on the way home topped off a great trip for Mark.

Here's to many more holiday outings for him in the future.



Recipe Corner

There is an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables available at the moment. With all the warm weather, tomatoes are finally ripening, and plums and other stone fruit are ready for harvest. The problem is, what to do with all the excess? I have made a few preserves in the past few days.....I'll share a couple of recipes for plums here for you.

Simple Plum Jam

Ingredients

1.5kg freshly picked plums or greengages
(I used damsons)

1.2kg white sugar

Juice of 2 lemons

Method

Remove the stones from the plums, and cut them into halves or quarters (depending on the size).

Place all ingredients into a large pan, and stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to the boil and allow to boil for at least half an hour or until the jam has reached setting stage. (You can test this by placing a saucer into the freezer, and putting a spoonful of the jam onto it. The jam should hold its form once it is cool.)

Sterilize jars and lids, and making sure all your equipment is sterilized too, pour jam into warm jars, and seal immediately.

Plum Chutney

Ingredients

1kg firm ripe plums– seeded and quartered

1kg cooking apples - peeled and chopped

½kg onions - finely sliced

2.5cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced

2 cloves garlic - minced

1 tblspn brown mustard seeds

1 tblspn salt

2 cups red wine vinegar

2½ cups brown sugar

Method

In a preserving pan, combine the plums, apples, onions, garlic, ginger mustard seeds and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil over low

ingredients are soft and can be crushed with the back of a spoon.

Add vinegar and sugar, and cook for another 30 or 45 mins, or until chutney is thickened and vinegar is absorbed.

Spoon the chutney into sterilised jars, and seal well. Store the unopened jars in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks before eating. The chutney is great with cold meats and sharp cheddar cheese, or as a marinade for pork or chicken.

