



NEXUSINK August 2019



Kicking goals at the footy

A GROUP of clients and Nexus staff took a road trip up to UTAS Stadium to watch the round six AFL game between Hawthorn and Carlton.

Departing from Hobart early in the morning for the start of the game in the afternoon, six clients and three staff members took a van up to Launceston to enjoy a day of football and fun.

The idea of having a day out was put forward by disability support worker Max Fleet, who gathered a number of interested individuals.

Max said the aim of the trip was to “add a bit of spice to life” and support the clients partake in an activity they usually would not have the opportunity to participate in.

Many disability clients have social anxiety when faced with crowds, so having a supportive environment of people you know is a great way to ease fears. Plus, we all know that watching footy with mates is more fun.

Max said all the clients had “an absolute ball,” engaging with the atmosphere at the football by cheering and supporting the team they were following.

They even couldn’t stop having a joke or a sing on the bus home.

Throughout the day, there was rivalry between Hawthorn and Carlton supporters, but it was the Hawthorn fans who had the last laugh in the end.

David Freeman from La Perouse took the trip up, and even though he was not the biggest football fan, he still enjoyed the day – despite supporting Carlton.

He said for the clients the day was “all about socialising within the community and socialising with other residents within Nexus – it was also about having fun.”

With the positive response from clients, Max took another client to Blundstone Arena for the North Melbourne vs Sydney game and was thankful for the support that was shown.

Nexus has now arranged tickets for each of the North Melbourne games at Blundstone Arena and it has become a regular event for Max and his crew.

Max said he will look into having more days like this to get clients involved in the community – it doesn’t even have to be football.



Road to independence



On Wednesday 24th July, Arthur successfully passed his P's! He came into the Nexus office with a huge smile on his dial and it was great to see!

Arthur completed his required hours and driver training as part of his capacity building supports. Two Nexus staff qualified as driver mentors through the Top Gear program at Jordan River Services in Bridgewater worked with him on his skills and building up his hours on his L2 licence which he achieved last year.

Arthur has also been saving for a car. Given that he lives in an area with little public transport, it will be a great advantage for him to have a licence and will go a long way to assisting with his goal of gaining employment. He is about halfway to having enough money for a reliable first car. A great achievement given he pays rent too!

Huge congratulations Arthur and we look forward to seeing you on the road independently very soon.

GPS update – how are we tracking so far?

SINCE the installation of our new GPS tracking initiative 10 months ago, we have seen a significant improvement in driver safety – not just within the organisation, but also in our drivers' personal lives.

One great feature of the tracker is identifying “harsh” driving incidents – taking a corner too fast, quick acceleration etc. Drivers need to be aware that their passengers might feel this more as they are in the back of a van sitting up in a wheelchair, where they are up front holding onto the steering wheel! Team leaders will automatically get a report each week for the vans they are responsible for, which means they can quickly investigate and follow up on the incident with any staff.



Clayton drives for success

CLAYTON Barrow, one of Nexus' clients in NCS, has recently passed his L2s, opening up a number of opportunities.

Clayton took his L2s assessment at the end of April, with the Top Gear Learner Driving Mentor program in Bridgewater giving Clayton access to one of their vehicles.

Clayton was clearly excited about passing the test and was unable to keep the smile off his face.

The driving assessor said it was one of the smoothest rides he had been on.

Clayton's support worker Hiroyuki Mori mentored him throughout the process leading up to the test to help him gain supervised driving experience.

Hiro said Clayton had driven to various places including Bothwell, Sorell, Kingston and Mount Wellington, and had done so in different conditions – rain, shine and even at night.

Clayton enjoyed driving in the city and on highways the most, but found changing lanes in heavy traffic to be difficult.

He also watched his parents drive to learn essential knowledge about speed and road safety.

By getting his L2s, Clayton has provided himself with the opportunity to get his provisional licence later this year.

This will allow him to go to college, work and his friends' places without catching the bus or getting a lift from his parents.

It is important for our clients to gain these valuable life skills and become more confident in their abilities.

For Clayton, passing his L2s has allowed him to become more independent and to be able to pass what he has learnt onto other people.

A couple of staff members at Nexus are registered with the Top Gear Learner Driving Mentor program, allowing our clients to use their cars to attain their L2s or provisional licences.



The secrets to our success

MARK Jessop was recently invited to address a CEO and Board Seminar in Brisbane by the Queensland office of our peak body, National Disability Services (NDS).

Queensland is still only transitioning into the NDIS, region by region, whereas Tasmania transitioned by age group and is now fully in the NDIS.

This means that some Queensland organisations are literally getting their first exposure to the NDIS this year.

Nexus has 6 years' experience.

The invitation came as the result of Nexus working with Alan Hough, a strategy consultant, in 2015, just after Mark joined Nexus.

At that time, Nexus had come through a poor couple of financial years and Alan facilitated a strategic planning workshop for the Board.

Alan's approach to Mark was that when he

met us, he "was really worried whether Nexus could survive. Your net current assets were one of the lowest I'd seen. But here you are four years later, thriving as an organisation."

What impressed Alan was that Nexus had turned around well and managed growth to get to a point where Nexus is sustainable.

From a turn-over of \$5 million and a loss in 2013, to a turn-over of more than \$13 million and a sustainable surplus in 2019.

So, on the Friday at the seminar, Mark worked with 50 CEOs in a Master Class, using Nexus as a case study,

The seminar had a wide range of speakers including, pictured with him David Moody, CEO of the peak body NDS and Robert Fitzgerald a Commissioner from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse who talked on the need for providers to protect the rights of vulnerable people.

So what success secrets did Mark share with the CEOs and board members attending the conference:

- We decided to embrace the NDIS and find opportunities it offered – rather than trying to fight it.
- We found what we did well and looked at how we could multiply it – we knew we were good at transition, accommodation, complex physical health and active support/capacity building. I also knew that we had good managers and staff who were really well connected to the clients that they supported.
- We decided we were going to grow and told the world – I asked for help and referrals came to us.
- We were opportunistic – I listened to what clients were saying they wanted and then asked “can we do that?”.
- I talked to my staff – and posed the question, “look at what we have done in the past, do we want to do more of that?”. We adapted some models at the start and have now adapted the whole organisation’s policies.

It was also great to hear other speakers with a strong focus on the impending governance changes related to the coming Quality and Safeguards Commission, as well as the Royal Commission into the Disability Sector.

Nexus has invested 12 months in preparing for the new standards.

This has included rewriting our policy and procedures, employing Tammy as our quality advisor, designing our new cloud-based policy platform (which we are getting ready to roll out to staff) and updating our client IT.

Mark said that it was interesting talking to organisations beginning their NDIS journey and how lucky we were to have gained so much experience. But he felt that the next 12 months is going to further test the sector with the full roll of the NDIS and quality and safeguarding, but we are all looking forward to a challenging year.

Adrian gets an extended role



THE introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has completely changed the “back office” way Nexus operates.

The biggest change is that we no longer receive block funding in advance and are now working in a fee for service model under the NDIS. This means that we now must seek payment for each service after it has been provided. This has involved putting new systems in place to properly manage this significant change.

Clients still see us as a person-centred service – and over four times more clients get to work with us now than when we were a purely State Government-funded organisation six years ago.

In managing our growth in numbers and the range of services we offer we do not want to lose the “Nexus feel” in how we work with people. To help us keep focused on this we have given Adrian Scott the new role of Chief Operations Officer (COO) from 1 July.

Adrian has been with our organisation for 20 years and has held roles from entry level support worker through to management, giving him a very thorough understanding of Nexus’ systems and processes and how we have changed and evolved over the past two decades.

The Chief Operations Officer role will be an extension of Adrian’s current role as manager Supported Living and will help in rolling out new systems, quality standards and our IT software, CIMS.

CIMS is an enterprise system that includes client information management, client reporting, client plans, staff rostering, payroll and billing in one place, ensuring we have a standard approach across our organisation.

CIMS will also help Nexus comply with the new Quality and Safeguarding standards and we have recently introduced the new CIMS Incident Module, which will allow us to report on any kind of incidents that occur during the course of our work (eg. risks, staff or client injury, compliments, complaints).

This module will make incident reporting much easier and allow us to record comments, complaints and any feedback or suggestions from clients and other stakeholders.



Hurricanes Inclusions Cup

THE Nexus Hurricanes Inclusion Cup team have taken out top honours for the 2018/2019 round robin season, blasting the competition away with their skill in their first year in the competition.

The Nexus team was presented with the trophy by Hobart Hurricanes captain Matthew Wade at a day of celebration at Cornelian Bay Rugby Park.

The Hurricanes Inclusion Cup is an all abilities cricket program supported by Lord's Taverners Tasmania that brings together disability services to play in a round robin competition that spans the cricket season.

Tasmanian sports coordinator for Special Olympics and strategy and inclusion manager for Lord's Taverners Jason Schmidt said it had grown from a six-player program to a four-team competition with 50 players.

Along with Nexus, the other teams were from Mosaic, Life Without Barriers and Possability disability services.

The competition gives players independence, confidence and the opportunity to set achievable goals, using cricket as a platform for social connections that are not always possible in the broader community.

Jason said "it gives them the chance to get in and play cricket – get that real team feeling that a lot of these guys are lacking and never experience." The competition is a great way to get involved in sport where having a disability is not a restriction.

Bianca Hardaker, who acted as a coach, contacted clients who showed interest and entered the Nexus team as a way to use mainstream services to help people with a disability.

There were a number of fierce competitors in the side who were determined to win, but above all clients were provided the opportunity to network with people from other disability services and make new friends. The Nexus team also went to Hobart Hurricanes games at Blundstone Arena for social gatherings.

At the end of season presentation, the team had a chance to play in a friendly game of cricket with Matthew Wade or enjoy a conversation while having a sausage from the barbecue. Having someone there who they looked up to in the sport showed that mainstream teams cared about making inclusive sports a big thing.

The Nexus Team included current clients Tyson Wordsworth-Devine, Billy-Joe Simpson, Naden Hall, Clayton Barrow, Janine Bonnitcha, and Moira Adderley as well as some previous clients who sought us out Tom Johnson, Alisha Hunter and her brother.

Two of the Nexus team, Naden and Tom Were also selected to represent the South in the TavsTas Inclusion Shield against the Northern disability team.

New Leaders

SINCE our last Nexus Ink we have been busy adding to our leadership team.

As a service provided of a person-to-person service, Nexus knows that our key to great customer service is the quality of our leaders and their regular hands on contact with staff and clients.

To support our drive to ensure the person is always at the centre of our decision making we have to make sure we grow and recruit the best front-line leaders.

It is great to welcome Casey and David from our leadership development program as well as welcoming Alyson back. We also welcome Andrew, Irene, Beck and Rob to the Nexus family.

- **David Smithurst** – Has worked at Nexus for the last 7 years as a Support Worker and Key Worker. David has taken part in our Team Leader Development Program and made a successful application for the vacancy created when Jenny Free retired, taking on the role as Team Leader at Bligh.
- **Casey Browning** – Casey is another graduate from the Team Leader Development Program and has moved into this role for the Burton and Oldham programs. Casey has worked at Nexus since 2015 as a Support Worker and Key Worker.
- **Alyson Richardson** – Previously worked as a House Manager at Nexus for a number of years. Ally returned last October after a break of a few years doing other things (being a mum and working in disability employment) to take on the Team Leader role for our new Wilmslow and Bounty programs.
- **Andrew Freedland** – Andrew started as a casual employee at Nexus in mid-2018. He has a wealth of knowledge gained through years of employment in the disability sector, here in Tassie as well as interstate. Andrew made a successful application for the Team Leader role at Sunshine.
- **Irene McClurg** – Irene has worked in the disability sector for many years and has previous experience in Team Leader positions. Irene started as a Key Worker at Nexus in February this year but became the newest Team Leader in Supported Living when she was successful in applying for the vacant position at Rowbottom.
- **Rob Blackwell** – Rob is known to many people in the Hobart disability scene and we are happy to welcome him as a Project Officer in our Client Services team. In addition to doing some service coordination work, Rob is taking on a number of critical projects including the development of our intake processes.
- **Beck Bewley** – Beck has joined as Manager Complex and Individualised Support. She has the rare mix of hands on experience across disability, welfare and community work. She has worked across the State Disability Services sector in residential, community access and respite support work as well as service coordination and team leader roles. She joined Hobart City Mission as a manager in the Family and Community Support services space and then returned to Disability and Community Services where she was manager of the Community Partnership Team.



David Smithurst



Casey Browning



Alyson Richardson



Andrew Freedland



Irene McClurg



Rob Blackwell



Beck Bewley

Salary packaging:

It's simple maths

EARLY this year Nexus began a review process to look at our salary packaging provider. The team made a decision to change providers and it is already having a noticeable impact on our employees.

As a not-for-profit organisation, salary packaging is one of the benefits the Government allows us to offer our employees so they can maximise their income and significantly increase savings by minimising the amount of tax they pay.

Supported by the Australian Taxation Office, salary packaging is an arrangement between an employer and an employee where the employee agrees to forgo part of their wages in return for the employer providing them with benefits of a similar value.

Benefits (to the sum of \$17,000 per annum) can include anything from salary packaged cars, health insurance, loans (usually for a car), school fees, childcare fees, and other personal everyday expenses including electricity, fuel, mortgage or rent.

By paying for these items before tax is taken out, employees are left with more take-home pay than if they paid for it out of their post-tax salary.

So, how much can you actually save with salary packaging?

Here's an example:

An employee works for a not-for-profit organisation and is fully taking advantage of the salary packaging.

If they are on a \$60,000 salary, they will be receiving around \$700 in extra income a fortnight.

This is about the same fortnightly income as a person working for a for-profit company on an \$80,000 salary.

Doing it the Eziway.

Eziway, our new salary packaging provider, is a highly advanced company with its own easy-to-use software.

Eziway can provide fortnightly (or even daily) updates on how much you are spending and how much your next pay is going to be.

Eziway has done a fantastic job so far promoting its services to our employees, sitting down one-on-one and answering any questions they have about the process and the benefits available to them.

The response we have received from our employees has been fantastic and we have already seen an increase in the number of people taking up the salary packaging offer.

How to get started?

The process is very easy.

All you have to do is register with payroll and receive a staff number, which will then be passed on to Eziway.

We'll give you the details of the Eziway contact, who will walk you through the next steps. In no more than five minutes, you'll be set up and ready to receive your next fortnightly payment.

CASE STUDY:

Salary packaging on the ground

Danesh Rakhani

Accountant, 28 years old

When I started at Nexus six months ago, I had never heard of salary packaging. The idea that I could save more money and pay less tax? My first Google question was, is it legal?

Coming from working at a for-profit company in Sydney, we were never offered benefits such as this.

I used to work 9am to 5pm every weekday, as well as a weekend job just to get by.

All that has changed now.

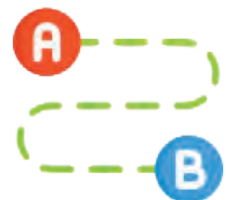
In only six months of salary packaging with Nexus, I have already saved enough money to start up a company on the side – my very own fashion clothing line.

Not only do I have my weekends to myself again, I am able to invest and work on my own business. Instead of spending all my time stressing, I now have the mental space and emotions to dedicate to other things.

At 28 years of age I've been able to purchase my own house, I've started doing donation payments and I've even started studying again.

When people ask me about salary packaging, I recommend it every time. At the end of the day, the savings are just simple maths and it can have a real impact on people's lives.

It's something that can make your life better, so why not take advantage of it?





The Pod

Housing is an important right for people with a disability. For a long time people have been offered very limited housing options – normally to live in a 4 person shared house.

For a lot of people this type of shared living is OK, and for many people we have spent a period of time living with unrelated adults. But in reality only 3% of Tasmanian households were living this way in the 2016 Census. Many more people lived alone in their own homes – a massive 28% of households. The message is though – horses for courses. People with a disability need to be able to choose how they live.

When we rolled out some new housing early in the new year we found that single supported units were very popular. We were able to offer 6 long term single units. One of the attractions of the units was that while people had their independence there was also

a sleep over unit based on site so clients had access to staff when they needed them. The best of both worlds.

We also rolled out some two person units and repackaged some 4 person group homes at the same time – so in all offering 31 new beds for people with a disability.

We also jumped at the opportunity from Housing Tasmania when they were looking at their new Pod options. These are pre-built single units that can be quickly added to an existing site, using the service connections that already exist. We surveyed all of our existing Housing sites and found three were suitable – in Kingston, Granton and Newtown.

Our first pod is almost completed at Kingston. This will be an ideal new home for someone who does not want to move into a group home, but still needs a bit of support close by.

Notes

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About Nexus

This year in October we celebrate 21 years of supporting Tasmanians.

Nexus provides:

Supported Living – where we provide support to shared houses of between 2 and five people.

Complex and Individualised Care – supporting clients who need assistance with day to day decision making and engaging in the community.

Community Services – providing community access and capacity building in your home or community.

Boutique day service – we operate a small venue where people with high needs can be supported.

Support coordination – we can help you get the most out of NDIS plan.

