

# Disability Services Newsletter

General Manager Update *Wendy Pettifer*

APRIL 2021



**We've had a lovely April – we celebrated Easter, and opened on the Public Holidays for the first time, there's been Orthodox Easter for many of our clients and staff and the beginning of Ramadan! So Happy Easter everyone and Ramadan Mubarak!**

## **EASTER!**

As always, clients in all our centres enjoyed Easter activities including a lovely Easter Bonnet Parade – all as socially distanced as possible of course! The centres were decorated of course, and we had some really lovely artworks completed.

In addition, we took a group of clients for a day out at the Easter Show – something we haven't done before, and which went really well. It was so good to be able to give clients this experience safely and with their friends. Definitely something to be repeated!

## **CANBERRA HOLIDAY!**

We've already got quite a group of excited clients booked into our Canberra holiday which is from 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. We will be staying at Canberra Park which is beautiful purpose-built accommodation for group holidays and mainly used by schools. The trip is fully catered, and we know everyone is going to have a great time.

We're planning to visit Questacon, Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial, and give our clients a real taste of our capital. It's likely to be cold, so we'll be indoors as much as possible, but you'll need to remember to pack your winter woollies.

The trip can be fully funded by the NDIS if you have appropriate funding, and we can help you to understand how this works.

If you are interested in coming, please contact Toby on 0490 048 284 as soon as possible to ensure you secure a spot and to give us ample time to get together a comprehensive support plan for our clients. Being away from

home, and overnight, means that we need to plan staffing carefully, and familiarize ourselves with routines we are not usually involved in, so we need a bit of notice of your intention to attend.

## STAFFING

We're continuing to see increases in hours from existing clients and new clients, which is lovely. As a result we've recently welcomed new clients Roxanna and Montather. We've also got a few new staff – Sudha, Jan, Jack, Rebecca, Janssy. Our new DSW/Driver role is working out really well, and ensuring that we have real consistency with who collects and drops off on some runs, which we hope will help both clients and families.

You may be aware of the challenges of finding suitably qualified disability support workers. There is a national shortage of workers and we are very fortunate that we have very high staff retention (and really amazing staff!) at Woodville Alliance. However, as we grow, we need to constantly take on new people. To address this, and to be part of the solution, we started 3 trainees in January who are being trained by our partners at Safety Corp to complete a Cert 3 in Disability. Of course, the work they can do whilst they are being trained is limited and they are very closely supervised, but we are very pleased with how they are developing. In fact we are so pleased that we are about to start another small group of 3 or 4 trainees on the same program.

At the same time, we are strengthening our team of staff who are able to work with our most complex clients, and will be advertising shortly for staff with this specific expertise.

## SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

Exciting news! I don't want to speak too soon, but we've made an offer - which has been accepted - on a beautiful 5 bed, 2 bath family home in West Hoxton, and we expect to sign next week. We have a 42-day settlement period, after which we plan to do some very minor works. We therefore expect to have residents in the home by September. Jenna has been contacting our interested families, and as soon as we have signed the contract we will be working with the vendors to arrange viewings for potential residents and their families. Of course, if you are interested in Support Independent Living and have not yet approached us about it, please do – we'd love to speak to you! We are planning the purchase of at least one further home in the next financial year, so there are lots of opportunities coming up.

## ACTIVITIES

April has been a month during which we've been really lucky in being able to get out and about. Clients have spent time at the bowling alley, getting back to shopping centres, and the Chester Hill gang had a lovely day out at the Koala Trail, where we got some lovely photos. We've also been partnering with CORE services to provide some opportunities for team sports. Recently we've taken groups to play basketball





and now we have clients participating in a fun cricket course. We are always looking for ways to add new activities to our programs, and it's great when we are able to do this in partnership with other organisations who are working within our community.

### CHANGES TO CHARGING UNDER THE NDIS

I've written a couple of times over the last few months about the changes to NDIS charging which are starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. Some of you already have your new quotes, and everyone will have a received one by mid June.

These changes are mainly related to how the costs are broken down in your support schedule. Previously the hourly rate you paid for support covered staffing, a provision for the cost of the building etc, a provision for the cost of transport and a provision for the cost of the work we do behind the scenes to support our clients (this is referred to as non-Face to Face support).

In the new charges, all these costs are separated and must be shown separately on your quote. For some clients this may mean that we are able to add in some additional support – for example personalized 1:1 support to help clients reach specific capacity building goals or to ensure that they are able to follow particular interests. We will be producing our new quotes over the coming weeks, and where we think fitting in some additional supports might be useful, we will contact you to discuss it. For the majority of clients, we are not expecting that the overall cost of their weekly supports will increase, only that we have to change how we collect the money. However, if you have any concerns, please contact either myself or Toby.

### NDIS Reviews

I want to remind everyone of how important it is that you let us know well in advance when you are having your NDIS plan reviewed. We have recently had a spate of clients whose plans were reviewed without our knowledge and their funding reduced. When this happens, we have no choice but to reduce the services we are able to deliver – at least until the situation has been reviewed. If we know in advance we can provide evidence to the review of your needs, and we can ensure that all the costs of providing that support are covered. Getting NDIS plans reviewed is time consuming and can be really stressful for families and clients, so it's best to try to go into them as well prepared as possible!

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY OPENING

After successfully opening over the Easter Public Holidays, we've decided to open on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021, which is the Queen's Birthday Public Holiday. Contact Toby asap if you would like to attend, and we will also be sending out an expression of interest form to be completed and returned.

Best wishes

*Wendy*

Email: [wpettifer@woodville.org.au](mailto:wpettifer@woodville.org.au)



