

Disability Services Newsletter

General Manager Update *Wendy Pettifer*

AUGUST 2021



This will sadly be my last Woodville Alliance newsletter. Although I should have started my new role in Adelaide in mid-August, COVID has intervened – as it has for so many things! – and I have not yet been able to move interstate. However, I now have a new start date to start working remotely from Sydney and my last day as General Manager at Woodville will be 8th October. Although it's all been a bit stressful it's been a big relief to be able to be here to continue to support my staff and our clients through this very difficult time, and to be part of the recruitment of my replacement, Melisa

Bradley, who I believe is going to be a wonderful new leader for the team. Happily, I will also be able to do a thorough handover before I leave, we will both be in place between 5th and 8th October.

I've been really fortunate in this role to work with fantastic people, and I'm very proud of the work we have done as a team to continually improve the services we provide and to attract new clients to Woodville – a large period of which has been during the pandemic which has provided us with plenty of challenges! All my staff work really hard and are just so committed and passionate about their work. However, I'd particularly like to thank Toby and Jenna and all the mentors, who have been so key to rolling out the changes we've made over the last couple of years. There are also people behind the scenes who are essential to our work – Karen, who does all the service agreements and makes sure everything is organized from an administrative point of view, and Mei who ensures that the NDIS pays us for our work. Additionally, many of you will know Elizabeth and Tra, who are our hardworking Support Coordinators and who have been wonderful to work with.

I'd also like to acknowledge and thank my colleagues on the Senior Leadership Team, who have always been so supportive and the leadership of Pam, our CEO, who has kept us all going through the challenges of providing community services during a global pandemic.





And finally, I'd like to thank all of you. Sometimes it's easy to forget that those of us who are no longer providing direct face to face support to clients are as passionate and committed to our work as those who are. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to get to know all our clients and their families and I know I'll miss everyone!

SERVICES INTO NEXT YEAR

All the signs are that we are getting close to starting to relax restrictions. We've been working a lot on what this might look like for disability services and I wanted to let you know about the direction we are going in.

The vast majority of our clients are vaccinated. We will be continuing to provide services to unvaccinated clients, recognizing that there are a range of reasons why a person with a disability might not have been vaccinated, but importantly also because the NDIS Code of Conduct requires all disability providers to do so as part of their registration. So please, if you do not have a medical reason for not being vaccinated, please do continue to consider it, and take advantage of the many opportunities available to do it at the moment.

We are very fortunate that our staff have grasped the opportunity for vaccination, so we do not have anyone working who is not. All staff are currently testing weekly. We will continue to require people to use the QR codes to sign into the centres, and to temperature check everyone when they arrive. Social distancing where possible, hand sanitizing and cleaning will also, of course, continue. Our approach with all clients will be to minimize all potential risks of COVID.

We proactively manage the very real risk of staff members or clients testing positive for COVID every day. We have comprehensive plans which we put into action if we have a case, and we also have good systems in place for monitoring any potential issues, considering all the available health advice. We are ready to respond swiftly and ensuring that communicating with you quickly and transparently is a priority.

CELEBRATING OUR WONDERFUL STAFF

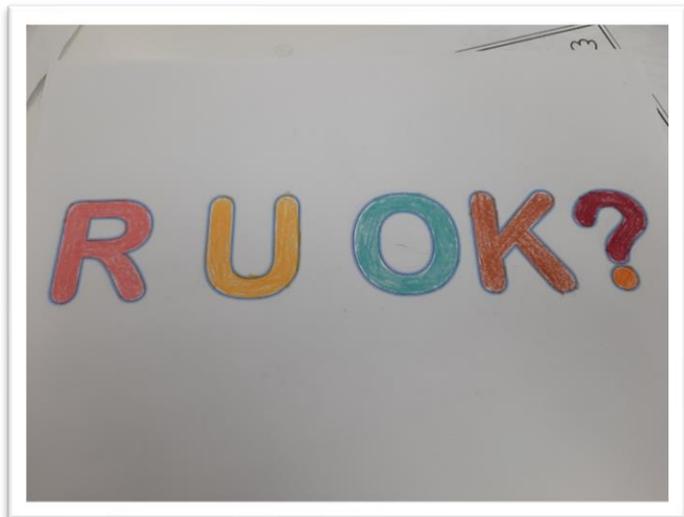
At Woodville, we know we have wonderful staff and they must really love working with you all because we have very low turnover! Recently some staff have reached some significant milestones and I know you would want to join me in thanking and congratulating them. I'd like in particular to acknowledge Luke Hull who celebrated an amazing 25 years with us this month. He is our longest standing member of staff, and I know that his experience and knowledge is greatly appreciated by everyone.

Additionally, Paul Dimitrievich celebrated 13 years with us this month, Judith Kitchener celebrated 10 years in June, and Melinda Paparestis celebrated 5 years in February. Thank you so much for your service.



Ordinarily we officially acknowledge significant milestones at our AGM in November, but we were unable to do this last year, and we are not sure about this year. However, we will definitely find a way of ensuring our staff know how much we appreciate them!

R U OK?



This year, more than ever, R U OK day has particular significance. Throughout the crisis we have been staying in touch with both staff who are not working, and clients and their families who are not attending services, reaching out and offering what we can in terms of support. We've been able to direct some towards other services that can help them, and with others we've just had a lovely chat and compared notes on living in one of the 12 LGAs of Concern and everything that goes along with that! I know that in the calls I've personally made, it's been really nice to touch base and say hi.

We've also been having fun Zoom meetings with staff, bringing together those who are stood down, with those who are working and also those who are working from home. It's been important to maintain that sense of being a team whilst we work our way through these unusual times. I've also had the opportunity to join Zoom activities with some clients, and that's been wonderful. We miss having everyone around, and to be honest, my lonely office at home is getting a bit old!

As it was R U OK? Day last week, clients who are still receiving services did activities based around this and I received some nice text messages with art work completed, which was lovely.

Our local health authorities are also keen to support the mental health of our communities at this time, and we've been sent a list of online webinars being run by the Transcultural Mental Health Centre, in a range of community languages. The links are listed below. If you are interested in the sessions but do not receive this newsletter electronically, please let us know and we can help you get connected

'Keeping Well During the Pandemic'

In-language online webinars for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

The webinars will be in-language or in English with an interpreter.

For more information or to register, click on your language or community **below**:

[Burmese: 23rd October](#)

[Nepali: 22nd October](#)

[Cantonese: 27th October](#)

[Spanish: 14th October](#)

[English: 11th October](#)

[Swahili: 20th October](#)



[Greek: 13th October](#)

[Indian: 22nd October](#)

[Italian: 12th October](#)

[Mandarin: 27th October](#)

[Tamil: 21st October](#)

[Tibetan: 19th October](#)

[Vietnamese: 15th October](#)

[Yazidi: 18th October](#)

SIL UPDATE

Despite the global pandemic, we been getting on with work to get our first SIL home up and running – with the help of Nadeeka, our new Project Officer. After a few COVID related delays, we now have a group of tenants preparing to be housemates and we are expecting to open for business at the end of October. We're having fun thinking about furniture and furnishings, and how to make the home a wonderful place to be.

Expressions of interest for staff have been released and so the recruitment process has begun. We're hoping to have predominantly existing staff working in the home, plus a few newbies. There will be a thorough process to ensure we get only the best and then all staff will receive training and induction specific to working in accommodation.

We're also thinking about our second home, which is planned to open in February 2022. If you're interested in SIL, please do get in touch. The process to secure funding is quite long, and we can help you navigate all the usual NDIS twists and turns!



Stay safe everyone!

Wendy

General Manager, Disability

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