

The Bridge News

August 2019



From little things
big things grow ...



Left: Staff testing out the new equipment Right: Staff from MTD Products delivering new equipment

MTD Products, Australia & New Zealand, recently decided to support a local community project via MTD's global stewardship program. When they saw that The Bridge had extensive gardening and employment training programs for adults with disabilities, they knew it was a perfect match.

Executive Team Assistant, Kimberley, spearheaded the idea with MTD's senior staff, and they got on board straight away. National Sales Manager, Martin, and Marketing Communications Manager, Luke, surprised The Bridge with a very welcome donation – a set of state-of-the-art Rover CORE power gardening equipment. This equipment will be used by The Bridge to maintain our gardens, but also to train participants in potentially, employable gardening skills.

The Rover CORE power equipment was thoughtfully selected by MTD staff for its high safety features, ease of operation, and no risky fuels or chemicals are required. The package comprises a brand new Rover CORE lawnmower,

whipper snipper, hedge trimmer and leaf blower, which are all battery operated and spare chargers are also supplied. The donated garden equipment is valued at over \$2,000.

The Bridge's Webb St Narre Warren Service Coordinator, Catherine, was touched and excited by MTD's donation. She had been dragging her own lawnmower to and from the centre, and those days are now over. Disability Support Worker, Dan, knew how much the participants would love learning to use the MTD equipment, especially the Rover leaf blower! "They'll all be fighting over who gets to use that one!" Dan said.

Touched and excited about
MTD's donation.

Message from our CEO Phillip Toovey



NDIS Progress

In April this year I reported that about three quarters of NDIS eligible participants of The Bridge have now converted to the scheme, and now in July the figure is over 90%, so the transition to the scheme is almost completed.

And from July 2019 some welcome increases in funding to certain types of support have been introduced.

While that is good news, there are still flaws in the scheme, with inadequate funding for transport or travel support, low group-based support funding, lack of emphasis on supports to gain employment and the quality of participant plans is still very inconsistent.

But overall, it has to be said that the scheme is enabling people to truly have more opportunities to choose what they need and want to do.

2019-20

The Bridge begins the new financial year with a new budget and more confidence about financial performance than previous years, largely due to expected further service expansion and maintaining our administration at affordable levels.

Also our Noble Park property project, 'Park Grove', will move into construction mode, with the first stage of building works for 11 townhouses due to start soon.

This year also heralds an important milestone for the organisation, as in 2020 it will be the **50th anniversary** of The Bridge!

This is certainly something to celebrate, and we are already planning ways to recognise our five decades of service history, as well as some celebratory events. As they say, stay tuned!

The Bridge Create Change Award

For the past two years, The Bridge has sponsored the Young Achiever Awards, in the category of 'Create Change'.

The Bridge Create Change Award was this year awarded to Georgie Stone, 18 of Bentleigh. Georgie is an advocate for trans and gender diverse youth. She achieved significant legal reforms since her initial hearing in the Family Court of Australia, resulting in timely access to treatments for trans adolescents. Congratulations Georgie!

The Bridge will continue to support the Young Achiever Awards in 2020.



Award recipient Georgie Stone and Ausra Wells, General Manager of The Bridge Employment

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission began operations in Victoria on 1 July 2019. The Commission is separate to the NDIA and has been established to introduce a new nationally consistent approach to the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services, replacing previous State based arrangements. The Bridge is required to comply with the new Quality and Safeguarding Framework as a registered NDIS provider.

The Bridge is currently reviewing and modifying our policies and procedures to ensure they meet the requirements of the new quality standards called the NDIS Practice Standards. This includes in the key areas of Reportable Incidents, Behaviour Support, Complaints Management and onboarding of new staff/volunteers.

What is the NDIS Code of Conduct?

The NDIS Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards and obligations that NDIS participants and all Australians can expect of providers and workers delivering NDIS supports and services.

	Respect individual rights
	Respect self-determination
	Act with integrity, honesty and transparency
	Ensure quality and safety
	Respect privacy
	Deliver services competently
	Prevent and respond to violence, neglect, abuse, and exploitation

It must be upheld by:

- registered service providers
- unregistered service providers
- workers of service providers
- community partners under the NDIS such as Local Area Coordinators and Early Childhood Early Intervention Partners.

What is the role of the NDIS Commission?

The NDIS Commission brings together a range of quality and safeguarding functions under a single agency for the first time, with regulatory powers that apply across Australia.

What we do



All workers at The Bridge are required to comply with the NDIS Code of Conduct which sets out minimum standards of behaviour to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants.

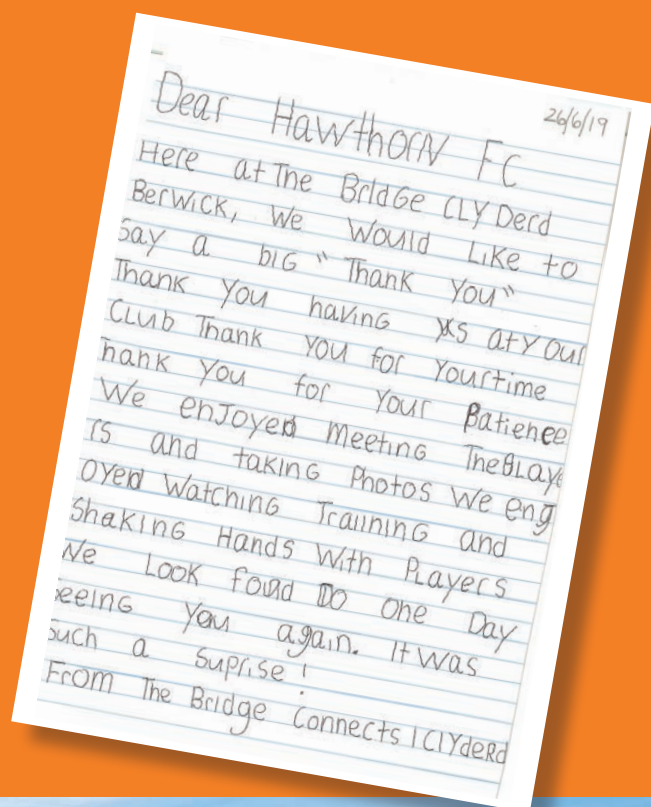
The Bridge will undergo an accreditation process under the NDIS Practice Standards in 2020. The accreditation process will be similar to other reviews we have had in recent years and will involve external auditors visiting our premises to meet with staff, participants and carers. We will communicate further about the accreditation process when we have more information about when the review will be undertaken and which of our services will be involved.

If you would like to know more about the role of the NDIS Commission and also our responsibilities as a provider please visit their website: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants>

Participants meet the Hawks at Waverley Park

Service Coordinators are always keeping an eye on any exciting events on the horizon, so participants can have as much fun as possible in their community access activities with The Bridge Connects day services.

The team from Clyde Road recently had the opportunity to get 'up close and personal' with the Hawthorn footy team and Coach. For some, it was a dream come true, and Rachael enjoyed it so much she wrote to the team to thank them for the opportunity to meet.



Support Coordination

Our Support Coordination service is continuing to grow and has far exceeded our expectations.

With this growth we have needed to increase the support within our team to 6 staff. So, for any existing participants or nominees wishing to nominate The Bridge to undertake Support Coordination for your NDIS Plan, please advise your Planner / Local Area Coordinator that you would like to use The Bridge, and ask them to send the Request for Service to us.

Once this request is received, our Intake team will determine if we have the skills and expertise to provide a quality service to you. If the request is accepted, it is then allocated to a member of the Support Coordination team, who will then make contact with you to set up an initial meeting to identify needs and priorities.

New activity for Getaways

Due to unprecedented demand, the Getaways team have been doing their best to increase the number of social and community participation activities on offer every weekend.

From July 2019, participants can access more weekends away, activities during the day on Saturdays or Sundays, fortnightly Friday night socials and the Hallam Disco once a month!

The new Friday night socials have been a big hit with participants and each one has a different theme, from football to cooking, to arts and craft and movie nights. This means more participants can access more Getaways activities more often, which is great! Staff welcome feedback and suggestions for the next event too.

For more information please contact getaways@thebridgeinc.org.au and book early to avoid missing out!



Participants enjoying the new Friday night socials, which uses our Webb Street, Narre Warren facility as a base

The Bridge Employment expanding services

The Bridge Employment team have been very busy over the last few months, supporting many to achieve their pathways into work.

We have expanded our services to more participants with NDIS funding and are looking forward to assisting even more people into employment with recent developments of our Supported Employment offering.

Combined with this, we have also been expanding our assistance for young job seekers through Jobs Victoria and additional youth pilot programs targeting youth from a culturally diverse background.

Additionally, staff have been focusing on ensuring we can provide a holistic service to support youth and people with disability, to build confidence within the other areas of their lives, with some exciting partnerships with local community services.

As always though, our focus is supporting you to find your own pathway into employment as we know anything is possible with the right supports given at the right time.

A new Era for Supported Employment

With greater flexibility for options for Supported Employment, a decision was made to reposition our ADE operation under the management of The Bridge Employment. This will provide new and current participants with more options to gain employment skills as well as continuing with the existing business contracts operating from our Cheltenham Road warehouse.

Over the coming months, signage will be rebranded, and our Youth Jobs Now! program will also commence operation from Cheltenham Road.

There have been a number of staff changes over recent months, and we are happy to introduce new members to the Works team.

More information will follow as the transition continues, and we are all very excited to be able to continue support for our valued Supported Employees and their families, as well as being able to offer options to new participants.

Centre of Multicultural Youth (CMY)

As part of the Victorian Government's pilot to support job seekers of an Africana and Pasifika heritage, The Bridge has partnered with CMY.

Through this partnership we are working together to build strong linkages for local Pasifika youth within their communities and into employment.



JVEN

We currently have 7 JVEN participants employed at Kwikserve Scaffolding, a great company who have been an expert in their field for over 50 years.

This opportunity has enabled all our participants to learn new skills and gain confidence working in a professional team environment.

The Bridge is excited to continue having a great, collaborative working relationship with Kwikserve, and we continue to assist many more young people enter the workforce.

Strengthening Youth partnerships in the community

My journey into Employment

What an amazing six months it has been for Maddy. She has been working for over six months in her dream job as an animal attendant and loves going to work every day to care for her furry friends. Maddy dropped in to say hi to the staff at our Frankston office to update our DES staff on how well she is doing in her job.

Well done Maddy. Big thumbs up!



Frankston staff, Anna (L) and Soula (R) with Maddy (centre)

Youth Health Hub

Over recent months Marie Hale, Employment and Partnerships Manager, has been attending the Youth Health Hub, an innovative program run by Monash Health's Youth and Family Team.

The Youth Health Hub not only provides the opportunity for youth to engage with other young people in their local area, but also access a variety of health professionals, including Social Workers, Youth Workers, Music Therapists and Psychologists.

One of the big drawcards for local youth is access to an exercise program, facilitated by accredited Exercise Physiologists, in a fully equipped gym. Marie can be found in the gym on a Tuesday and Thursday evening talking to young people about The Bridge Employment and the support we can provide to take that first step towards employment.



This huge smile says ... I GOT THE JOB!

Qais has worked towards this day for a while now, together with his Employment Coaches in Youth Jobs Now!, and was beyond excited by this news.

A combination of self-belief, training, encouragement and work experience support was what it took for this success story.

Congratulations Qais! We are incredibly proud and will continue to support you through your employment journey.



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The Bridge Inc. is a registered NDIS provider

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