

The Bridge News

April 2020



Celebrating 50 years

Since 1970, The Bridge has been providing a range of supports to people with disability.

Our organisation was created by a determined group of parents and local community leaders from the Springvale and Noble Park area, who formed a committee to develop a school for children with a disability.

A facility was built and the Urimbirra Day Training Centre opened in Callander Road, Noble Park, in 1974. It later became the Noble Park Special Developmental School.

After founding the school the committee went on to establish the Urimbirra Centre for adults with intellectual disabilities, which opened in 1982, from a new building next to the school in Callander Road, Noble Park. During the 1990s Urimbirra Centre expanded its services to include open and supported employment services.

The Bridge continues to provide a variety of services for youth and people of adult age who have various disabilities and disadvantages.

In 2020 we celebrate our 50th year of service to the community.





Message from our CEO Phillip Toovey

The start of 2020 has unfortunately seen terrible events which have marred the world beyond ours. First with devastating bushfires and now the advent of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, both impacting people's lives, the economy and in the case of the fires, the environment.

Here at The Bridge we are now experiencing the impact of COVID19 and in an effort to keep our participants, families and staff safe, we have been forced to suspend group-based community participation services until further notice, due to the necessary social / physical distancing rules.

Where safe to do so, we are continuing to deliver individualised support, individual in-home Support via Your Supports and after hours/weekend supports using individual support via Getaways.

These changes have caused us to become more innovative in the way we deliver some services and we are now delivering digital services to as many participants as possible. Our employment services are all continuing, but not 'as usual', with staff in our job placement services working from home, and our supported employment operating with substantially lower numbers.

Be assured that all staff are here to help whilst maintaining the necessary social distancing and vigilant hygiene practices to ensure the safety of everyone. Please contact us to discuss how we can continue to support you through this really challenging time.

New Strategic Plan

Development of a new Strategic Plan involved consultations with a range of key groups, being staff, participants and family members. Three groups were facilitated by an external consultant, with the feedback incorporated into a workshop of Board Directors and senior management personnel, on Saturday 29th February.

A draft 2020-23 plan is now being prepared for the Board's consideration, with the aim being to provide in the coming months a summary of the key strategies and goals.

50th Anniversary

2020 represents a huge milestone for The Bridge with the 50th Anniversary of the organisation.

We are recognising this achievement in a range of ways, through curating our five decades history of community service, as well as celebratory events for later in the year. COVID-19 circumstances permitting, on 20th October 2020 The Bridge will hold its Annual General Meeting in the Supper Room of Springvale Town Hall - the same date and time of the organisation's inaugural meeting in 1970.

Stay safe and well everyone.

Webb Street celebrating 20 years!

In this year when The Bridge celebrates its 50th anniversary, our service at Webb Street, Narre Warren, has its own 20th anniversary milestone.

On 16th February 2000 the Webb Street facility was officially opened by the then Victorian Minister for Community Services, Christine Campbell.

The Bridge was then known as 'South Eastern Disability Services' and the Webb Street day service was named 'Kalimna' Training and Community Support Service. Kalimna was a purpose-built facility and one of the last DHHS capital funded projects of this type.

Around 25 people started receiving services during the first year, and since then many, many more people have had supports at and from this site.

Webb Street was also the 'home' of our Community Outreach Services, which started in the early 2000's - this was a 1:1 support service which was piloted in the Casey area and from that time it broadened to be what is today, now known as 'Your Supports'.

Webb Street continues to offer great services. So, thank you to all past and present that have been involved across the two decades, two fifths of our whole 50 years of history.

Congratulations and happy 20th anniversary to Webb Street!

Webb Street under construction, 1999



Newly completed, purpose-built Webb Street, 2000



Attendees at the opening of Webb Street, Narre Warren - 16 February 2000



Christine Campbell - Victorian Minister for Community Service



Men's Shed

Men's Shed at the Keysborough Learning Centre is always one of our favourite activities. Designed to provide a quiet and relaxing atmosphere for males to bond and learn wood working skills,

feel a sense of achievement in the planning, purchasing of materials and making of their various creations, such as the chopping boards and planter boxes pictured here.



A new site for Officer

In January 2020, The Bridge was pleased to open its newest day service in Officer, at the Officer Community Hub and Heatherbrae Recreation Reserve, starting with five participants and two staff.

Given the growth in demand with NDIS, the Officer service has been well received by the local community and with a variety of activities such as baking, BBQs, travel training, movies, beach and museum visits on offer, interest in this service is high.

For more information please call 1800 274 343.



Guiseppe, Blake and Michael enjoying a BBQ



Guiseppe, Blake and Michael participating in art class



Guiseppe, Blake and staff members Lisa and Larissa

Connecting to community

The team from our Clyde Road service love the opportunity to get involved in events hosted by Bunnings at Fountain Gate.

These activities support goals around community inclusion and socialising as well as developing life skills. This in-store appearance and workshop by Tara Dennis, from Better Homes and Gardens, involved participants making home décor items and receiving home styling tips from this celebrity who many knew from TV!

Participants, volunteers and staff said it was great being a true part of the local community and being able to access these events.



Hazel with Tara Dennis from Better Homes and Gardens

Satisfaction remains high amongst Connects participants

In December 2019, we asked participants and carers for their feedback on our day services, Your Supports and Getaways. This is an important aspect of our ongoing service evaluation and helps us identify what we are doing well and if there are areas we could improve.

It was great to see 161 people responded to the survey and highlights were:

- 97% indicated their services and supports have helped them achieve their goals
- 89% were extremely or very satisfied with services provided
- 86% would recommend The Bridge Connects to other

In terms of the impact of the activities participants were involved in during 2019, the following outcomes were reported as achieved:

- 71% more independence
- 84% socialising
- 83% community participation
- 78% learning new things

Whilst feedback from the survey was very positive it has reinforced to us that we need to continue to:

- Ensure good communication with participants and carers
- Find ways to monitor the effectiveness of services supporting participants to achieve outcomes
- Continue to ask participants and carers if there is anything we can do better

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey.



Chan at work

Lydia, Occupational
Therapist at The Bridge

Support on the Job

Lydia, our DES Occupational Therapist, has been very busy on site at one of our employers, Carryboy, supporting one of our working participants, Chan, who commenced work in October 2019.

Chan came to The Bridge through Youth Jobs Now! using his NDIS plan to build employability skills. He completed a work experience placement and then registered in DES for support.

Lydia has been onsite assessing the workplace, understanding what Chan does on a day to day basis and identifying what supports he needs to assist him at work.

Lydia has been implementing an intensive training program tailored to his support needs which includes task cards and visual prompts. Her training plan and tailored interventions will assist Chan to increase his on the job skills to meet the employer's requirements.

Understanding Workplace OHS and emergency response

In March, Youth Jobs Now! participants and staff from The Bridge Employment, completed their first joint emergency response drill practice at our warehouse in Dandenong South.

The outcome was great and as well as supporting further understanding of workplace emergency response, it also proved beneficial to support further training and development for the Youth Jobs Now! participants in relation to OHS and safety in both the workplace and home.



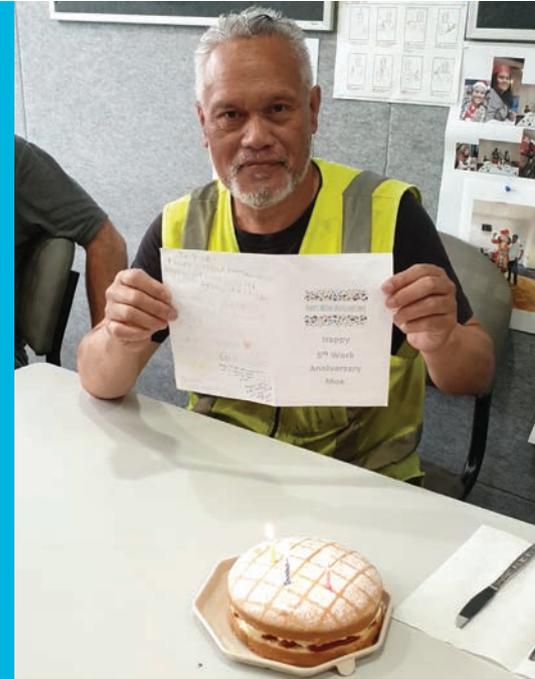
Moe - Celebrating 5 years at The Bridge

On Monday 24th February 2020 staff and Supported Employees celebrated with Moe in achieving 5 years as the Warehouse Supervisor with The Bridge Employment.

Moe originally came to The Bridge Employment through our DES program. With support he gained a casual driving position before progressing to his current role as the Warehouse Supervisor.

Moe provides support on a daily basis to empower our Supported Employees in their roles and also assists business development with our customers.

We would like to thank Moe for all his hard work and dedication to The Bridge over the last 5 years.



Jacob - preparing for his first job

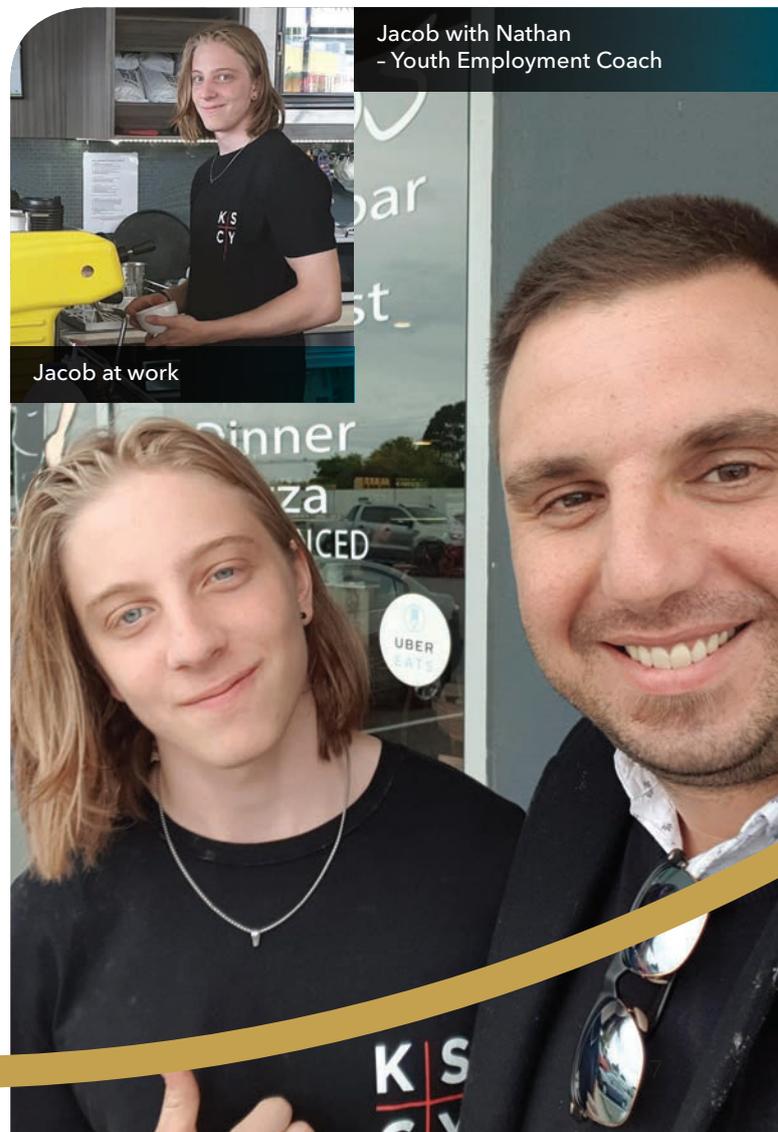
"Jacob came to me as one of my first referrals. He has a passion to one day become a business owner and run his own café.

I approached a local business, Santos Café & Bar, located in South Morang, who were seeking part time workers. They are great advocates for helping youth and engaging them into employment, so the opportunity was there for Jacob. I assisted him in preparing for his interview.

Jacob is a very reserved young man and was extremely nervous about his interview. We discussed possible interview questions and how to present himself to the employer, as this was his first job interview and he didn't want to mess it up.

Jacob was successful and started the next day! His employer has said that since commencing in the role Jacob is a different person, happy, excited and confident. I couldn't be more proud of the changes in Jacob and how he has grown in such a short time. It's great to see a young man working and enjoying what he does. This is the reason I enjoy my job, seeing outcomes like this."

Nathan - Youth Employment Coach



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The Bridge Inc. is a
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Getaways
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Your Supports
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NDIS Support Coordination
03 8710 8555

Day Services:

The Hub
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03 9701 7311

Douglas Street
Noble Park Vic 3174
03 9546 8369

Clyde Road
Berwick Vic 3806
03 9769 3950

Stawell Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977
03 5995 5250

Webb Street
Narre Warren Vic 3805
03 9705 9111

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Youth2You

Jobs Victoria Employment Network
Casey CALD Youth Employment project
Support for Jobseekers of African & Pasifika
Heritage Program (SJAPH)
03 8710 8555

Shop 48 The Mall
Heidelberg West Vic 3081
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

Disability Employment Services (DES)
Suite 8
108-120 Young Street
Frankston Vic 3199
03 9784 3888

Youth Jobs Now!

Transition to Work / School Leaver
Employment Support (SLES)
Supported Employment / Social Enterprise
Suite 2
387-389 Springvale Road
Springvale Vic 3171
03 9546 2892

95A Cheltenham Road
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