

The Bridge News

August 2020



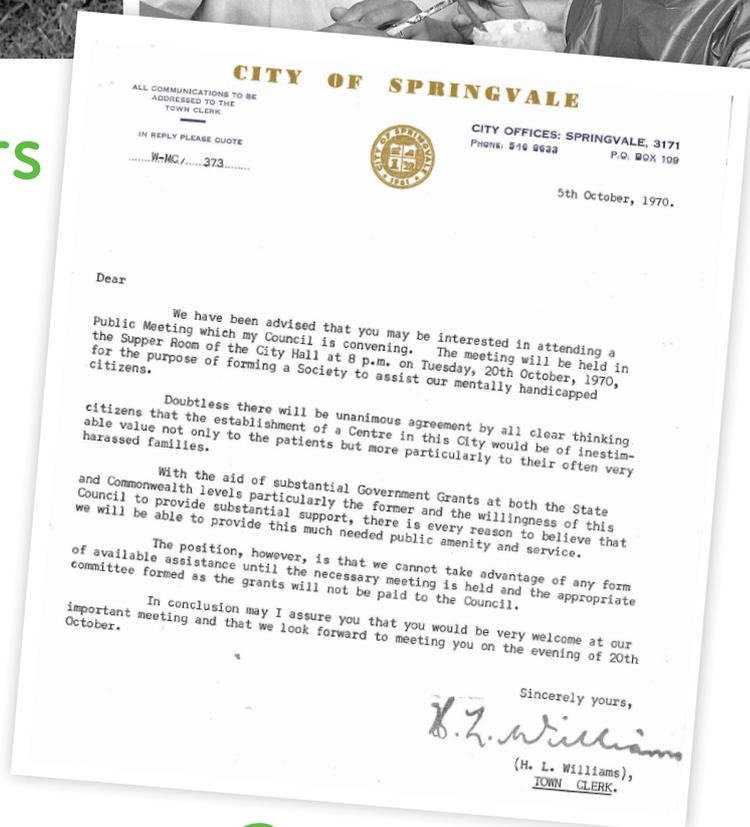
Celebrating 50 years

On 20 October 1970, a public meeting was held for the purpose of forming a 'Society' to assist citizens of the City of Springvale who had a disability. As you can see from this copy of the letter used for this event, the language was very different in those days, but the intent was nothing but benevolent.

The call was heeded, with the formation of a Committee and here we are 50 years on, as The Bridge, delivering services to people of all abilities.

Our 'sister/brother' organisation, the Springvale Park Specialist School, which was founded by this committee, also celebrates this milestone.

On 20th October 2020, The Bridge plans to hold its AGM at the same place, day and date as the inaugural 1970 meeting.





Message from our CEO Phillip Toovey

The last time I wrote a piece was in April when COVID-19 had already ‘erupted’ and impacted everyone’s lives. Sadly, we are now all living and working in a very different, constrained, uncertain world.

However, where it has been safe to do so, we adapted our services to enable people to stay connected and actively involved. Though, it hasn’t been possible to continue services in ways that meet everyone’s needs and we are well aware this has been a difficult time for certain people and their families and carers.

We are grateful to have such good staff which has helped The Bridge to be the best it possibly can for the people we serve in these very trying circumstances.

Government support, especially through the JobKeeper wage subsidy program, as well as rent relief by landlords, has all been very welcome.

While much of what we do has been slowed or restricted over the last months due to COVID-19, work has continued on future goals. We finalised our new **2020-22 Strategic Plan** and this renewal process inspired a change to our Vision and Mission statements, with our current Vision “a connected society where all people with disabilities achieve their full potential” changed to;

Vision

A connected society where people of **all abilities** achieve their full potential.

A further element was added to our Mission, with the addition of the important domain of ‘home’;

Mission

Transforming lives through empowerment, choice, support, advocacy and connections to **home, work and community.**



Our **Park Grove** property project, in Noble Park, has kept progressing with construction of the first stage of 11 town houses reaching completion in the next month.

Also, through our partnership with tech entrepreneurs, it has been very exciting to see further development of the **GoodHuman** app for NDIS participants.

Plus, we’re undergoing our first **NDIS quality certification** process. See more on these in this edition.

And soon we’ll be launching a **new improved website** for The Bridge, so keep an eye out for that!

Take care everyone.

NDIS Certification

As a registered NDIS provider, The Bridge is required to undertake an NDIS Certification process to confirm that our service delivery and quality systems conform with the NDIS Practice Standards as set out by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. The Bridge will be going through this process for the first time from **Tues 11 - Fri 14 August 2020**.

This audit will be a similar process to other audits we have undertaken for other disability quality standards over the past 15 years.

NDIS Certification is a two-stage process and we have already completed the Stage 1 document review in mid-July. Stage 2 is a 4-day review that would usually be undertaken onsite but this year due to COVID-19 it will be done remotely, via Zoom meetings and phone calls.

As with previous reviews, the audit team need to meet with a sample of selected participants / carers per service, who have consented to be involved and they also review participant records in our databases. During audit week the audit team also meet with support staff, supervisors and management about services provided.



Service users who consent to be involved are added to a list for selection by the audit team. Participants may not be selected to be involved as the auditors only require a small number per service. There is also an Opt Out process for people who don't wish to be involved.

If you are a participant of The Bridge's NDIS services and have any questions about the NDIS Certification process and your potential involvement, please contact your service Coordinator or Manager.

The Bridge is committed to providing the best quality services through the NDIS and strongly believes in a service system that is regulated by a robust quality regulation framework.

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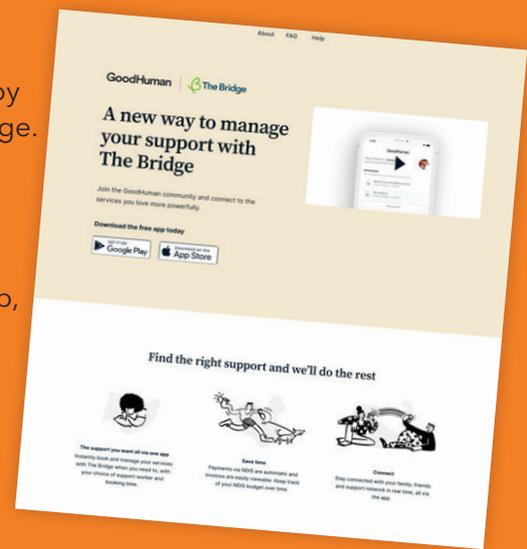
The Bridge teams up with GoodHuman

Over the last 2 years we have worked with GoodHuman to create a digital platform that connects the entire support experience, so participants and carers can spend more time on the things they enjoy and less time on organising shifts and communicating with The Bridge.

The GoodHuman mobile app will streamline the way we work with participants and carers and enhance communication, ensuring it is responsive and enables us to provide quality services and supports.

In April staff within Your Supports started using the GoodHuman app, and in June our first participants and carers experienced using the app. Here's what Jamie, one of our support workers said about the app; "GoodHuman is a fabulous tool for end users and clients. It's an easy product to use and user friendly".

From July 2020 onward, we will be inviting staff, participants and carers to download the GoodHuman app. For more details please go to <https://www.goodhuman.me/thebridge>



Modifying our services

Since April 2020, The Bridge Connects has continued to provide a range of modified services that comply with COVID-19 safety and infection prevention measures. For many participants this has involved accessing one-to-one respite support, rather than their usual group-based services.

Participants and staff have told us how wonderful it's been to really get to know each other and make progress in achieving their goals.

One of Karl's goals is to develop more independence with his grooming and personal appearance, including purchasing clothing of his choice. Karl is making great progress as you can see from this photo. He is looking great and feeling very relaxed after walking around the Red Sand Garden at Cranbourne Botanical Gardens, enjoying the birds and wildlife in the company of his support worker.



Online Servicing

COVID-19 gave us the opportunity to get creative with our service delivery!

The Bridge Connects has provided online services to participants unable to attend group-based activities in Day Services and Getaways, since April 2020. The results have been astounding, and with 30 regulars we've found some very talented participants who we hope will soon run their own segments!

The secret to success has been making participants feel welcome, connected to each other and us, making the activities engaging, enjoyable and fun. Doing something physical and stimulating thoughts and conversations within the group about areas of interest. Feedback from participants and carers has been amazing, like from Richard who, following a session, phoned us to say he was in tears seeing his sister Joanne so happy, interacting and dancing with all of her friends and the staff.

The most popular segments in our current program of online activities include; Favourite Things/Hobbies, Radio Role Plays 'featuring' the

following special guests HRH The Queen, John Farnham, Jimmy Barnes, Bindy Irwin and Roxy The Dog, Exercise to Music, Trivia, News and sharing Favourite Websites.



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Virtual servicing for NDIS

If you need a lesson on how to use Zoom, just ask any one of the Youth Jobs Now! participants and they will walk you through it. Most participants have settled into their new routines, safely from their homes, and are now learning remotely up to 30 hours each week.

The Employment Coaches have also adapted to a new way of service delivery seeing a screen full of happy faces each day!

A few participants have started or continued working through these times, taking precautions to ensure safety is a priority. Shayne and Kaitlin (pictured) have both commenced volunteer work at L'Arte Central in Cranbourne. Not only are they learning the skills required for both front and back of house in hospitality but, in addition, learning how to ensure safety comes first in the workplace during COVID-19 times.



Production is continuing

At our Cheltenham Road warehouse, operations are continuing. We have implanted our COVID-safe plan and are providing support and training for our employees.

We currently have work from 10 different customers being done concurrently, with some of our contracts increasing due to demand. Our Sonic team are continuing to produce thousands of bowel screening kits per week.

With the increase in work, we have been able to support Nick into a new job. Nick abruptly faced unemployment for the first time in his life. He has worked in warehousing roles since he left school and his last job ended after 17 years.

Nick contacted our DES office seeking advice, asking Soula "What is out there for a bloke my age that's only ever worked in a warehouse?" Soula quickly advised him that age was not a barrier.

Nick was registered in our DES program and is now successfully working at The Bridge Works. In Nicks words "this job is ace, and I have ended up with exactly what I wanted."

Well done everyone!



2020 has been a year of constant surprises and unprecedented events. No one could have imagined the impact that COVID-19 has had on the world. As we are currently moving through the second round of lockdown, we are working with all our valued participants, employers and stakeholders to ensure we come out of this stronger than ever.

Importantly, our team have been able to continue providing services through flexible and virtual delivery where appropriate, and where this is not available, appropriate COVID-safe plans and procedures are in place.

Staff perspective – what’s happening out there for unemployed youth?

From the recent unemployment figures, youth aged between 15-24 are the hardest hit. We asked our Youth2You team for their perspective:

Oscar

Broad things I have found with the current climate of the employment space amidst COVID-19 is that whilst there are still companies open and employing, they tend to take longer to process applications / interviews which in turn delays start dates and getting placement and outcome forms signed. I have also found many employers and businesses are requiring the financial assistance to stay afloat.



Stacey

The team has been focussed on reaching out to participants both past and present to support those who have been affected most by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are not letting this situation slow them down, and instead of face-to-face servicing, we are being creative with technology to stay connected with our young participants, including using Zoom for interviews.



Nathan

While in lockdown it has been challenging not being able to apply simple tasks such as travelling to a work site to visit the employers and participants. Meeting with them is valuable and essential to our program. The communication from employers has also been impacted as many employers are now working from home or shut down. The North has encountered participants voluntarily leaving their jobs in fear of contracting COVID-19, or they have been stood down from their employment.

Satwinder

As a Post Placement Support person with our Jobs Victoria project, I have had to implement new strategies to cope with the COVID-19 situation. I contact employers and participants on a regular basis and offer any support they may need. Many of our required administration forms have been replaced with emails and I adjust the support as required. I also check with participants if they need any support in relation to sanitising equipment, so they can maintain safe working conditions.

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The Bridge Inc. is a
registered NDIS provider



The Bridge Connects

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Getaways
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Your Supports
03 8710 8555

NDIS Support Coordination
03 8710 8555

Day Services:
All day service enquiries:
1800 274 343

The Hub
Dandenong Vic 3175

Douglas Street
Noble Park Vic 3174

Clyde Road
Berwick Vic 3806

Officer Community Hub
Officer Vic 3809

Stawell Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977

Webb Street
Narre Warren Vic 3805

The Bridge Employment

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03 8710 8555
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

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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03 9792 2662
wbroomhall@thebridgeinc.org.au

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