

The Bridge News

December 2019



Bringing art to life

Participants were surprised to find their iPad app created self-portraits transformed into a spectacular mural, by volunteer artist, Mangala.

The piece now hangs proudly at Clyde Rd and is a talking point at the site.

Thank you Mangala for your ongoing support and assistance in arts and crafts, both onsite and in our local community.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe new year as we look forward to celebrating our exciting 50 year milestone in 2020!

In this issue we showcase participant art, highlight the Young Achiever Awards, health and wellbeing, employment achievements and much more! We hope you enjoy the final newsletter for 2019.



Message from our CEO Phillip Toovey

NDIS

This time last year we were a few months into the NDIS transition and now we're almost completely through it with nearly 100% of eligible participants in Connects and Works now in the scheme. Our staff worked very hard to prepare people for the NDIS and as a result, most people are better off than before.

As I've reported before, there are still flaws in the scheme, with a few examples being inadequate funding for travel support, lack of emphasis on supports to gain employment and inconsistent quality of participant plans.

5 Stars!

In good news, The Bridge's Disability Employment Service (DES) achieved a 5 Star contract performance rating, which was made public by government on 31st October. A great result!

And our youth employment services funded through Jobs Victoria has also been performing very well.

My thanks go to all the staff and volunteers involved in delivering all The Bridge services.

AGM

Our AGM held on 28th October at Bunjil Place in Narre Warren was a great event, with almost 100 attending.

After the AGM formalities, certificates were presented to around 20 staff and volunteers for their service, followed by a very interesting and entertaining speaker panel of five people who talked about involvement in our services, what they achieved and enjoyed, as well as their future hopes and dreams. The evening finished with a terrific short video featuring four participants.

Progress with 'Park Grove'

Our Noble Park property project, Park Grove, is really moving, with the first stage of housing construction progressing quite quickly, with frames now up for 11 townhouses.

As this year closes, we head into 2020 with the knowledge that 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. More on this will come out in the New Year.

So farewell 2019. It was a big year for The Bridge and I want to thank everyone for their hard work and support.

Wishing everyone all the very best for the festive season and the New Year.

7News Young Achiever Awards

In 2020 The Bridge is once again sponsoring the 7News Young Achiever Awards Vic, in the category of The Bridge Create Change Award.

The Awards are designed to acknowledge, encourage and most importantly promote the positive achievements of all young people throughout Victoria up to and including 29 years of age as of 31st December of each year.

If you know someone deserving of this Award, visit <https://awardsaustralia.com/young-achiever-awards/vic/> for further information on criteria for the Award, and to nominate.

Nominations close 13 December 2019.



Health & Wellbeing

On the 12th of September 2019, The Bridge Health and Wellbeing Committee held six events across our various sites to promote the important R U OK? Day message.

Staff and participants enjoyed a presentation followed by refreshments. R U OK? is a not-for-profit suicide prevention organisation that inspires communities throughout Australia to ask the life-changing question "are you ok?".

Stawell St staff and participants



DES staff at our Frankston office



Showcasing art

At The Bridge we support participants to develop their skills and independence in pursuing a range of different goals and interests.

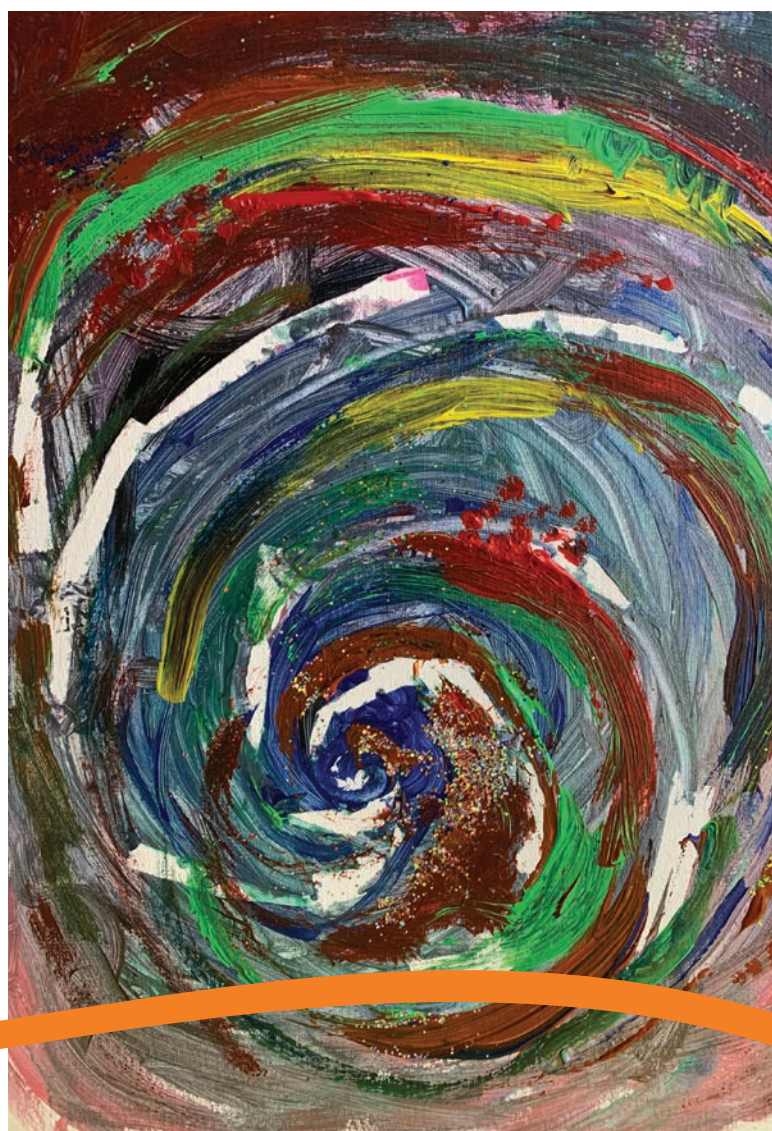
A favourite activity for many participants is expressing their creativity through art, which boosts self-esteem and provides a sense of accomplishment. In this issue we are showcasing a small selection of art being produced across The Bridge Connects Day Services.

During September and October participants from Dandenong Day Services were busy in their art groups preparing for an exhibition held on the 19th & 20th October 2019, at Noble Park Community Centre.

As you can see from the photo (top right) there were some great pieces on display. Participants were all awarded Certificates of Appreciation for their contributions and also received a \$50 cheque from the Centre to assist with Art Supplies into the future. Great work by everyone!

Artist, Evelyn, from our Clyde Road Day Service has submitted her artwork (bottom right) 'The eye of the storm' into this year's 'End of Year Celebration' card competition, hosted by Supportability.

They provide The Bridge's Client Information Management system and on receiving the entry stated 'the team has genuinely enjoyed seeing each and every one of the incredible entries!'





Corrinne and Danielle

Enjoying new experiences

With her increased funding, Dani has been able to access weekends away with Getaways for the first time.

She has loved her visits to Tootgarook, especially the chance to make new friends. When we asked her about it, Dani couldn't decide which parts she enjoys the most. Whether it's going to the movies, going out for dinner or enjoying live music with friends. To top it off, the accommodation has a fully accessible bath which is a luxury she can't regularly enjoy.

When asked about The Bridge she said "I feel safe, they know my needs, I get to do what I enjoy and love."

Sometimes it's the small things that can make all the difference.

Support Coordination

Support coordination commenced at The Bridge in 2017 and now supports over 150 participants.

Support coordination helps strengthen a participant's ability to coordinate and implement their supports whether they are informal, mainstream, community or funded supports. It often involves helping people work out their Plan and how best to achieve their goals, and enhances their ability to access the local community and build their capacity to be more independent. With the help of Kirstin, the newest member of our Support Coordination



Kathy, Rebecca and Kirstin

team, Rebecca is now accessing a broader range of services to help her increase her independence and life skills development.

"With the help of my Support Coordinator I feel like I'm really making progress on my goals".

Your Supports

Some of our participants have been accessing some great outings through Your Supports!

Debra cooking up a storm at her weekly cooking class at the Balla Balla centre (right)



Jerris looking confident at Skydeck



Hanan at Melbourne Museum

As 2019 wraps up, it's given us time to reflect on the many employment outcomes our participants have had, and the steps others have taken towards achieving their goals.

Throughout this year the staff across The Bridge Employment have worked tirelessly to adapt to many changes to our programs, but all have had the same focus of working towards achieving equality for employment to those who are under-represented in the labour market.

Throughout 2019 our employment programs have expanded, supporting more people into employment, including young people experiencing disadvantage, youth from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and people with a disability.

In October 2019 we received our DES (Disability Employment Services) star ratings and we received 5 stars. This is the highest rating we can receive and it is credit to the DES team for the dedication shown in supporting people with disability and employers.

As we begin looking forward to 2020, I would like to thank the work of The Bridge Employment staff. The focus for next year is to continue building on the strong elements of our programs to give greater flow through particularly between the NDIS, Supported Employment and also DES.

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday period, and look forward to seeing you all in 2020.

Ausra Wells
General Manager Employment

My journey into Employment



Chan commenced with Youth Jobs Now! in March 2019 and quickly identified as a young man with clear goals of obtaining employment.

Chan had previously attended an SDS and with the added barrier of English being his second language, found it difficult to communicate, but that didn't stop him from showing his employment coaches he was serious about getting a job, doing everything they asked of him to secure work experience in open employment.

Chan was always on time and during his sessions he increased his understanding of English helping him learn the basics required to secure employment. Employment Coach, Joanna, negotiated work experience with the end goal of paid employment. Staff also assisted with travel training to and from work for Chan, and in no time Chan was independently getting himself to and from work experience.

Working together with the Youth Jobs Now! and DES teams, Chan made such great progress towards his employment goals. The DES team supported him to move to the next step in his employment journey. He was supported to register in the DES and start paid work in October.

What an amazing employment journey Chan has had.

Never giving up

Hanson faced personal obstacles which lead him to losing his previous job, creating barriers when searching for new employment. He was struggling to find an employer willing to give him an opportunity.

After being unsuccessful in his first two interviews he was supported by his Youth Employment Coach who introduced Hanson to Brett at Lumber Softwoods. Lumber Softwoods are a timber yard in Dandenong South. The owner, Brett, has previously taken a number of our participants and has always been happy to give people an opportunity if they are willing to give things a go. After the interview Brett was confident Hanson would fit in to the team and decided to give him a trial shift. Since properly commencing in October, Hanson has quickly become an integral member of the team.

His manager at Lumber Softwoods has stated that Hanson is progressing very well. Well done Hanson!



Achieving his goal

Mark was referred from Narre Warren P12 Secondary College. He had completed year 12 and was really interested in taking up an electrical apprenticeship but was finding it difficult to secure one.

Youth Projects Manager, Fili, contacted OAM Electrics, an employer that The Bridge is currently working with. The employer was impressed with Mark's interest and eagerness in becoming a qualified electrician.

The first step for Mark was to complete a 10-day trial and has completed his Certificate 2 in electro technology. The great news here is that Mark has now signed his apprenticeship papers.

Mark will continue to receive ongoing support from The Bridge Employment during his apprenticeship.

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

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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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wbroomhall@thebridgeinc.org.au

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