

The Bridge News

December 2022



A bright new location for Dandenong Day Service and Youth Jobs Now!

Over the last couple of months, we relocated two of our services to a shared location at 31 Princes Highway, Dandenong, right next door to our Head Office at 33 Princes Highway!

Our Dandenong Day Service moved its services (previously at The Hub), and Youth Jobs Now! moved from Springvale. It was a huge logistical exercise but went well due to careful planning. Our co-located services have now settled in well to a freshly appointed space that better suits participants and staff.

Feedback has been positive with the staff loving the bright, new space. They are enjoying getting to know their colleagues and many participants from the two services already know each other and enjoy saying hi to friends at the start of the day. Currently everyone is working together to come up with a stylish new name for the site, so watch this space!

We're excited about the opportunities that being co-located will provide for our participants and staff. This integrated service model will provide innovative ways of working to inform future plans and growth for The Bridge.



 The Bridge



Message from our CEO Mary-Jane Stolp

The Bridge has undertaken a transformation over the past 12 months with a new organisational structure and skilled leaders supported by high performing teams, to take The Bridge into the future.

We are making good progress with our new strategic priorities and remain committed to ensuring an outstanding experience for the people we support. In the last 12 months our community services provided 226,736 hours of service and we assisted over 1,300 Victorians with employment support. Whilst the results of our client surveys remain excellent, our commitment to person-centred services has been strengthened by the new Client Experience Committee that continues our customer journey mapping and ensures an outstanding experience for the people we support.



L to R Board Directors - David Mallinson, Sue Banks (Chair), John Jeffries, Jim Hall, Mary-Jane Stolp (CEO), Andrew Stewart, Sue Hansford, Sally Bennett

Continuous quality improvement is key to our operations. When it all comes together, we make a real difference to people's lives.

This year's Annual General Meeting event was well attended by participants, their families, our Board of Directors and The Bridge staff and volunteers. A highlight of the night was guest speaker, Michael Elias, from UPPAREL who spoke of their amazing partnership with The Bridge. Sue Banks, Board Chair ran through the official business, followed by video stories of the people we support. We presented awards for Recognition of Service and Outstanding Achievement to our staff, recognising more than 25 people, 12 of whom have been with The Bridge for more than 12 years. The evening ended with a fond farewell to our Director and past President, Jim Hall, who has retired after 11 years at The Bridge. Thank you for your service and dedication, Jim.

Advocacy work continues as The Bridge lobbies on behalf of the communities we support with our peak bodies around accommodation, funding for people with complex needs, employment opportunities, worker retention, unregistered providers and NDIS pricing. In response to the Royal Commission into Disability Services and recommendations for providers, we have reviewed our systems and processes to identify any areas we can improve.

While Covid-19 has brought many changes we adapt and feel confident about capitalising on new challenges as they arise. Thank you to The Bridge community for your continued support in helping us transform peoples lives through empowerment, choice, support and advocacy.

We hope you enjoy our final edition for 2022 and wish you all the best for the festive season.

Merry  Christmas!

The Hallam Disco gets Spooky!

The Bridge Hallam Disco, which is held each month, is always very popular but when it is also combined with a theme it creates even more interest.

Our October Disco was no exception when we had a Halloween theme. Many of those attending went to a great deal of trouble to show off some amazing costumes. Setting the tone for the night was motivated staff who got amongst it and dressed up themselves. A great night was enjoyed by all!

The Bridge Hallam Disco is held on the first Saturday of each month, except for January. If you would like to join in the fun at future discos, please call the Getaways team on 03 8710 8537.



Celebrating milestones at The Bridge!



Recently, we recognised and celebrated the service of two staff members at Head Office.

Helen, Senior Finance Officer and Jarrod, Getaways Coordinator, have been working at The Bridge for 15 and 20 years respectively – wow!

Helen and Jarrod, pictured with CEO, Mary-Jane, reflected on their career journeys at The Bridge.

So why have they worked here for so long?

They both said their years of service were down to a great team culture, the ability to progress their careers and rewarding work which helps others every day.

We also acknowledged some incredible milestones of Supported Employees at The Bridge Works. Eight Supported Employees were recognised for 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service to The Bridge! Congratulations and thank you for your continued hard work and commitment.

If you are looking for a fulfilling career you can see our current job opportunities at <https://thebridgeinc.org.au/get-involved/work-with-us/>



Sean received his certificate and gift for 5 years of service with The Bridge Works



Giuseppe celebrated an amazing milestone of 20 years service with The Bridge Works!

Improving our manual handling skills

Recently, the Webb Street staff participated in Manual Handling Training with John Champion.

The timing was perfect as staff were able to learn on the newly installed hi-lo change table and hoist. The training was engaging and informative and John provided valuable advice and strategies to ensure we provide individualised, quality care to all our participants, whilst keeping our staff safe and free from harm.



My Kitchen Rules – Clyde Road



Katrina and Hazel

Our Day Service in Berwick has been running their very own "My Kitchen Rules Clyde Rd".

Each Monday, two participants have a cook-off, based on a three course menu that they chose themselves. In the first week we started with Katrina and Hazel who made veggie spring rolls, chicken fried rice and apple pie. Yum! We worked our way through to the My Kitchen Rules Grand Final where we had awards (voted for by participants) for Best Entrée, Best Main, Best Dessert, and Best Menu over all!

It was hotly contested and created great interest amongst the Clyde Rd participants and staff.

Bring on the My Kitchen Rules Clyde Rd, Summer Edition!

The Bridge Works is expanding

This year The Bridge Works became a Certified Social Enterprise, promoting greater work opportunities and viability as well as steady growth in supported employee numbers.

The Bridge Works leaders have ensured all contracts are delivered on time and on budget and maintains an excellent relationship with its commercial clients. We would like to extend our most sincere thanks to every client for their continued, unwavering support through the many challenges we have faced together, and take the opportunity to welcome our new commercial clients who have come on board this year. We look forward to ongoing partnerships that provide meaningful opportunities for our increasing number of supported employees.

Our newest partner Soap Aid helps save the lives of vulnerable children and families in Australia and around the world whilst providing employment opportunities for people with disability as well as young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through Soap Aid's unique circular economy initiative, our staff will be involved in the soap recycling process, including soap sorting, packaging, logistics and much more at Soap Aid's recycling plant, located at The Bridge Works in Cheltenham Road, Dandenong.

Wayne, Business Manager said, "We are very excited at the latest partnership here at The Bridge Works which enhances both the lives of those in need within developing countries and our supported employees."

For more information on Soap Aid, please visit <https://soapaid.org/>



Sincere thanks to every client for their continued, unwavering support

DES success - 2 year grant extension

Our Disability Employment Service (DES) continues to excel in terms of performance. Star Ratings released in June confirmed The Bridge has once again achieved the highest possible performance at 5 Stars. The Bridge was also recognised as the best provider of Employment Services on the Peninsula.

Further to this, the Department has provided a 2-year extension to the current DES Grant. This means we can continue to provide excellent services to our participants across the Peninsula until June 2025.

The Grant extension will allow The Bridge time to explore the expansion of our services - so please watch this space!



Continuing to provide excellent services

Building valuable connections



Mehri and Rakhee

Mehri from The Bridge Employment JVES team attended the Cranbourne Jobs Fair.

Mehri met one of her participants there to introduce her to employers as well as mingle with staff from the City of Casey Council.

Mehri is The Bridge's Casey Council Project Lead and continues to build a strong presence in the community. One connection that Mehri made recently is with Rakhee, Local Employment Facilitator, for the City of Casey. For employment assistance, please call 1800 274 343.

Trent is reaching his goals

Trent commenced his journey with Youth Jobs Now! in 2019. From day one, Trent's goal was to gain work experience within a Library.

Trent has a Diploma of Library and Information Services which he completed at TAFE. With a passion for books, administration and a natural attention to detail it is not hard to see how Trent could be an asset in a library.

An opportunity came up with our partner, Save The Children Australia, within their library and online bookstore. We organised a work experience placement and the other volunteers working alongside Trent were blown away by his work ethic and skills.

As the eight-week program was ending, Trent was offered a permanent volunteer position at the library and online bookstore.

Congratulations Trent!



Staff attended the annual Jobs Victoria Conference

The Annual Jobs Victoria Conference was recently held at Flemington racecourse where our JVES and Job Advocate teams heard some amazing stories and journeys from some truly inspirational people.

Staff were lucky enough to hear from economic and social change thought leaders as well as inspiring speakers like Australian of the Year, Dylan Alcott. Dylan called on employers to hire more people with disability and to understand how best to do this; simply ask questions and listen to those with the lived experience.



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The Bridge Inc. is a
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Officer Community Hub
Officer Vic 3809
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Princes Highway
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Stawell Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977
1800 274 343

Webb Street
Narre Warren Vic 3805
1800 274 343

The Bridge Employment

Disability Employment Services (DES)
Jobs Victoria Employment Service
Jobs Victoria Advocates Program
Casey CALD Youth Employment project
School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)
/ Transition to Work - [Youth Jobs Now!](#)
Supported Employment / Social Enterprise

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