

The Bridge News

April 2022



Jason is proud of his achievements

Whilst chatting to his support worker Paula, Jason shared what he loves most about his 1:1 supports which includes doing "men's" stuff and hands on projects with Matt (Support Worker), while having a coffee and discussing their current and future projects.

He is very proud of the woodwork creations that they have made, with his new outdoor table and chairs on top of the list.

Jason loves learning to cook with Paula and filling his freezer full of nice homemade meals and the chats they have after cooking. Paula has supported him to make an outdoor garden that has produced some tomatoes and herbs that Jason uses in his cooking.

He loves having company and a chat and says the Bridge is "making him very happy with the supports he has".



Message from our CEO Mary-Jane Stolp

It's been wonderful to see the return of all staff and participants to our sites and services as we learn to live and work with COVID. I want to thank everyone once again for persevering with continual changes we were required to implement, to ensure the safety of participants.

Whilst our operations are guided by the Care Directives for the disability sector (often different to those in the wider community) we can again provide our services safely with our COVID-safe plans and strategies working effectively.

Despite the challenges, it's been pleasing to see the development and growth of many of our projects and the development of our new strategic plan for 2022-2024. Our new plan is bold and brave whilst continuing to deliver the quality services you have come to know so well.

By strengthening our marketing efforts and partnerships with like-minded providers, we will continue to grow our services into the future to respond to unmet demand. Our integration work with Connects and Employment Services will continue to ensure The Bridge's signature service model meets community needs into the future. Through the help of our new People, Culture and Quality team we will continue to enhance our systems and workforce capability to support our strategic imperatives and build our reputation as a quality service provider and employer in the sector.

We hope you enjoy the April edition of our newsletter, and the good news stories we love to share.

If you would like to hear more about any specific topics in future editions, please let us know - info@thebridgeinc.org.au

Welcome to the People, Culture and Quality Team

Aligning with The Bridge's vision for the future, the team seeks to create seamless navigation of people services, quality of processes and safety across all sites.

This new team consists of five staff working to deliver people services, Occupational Health and Safety, and Quality processes throughout The Bridge.

Current work includes services to support our people to develop Safety Plans and Standard Operating Procedures in consultation with staff using them, education to deliver effective recruitment and onboarding of staff, volunteers and students and audit support to ensure all services meet compliance and legislative requirements.

We are developing programs that provide a strong, ethical, stable and compliant platform that underpins all that we deliver to our participants to engage learning, fun and the achievement of goals.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

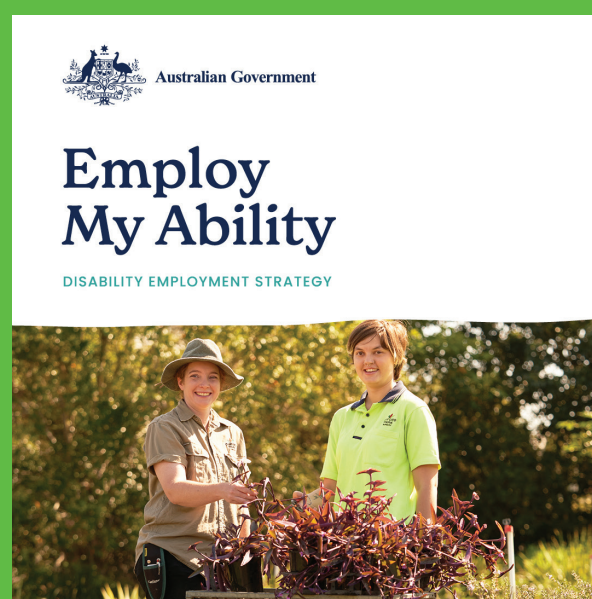
The Bridge is supporting the Teamwork Works Campaign being promoted through our peak body, the National Disability Service. A strong NDIS is crucial for people with a disability, the broader community and the economy. With pressures from the Federal Government to cut access and support levels, it's now even more important to talk about the benefits of the NDIS. You can support the campaign by sharing your story with NDS or through your personal networks/ social media. For more information go to Home - teamwork.org.au

The Bridge continues to closely follow the Royal Commission and public hearings 19-21 involved submissions on barriers to open employment for people with a disability and experiences with Disability Employment Services programs. This information will inform the design of the new disability employment support model and is expected to start in mid-2023. For more information go to <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>

Our services at The Bridge are aligned with government policy and we recommend to you Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, a national framework to improve the lives of people with disability over the next ten years. The Strategy's vision is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfill their potential, as equal members of the community. For more information go to Roadmap - Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 | Disability Gateway

On the next page we have provided an update on Victoria's Disability Plan 2022-26.

A further recent government initiative, *Employ My Ability*, hopes to make meaningful changes to the way supports to jobseekers with disability are delivered, and empower employers to confidently recruit people with disability. We know that businesses, clients, the community and the economy all benefit when more people with disability have jobs and The Bridge's mission and vision is clearly aligned with this goal. For more information go to Disability Employment Strategy | Department of Social Services, Australian Government (dss.gov.au)



The Bridge continues to closely follow the Royal Commission and public hearings 19-21 involved submissions on barriers to open employment for people with a disability and experiences with Disability Employment Services programs.

Victorian Government launches next state disability plan

The Victorian Government has launched **Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026**, which The Bridge fully endorses.

This plan will make Victoria more inclusive of people with disability. It will also make the state more accessible for people with disability.

Dr George Taleporos is the Chair of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council. He said, "People with disability want to live in a Victoria that includes them - a state that is accessible and safe. A state that upholds our rights and celebrates our diversity. And a state that gives us more opportunities to belong and control our lives. We must make sure that people with disability can take part in our community."

To develop Inclusive Victoria, they consulted with:

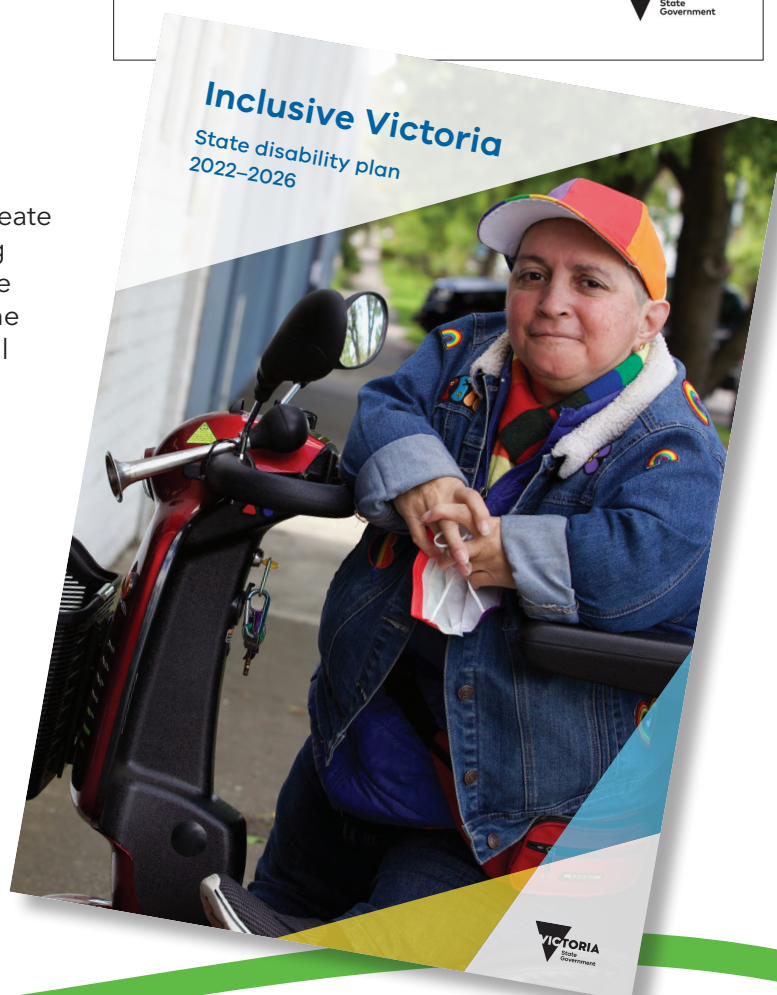
- people with disability
- disabled people's organisations
- self-advocacy groups
- peak bodies.

The plan has steps that everyone can take to create an inclusive state. This includes people working for governments, organisations and those in the community. At The Bridge, we are discussing the plan to ensure we all contribute to its successful implementation for the benefit of the people we support.

View the plan on the [vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan) website (<https://www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan>)

Inclusive Victoria
State Disability Plan 2022-2026

**Making Victoria
fairer and more
inclusive in transport,
health, housing, safety,
education and jobs**



Develop your skills and networks by volunteering at The Bridge

Our amazing volunteers give their time to support our participants in many community activities.

Currently we have several exciting roles available across all services that would suit activity interests such as gardening, cooking, basketball, swimming, work experience skills, sailing and many more!

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and to gain new skills. If you would like to join our dedicated and passionate volunteer team, please email volunteer@thebridgeinc.org.au or call 8710 8520.



Developing 'employability skills' at Officer

Officer Day Service participants recently commenced volunteer work at Myuna Farm in Doveton to support their local community and develop their independence.

Volunteering involves learning many new skills and tasks, such as putting together bundles of tractor ride tickets and preparing feed bags for the visitors to feed all the animals!

The first day of volunteering, involved a demonstration on using equipment safely and

an insight into Occupational Health and Safety at Myuna Farm, before they were off to the pony paddocks to clean up and learn about caring for the animals.

Afterwards they emptied the wheelbarrows into the compost area before tidying up and heading back to Officer.

What a great start to this new program, which will benefit the farm and the participants, and everyone is excited to see where this leads!



What is NDIS Support Coordination?

Support Coordination can help you to make the best use of the supports in your NDIS plan. Support Coordination can assist you to:

- understand how you can use your NDIS plan to achieve your goals.
- work with other people in your circle of support including family, friends, service providers, therapists, community and mainstream supports.
- teach you how to access the NDIS portal to monitor how your funds are being spent.
- monitor the progress and outcomes of achieving your goals.
- prepare for your next NDIS review meeting.
- build your confidence and skills to use and coordinate your supports.

We have recently welcomed Michael, Cunxia and Louise to our Support Coordination team. They bring a wealth of knowledge and skills which complement our existing team.

Support Coordinators – Louise, Michael and Cunxia



Bigger and better than ever – the Hallam Disco is back!

The much anticipated Hallam Disco recommenced in March following a 2-year hiatus, due to COVID restrictions!

The Bridge Hallam Disco is held on the first Saturday of each month – except for January. We have professional DJ's each month and security on site. Disco dancing and singing are healthy physical activities and so much fun for people of any age or ability. We hope you can join us for the next one. Please note, all in attendance need to provide evidence of being fully vaccination on entry.

To book, please call the Getaways team on 8710 8588.



Achieve your goals with Getaways

Since COVID restrictions have eased, Getaways has had plenty of fun with exciting weekends away and day activities, which include trips into the City / Fed Square, Churchill Island Heritage Farm, Melbourne Zoo, Beatles Tribute Show, Puffing Billy, Le Mans Go-Karts, live music and lunch.

Getaways can help you achieve your goals by getting into the community, socialising and taking a break.

If these activities and trips away sound like something you are interested in, please contact Getaways via getaways@thebridgeinc.org.au

Up-coming activities we are looking forward to include Tina Turner Tribute Show, The Old Melbourne Gaol, Twisted Science, Melbourne Ice Bar and more weekends away to a range of different locations.



DES is a 5 Star service

Our high performing DES team at The Bridge has once again exceeded expectations and attained 5 stars for its services compared to the rest of Australia.

A recent audit reinforced they are a leading service offering job seekers tailored, personalised service and a pathway to suitable employment.

Part of their success is excellent customer service, good job matching and sustained employment for 52 weeks. The DES team build healthy partnerships with employers who carry the same ethos as The Bridge, to employ people with disabilities in real jobs with real wages.

Moving forward we are looking to expand DES services beyond the Peninsula and support even more job seekers into the future.

Watch this space ...



Suhaila secures her first job in Australia!

Suhaila was born and raised in Afghanistan and came to Australia in 2019, for a better life.

Suhaila attended our Jobs Victoria Employment Service where she gained skills and training in resume writing and undertook mock interviews. With the assistance of Mehri, Jobs Victoria Mentor, Suhaila secured employment at a Vodafone Store, in January of this year.

Congratulations Suhaila!

Celebrating International Women's Day

The Bridge demonstrated its support of International Women's Day (IWD) through a range of internal and external activities to celebrate how far women of all abilities have come in their struggle for equality, peace and development. For more information, visit our LinkedIn page.

The team at Cheltenham Road also came together to network and celebrate IWD over a cuppa and sharing their amazing stories.



L to R (back row) - Kelly, Monawar, Sara, Bree, Cassie
L to R (front row) - Marzieh, Zainab



Sara

"I have been working at The Bridge for two years. I started as a process worker on the Sonic Healthcare production line and gradually became the Leading Hand.

Recently, representatives from Sonic come from NSW for an annual onsite audit at Cheltenham Road. It was very successful, and the representatives were very happy with the quality and attention to detail on the production line, which was a wonderful acknowledgement of our efforts.

I am so happy working at The Bridge and enjoy coming to work each morning."



Sumaiya

With limited opportunities, especially for women, Sumaiya and her family moved from Pakistan to Australia in 2013.

Sumaiya completed high school in 2016 and then studied a Certificate IV in Medical Business. In 2018, Sumaiya secured a role as a process worker at Cheltenham Road. Her manager observed her professionalism and natural ability to connect and support the Supported Employees and as a result she was offered a role as a Training and Support Officer.

Sumaiya's goal of financially supporting herself and her family was no longer a dream, but a reality. Sumaiya is grateful to The Bridge for supporting her in her career, which she finds so rewarding.

Employment success for Dinuka

Dinuka, a past participant of YJN!, came in to specifically thank Employment Coach, Olivia, for her assistance and support.

Whilst attending YJN! he gained the necessary skills and confidence to take the next step in his employment journey. Dinuka has now gained open employment and has also embarked on writing a book of his experiences so far.

The team is immensely proud of Dinuka's achievements and honoured to be part of his employment journey.



Employment Coach, Olivia, and Dinuka

Chris is achieving his career goals

"I started working at The Bridge Employment, Cheltenham Road, in 2005. It was the first job I ever had.

Over the years, staff have supported me with training and upskilling. One of my goals was to gain my forklift driving licence. I was supported by staff to reach this goal and now you will often see me unloading and loading stock allocation in the warehouse.

Being part of The Bridge Employment has made me feel part of a team and I have learned many skills. I am proud to be able to contribute to the workforce and feel very privileged to have had the support from staff to gain the knowledge and skills I have today."



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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

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Athol Road
Springvale South Vic 3172
1800 274 343

Clyde Road
Berwick Vic 3806
1800 274 343

Officer Community Hub
Officer Vic 3809
1800 274 343

Stawell Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977
1800 274 343

The Hub
Dandenong Vic 3175
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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- visiting our website www.thebridgeinc.org.au

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