

The Bridge News

August 2022



Updating the work environment for our teams

After 10 years at The Hub in Dandenong, our business supports team at Head Office have been relocated to 33 Princes Highway, Dandenong. The new location is more contemporary, with better amenities for our teams and room to grow as we continue to expand our services into the future.

We are also finalising plans to move Dandenong Day Service (based at The Hub) to 31 Princes Highway, just next door. Shortly after, Dandenong Day Service will be joined by Youth Jobs Now!,

so both services are co-located providing a bigger range of activities and opportunities for participants to develop employability skills.

Our Board and management team are delighted to be able to integrate these services to enhance available options and achieve many benefits for the people we support.

 **The Bridge**



Message from our CEO Mary-Jane Stolp

While Covid-19 has brought with it many changes – how we work, live and support our vulnerable communities – The Bridge continues to adapt and is excited about the future.

Progress with our strategic and business plans is continuing with the relocation of our Head Office, commencement of Stage C of our Park Grove development and approval of the building project for our new site at Slattery Place, Pakenham. We have appointed David Kazakoff as our new General Manager for Employment services and feel excited about his plans to lead our employment services strategy.

In other news, our Client Experience Committee, a sub-committee of our Board, commenced in April and gives participants / carers an important 'voice at the table' to enhance our services.

We hope you enjoy the August edition of our newsletter. Thank you to our wonderful team of employees and volunteers at The Bridge. We are proud of your ongoing contribution and resilience despite the challenges of delivering services during Covid-19.



Stay well this winter

We want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to have your flu shot and ensure you are up to date with your covid vaccinations.

A fourth (booster) dose is recommended for those over the age of 30 who received their 3rd vaccine dose more than 3 months ago. Please also note medicine is now available for eligible people who have Covid-19 to prevent them from getting sick and requiring hospital care.

Finally, the free rapid antigen tests (RAT) program for eligible Victorians with a disability has been extended to 30 September 2022.

Thank you for your continued vigilance in helping keep The Bridge community safe.

Reaching goals through D.I.Y. workshop at Bunnings

Bunnings is committed to participating in the communities in which they operate by regularly conducting D.I.Y. workshops for local community groups, including our Day Services.

Workshops are tailored to the needs of each community group and can include gardening, craft, woodwork, water and energy saving activities.

Stawell Street Day Service attended a plant potting workshop where they used their skills to paint a pot in the colours and design of their choosing. They then potted a plant!

Participants really enjoyed this experience to develop their skills, interact with the Bunnings staff and be a part of the community. Bunnings also kindly donated paint sticks for the Stawell Street Creative Art Program.

Thanks to Bunnings Cranbourne for all their support!



Achieving community inclusion



Sometimes we are lucky enough to come across some great opportunities for participants by connecting with members of the community looking to make a difference in their own way.

Sochettra and Ian were absolutely delighted to not only go to Dart World for their fortnightly darts session with the boys, but they were also presented with their very own jerseys, so that when they go and play, they feel like part of the team!

Ian was thrilled to be able to go home to his mum and show off his new super suave look.

If you support someone you think might enjoy hanging out with the boys every fortnight, please let us know!

Strengthening employability with qualifications

In April, 10 participants from our Officer, Clyde Road, and Stawell Street Day Services teamed up to complete a Certificate in Work Skills, hosted at Stawell Street and run by the wonderful trainer Heidi, from Access Australia Group.

Each week participants worked individually and in groups developing their knowledge on various topics to get them work ready. Topics included soft and hard skills, time management, and effective communication. Throughout the course participants were encouraged to consider jobs they would like in the future and the skills and learnings required to be able to achieve employment in the field. Participants were pushed outside their comfort zones, getting to know each other, staff from different services and sharing their strengths and barriers in an open forum.

All 10 participants successfully completed the 12-week course, so we had a graduation celebration where participants were awarded their certificates, while donning a graduation hat!

We congratulate all the participants for the efforts in paving a pathway to their future employment!



Enjoying local community attractions

Getaways recently visited TwistED Science in Moorabbin, which thrives on curiosity, how things come to be, how they work, move and feel!

Participants interacted with the amazing installations while enjoying the fun of science through play. TwistED Science encourage visitors to be brave and try things out in a way that is inclusive for people of all ages, ability and culture.

Everyone had a great time, in particular Michelle who had a ball creating the world's biggest bubble!

Supporting participants to overcome obstacles to work

Noman came to Australia in November 2021 from Afghanistan. He was looking for warehousing work and wanted to work full-time.

As Noman did not drive or have solid English language skills, he found it difficult to find sustainable employment. Our Jobs Victoria Employment Service (JVES) initially placed him with Labour Power, but soon discovered that shifts ending outside the hours of public transport would not work. The team brainstormed solutions with Noman, identifying the benefits of a bike to shorten his travel time from the station to his place of work.

As Noman struggled with reading the instructions, the JVES team came together and built the bike onsite with Noman, greatly boosting morale for the team and inspiring Noman for future success.

Go Noman and go JVES Team!



My NDIS app

The My NDIS app (an initiative rolled out by the National Disability Insurance Agency) gives participants a more accessible and user-friendly way to:

- Make and manage claims
- View their budget
- View plan information and personal details.

NDIS participants, carers and supporters are encouraged to try out the app and provide feedback.

The My NDIS mobile app will work alongside the Myplace participant portal to help participants quickly, easily and flexibly manage their NDIS plans.

Connecting participants with work opportunities

After working for The Bridge Works for over 20 years, Giuseppe continues to upskill and develop knowledge and skills in many areas on production.

Recently, the Training and Support Officers have been supporting Giuseppe with repackaging for our newest customer, Little Green Panda.

As a result, Giuseppe has successfully worked on the straw production line for the past few weeks and is meeting his KPI's and conducting quality checks with ease. Giuseppe takes a lot of pride in his work at all times!



Supporting participants to work



Training and Support Officers support Monica with her communication while she is working on our production lines. Monica's speech therapist, Natalie, attends The Bridge Works on a regular basis to upskill staff on how to effectively communicate with Monica and best support development of Monica's communication skills.

A lanyard of pictures / cue cards was created for Monica, enabling her to increase her communication skills and communicate with co-workers and staff.

Monica uses the communication cards effectively with staff to ask for more stock if she runs out and is a very productive member of the team.

Working collaboratively to secure employment

The DES team is working collaboratively to secure suitable, tailored employment for participants, regardless of age, gender, or circumstances.

John was placed into a delivery driver role and after 52 weeks of being anchored and maintaining his role, John has been exited as an independent worker. John is now off Centrelink payments and has stated, "I love my job". He works well above his benchmark hours and truly loves his job.

The DES team believe in close employer relations allowing the team to offer 'on the job' and 'off the job' support to help build confidence and overcome any barriers to work.

Well done, John on your outstanding performance.



(L to R): Michael (CEO UPPAREL), Shane, Chan, Leon (participants of Youth Jobs Now!) and Theodore (Warehouse Supervisor UPPAREL)

Partnering with organisations who share our values

After eight weeks of work experience, three participants of Youth Jobs Now! (YJN!) have gained open employment with UPPAREL, a leading organisation in textile upcycling.

One of the participants, Leon, has shown vast improvement in employability since he commenced. Leon accesses both group and one to one supports and first presented with low confidence and demeanour. Leon would often have his head down and cover his face. When spoken to Leon would shake his head, avoid eye contact and not verbally respond.

Our coaches immediately addressed this by providing Leon with physical examples of how confidence can be portrayed and practising this with role plays in both services.

Having recently joined UPPAREL Theodore, Warehouse Supervisor, stated 'the real drive for me to come and work for UPPAREL was hearing about their partnership with YJN!'.

We are thrilled to have partnered with an organisation that aligns with The Bridge's values.

The Bridge Inc.

Registered Office

Level 1
33 Princes Highway
Dandenong Vic 3175

03 8710 8555
info@thebridgeinc.org.au
www.thebridgeinc.org.au

Postal Address

PO Box 7030
Dandenong Vic 3175

Service Enquiries

1800 BRIDGE
1800 274 343
enquiries@thebridgeinc.org.au

The Bridge Inc. is a
registered NDIS provider



The Bridge Connects

Main Office

Level 1
33 Princes Highway
Dandenong Vic 3175

03 8710 8555
info@thebridgeconnects.org.au

Getaways

03 8710 8588

Your Supports

03 8710 8555

NDIS Support Coordination

03 8710 8555

Day Services:

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

Main Office

Level 1
33 Princes Highway
Dandenong Vic 3175

03 8710 8555
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

Suite 8

108-120 Young Street
Frankston Vic 3199
03 9784 3888
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

Suite 2

387-389 Springvale Road
Springvale Vic 3171
03 9546 2892
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

95A Cheltenham Road

Dandenong Vic 3175
03 9792 2662
info@thebridgeemployment.com.au

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