

The Bridge News

December 2021



Getaways are back!

With the easing of COVID restrictions Getaways are back in full swing with a fantastic variety of day activities and weekends away in the community.

All participants and staff are very excited for the fun and relaxation this is bringing right before Christmas. Please keep an eye out for our next exciting calendar of events, for January, February and March 2022. We are sure there will be something for everybody!

Getaways can also tailor day activities or weekends away to suite your needs including trips for small friendship groups. The Hallam Disco is a hot topic now with many enquiries on when this will re-commence. We are trying our best to get the disco started as soon as possible and safely, as venues still have density limits. Stay tuned for further details!

Contact Getaways on 03 8710 8588 or via Getaways@thebridgeinc.org.au to make a booking.

Merry Christmas!

We are close to the end of another challenging year!

Thank you to all our participants, families and carers for your continued support of The Bridge.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a healthy and fun festive season.

We look forward to seeing you all in 2022!



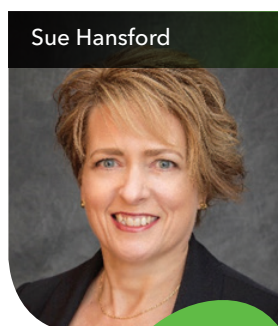


Message from our CEO Mary-Jane Stolp

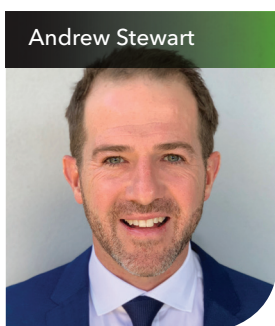
Although living with COVID brings complexity to our service models and the way we deliver our services, The Bridge continues to adapt to ensure services continue for the people we support. With renewed optimism we are looking towards Christmas and a New Year filled with possibilities!

In October we launched our newest online service - Mates Online - providing opportunities for skill development and enhancing independence, health and wellbeing and social connection. These services are available at a range of different times and days based on uptake. For a copy of the activities schedule please contact enquiries@thebridgeinc.org.au

Recently, we conducted our Annual General Meeting and updated The Bridge's Constitution to enable us to expand our Board and introduce fresh expertise, supporting corporate governance and positioning the organisation for the future. We welcomed Andrew Stewart and Sue Hansford to our experienced Board and congratulated our new Chair of the Board, Sue Banks. We thank Jim Hall for his wise stewardship of the Board over the last 9 years and appreciate his continuing involvement.



Sue Hansford



Andrew Stewart

A new Board sub-committee will commence in 2022, focusing on 'customer experience' and will include a member of our Community Voice Advisory Group to ensure input from the people we support continues to shape our service models.

The Bridge is again sponsoring the 7News Young Achiever Awards which acknowledge, encourage and promote the positive achievements of young people, up to 29 years of age, and showcase their achievements whilst paying tribute to their vision, innovation and commitment to their community. Awards are open until 14 December 2021, for more information please go to <https://www.awardsaustralia.com/young-achiever-awards/vic/award-entry-criteria/>

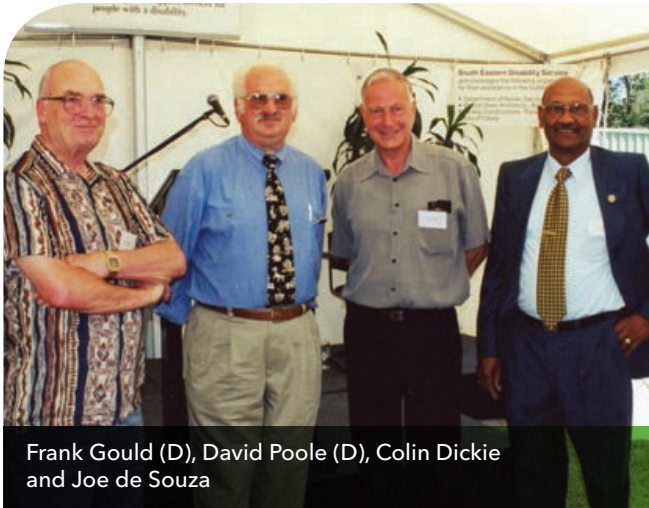


The Disability Royal Commission has recently published an overview of responses to their 'promoting inclusion issues paper'. We are discussing the findings and recommendations to achieve a more inclusive society through our Community Voice Advisory Group and management team to identify how The Bridge can best contribute to progress in this important area. For more information go to <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/responses-promoting-inclusion-issues-paper>

In other news, Stage B of Park Grove development is almost complete and we received approval for our new service in Pakenham. We hope to commence both Connects and Employment services from 2023 as one of our key strategic projects to meet ongoing demand for our services.

As we put our energy into scaling our services back up and preparing for our new strategic plan, we want to thank all staff and management for their extraordinary efforts in helping The Bridge get through COVID. With our new leadership team almost fully in place, it's a great time to be part of our progressive and innovative organisation.

Remembering David Poole and Leone Chirgwin



Frank Gould (D), David Poole (D), Colin Dickie and Joe de Souza

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of David Poole and Leone Chirgwin.

David was a Life Governor and one of the founding members of The Bridge in the early 1970s. David's daughter Tracey, attended Urimbirra, as it was known then, and is still involved in day services at The Bridge today. David was President of the Board on two separate occasions during the 1990s and early 2000s. David also has a son, Stephen, brother to Tracey.



Leonie Chirgwin with son, Adam

Leonie was a very active contributor at The Bridge. Leone's son Adam also attended Urimbirra in the early days and has continued to be involved over the decades. Adam is currently employed as a Supported Employee at our Cheltenham Rd warehouse and accesses Dandenong Day Service. Leone was a member of the Board in the early 2000s and was also involved in our Community Voice Advisory Group.

David and Leone contributed so much to The Bridge over the years, helping to make it the thriving organisation it is today and they will be greatly missed.

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Mocktail fun!

With COVID-19 restrictions in place over the last few months, Officer Day Service continued to trial fun and exciting new activities on site which also enabled opportunities to develop skills.

Mocktail making was a highlight for all, where participants played bartender and made some exciting concoctions which were very tasty! The focus was on increasing independent living skills for everyone in a safe and supportive environment. It was great to see the enthusiasm and willingness to try new things and see their creativity in action.



Volunteering benefits everyone



Are you interested in getting involved in The Bridge community?

Here at The Bridge, there are many ways to volunteer. Volunteering is beneficial for your own personal and professional development and can be very satisfying. Volunteers are involved in activities to assist participants with independence, gaining new skills, keeping fit and socialising.

There are a range of roles to suit your personal interests, skills and experience such as activities assistant, employment coaching and event helper.

By volunteering with The Bridge, you will be helping make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

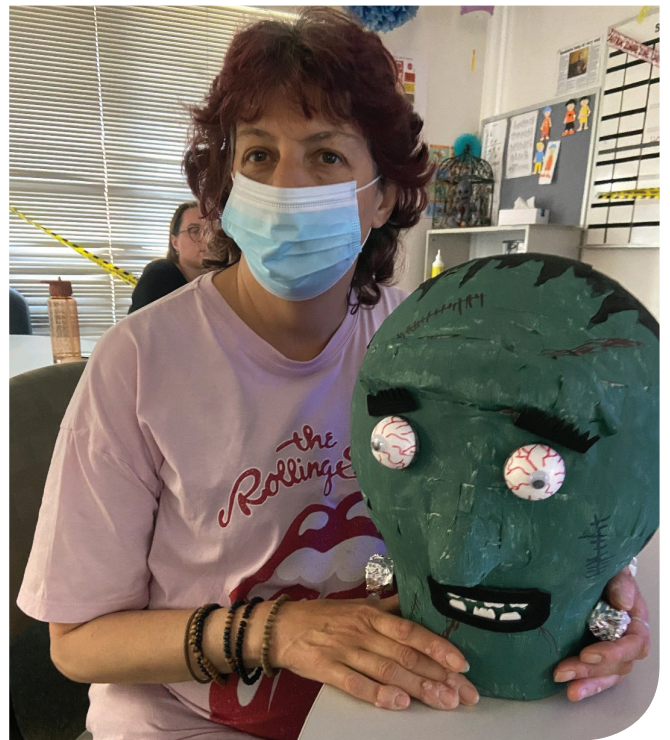
For further information and to register your interest, please email volunteer@thebridgeinc.org.au or call 03 8710 8520.

Getting into the spooky spirit

Stawell St Day Service enjoyed all things fun and spooky for Halloween to the delight of everyone involved.

Participants worked for a couple of weeks preparing Halloween decorations to hang up around the centre. One of the highlights was Rosina's amazing scary paper mache head which she spent four weeks creating!

The participants and staff had a lot of fun dancing at the Halloween themed disco in the morning and enjoyed spooky themed food like green egg sandwiches and eyeball jelly for lunch!



Closed for Christmas

The Bridge Connects Day Services will be closed from 24th December 2021 through to 4th January 2022 inclusive and will reopen on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

Your Supports and Getaways will continue to operate during this time for regular shifts and respite or supports whilst day services are closed.

Merry Christmas!

Disability Employment Service (DES)

Congratulations to our DES team who achieved a 5 Star rating for the last three quarters in a row (December, March and June). Achieving a 5 Star rating indicates the best performance in terms of delivering DES and achieving employment outcomes for participants compared to our competitors and the national average.

Our DES Manager, Soula, along with her Senior Employment Consultant, Anna, are bringing together a new power team to continue their success and grow our service as a provider of choice and beyond in the Peninsula area. As a 5 Star service we are considered leaders by the Department and our peers and recent feedback reiterates our good reputation with an experienced management team who are continuously improving to meet customer needs.

Feedback from Damien – "I was unemployed for about six years, multiple health conditions, no confidence and no idea what I was able to do. I started working with Anna who was patient and very supportive till I finally got my ideal role. The Bridge Employment has changed my life and I definitely agree they are a 5 Star provider!"



Jobs Victoria Employment Service



Maxine came to the Jobs Victoria Employment Service team in a time of hardship, desperately hoping to find a role where she can grow. Working with one of the team's long-time employers, Kwik Bins, Maxine was quickly deemed suitable after a short interview.

She is an absolute natural with her happy go lucky attitude, great people skills and relevant work experience and quickly commenced as a full-time administration and customer service attendant.

Since commencing, Maxine has gone from strength to strength and is now working at the front of the office and has taken on a more senior role. Whilst the Jobs Victoria Employment Service team will continue to support Maxine with any challenges she may face in her employment journey, we could not be prouder of the gusto with which Maxine has taken on this new challenge in her working life.

Well done Maxine!

Youth Jobs Now!

Youth Jobs Now! has been exploring various employment sectors with a strong emphasis on Employability Skills. The training sessions which are delivered, both onsite and online, have a highly interactive content which is then put into practice by discussions, role plays or mock experiences. This way, each participant has the opportunity to demonstrate, skill-build and have fun while doing so!

This month's focus is on hospitality and Youth Jobs Now! will be embarking on a Master Chef Challenge incorporating practical experience building on the theory taught in the training sessions. These experiences are then showcased in our monthly newsletters which are distributed to families and carers.



Cheltenham Rd

After some extensive lockdowns we are seeing the return of some staff and ramping up production. We have been able to recruit new staff and give more opportunities to more people. Pictured here is Cassie, one of our Supported Employees, working hard on our Sonic Healthcare production line.

The Bridge is committed to the health and wellbeing of everyone we support and to encourage vaccination uptake we undertook on-site vaccinations at both Cheltenham Rd and Webb St with the help of Aspen Medical and involving 130 people which was fantastic. Many other health and wellbeing initiatives have been organised by our Health and Wellbeing Committee including weekly Revitalise@TheBridge newsletters and activities, education on resilience and mindfulness and mental health first-aid.



The Bridge Inc.

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The Bridge Inc. is a
registered NDIS provider



The Bridge Connects

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Your Supports
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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

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