

The Bridge News

December 2023

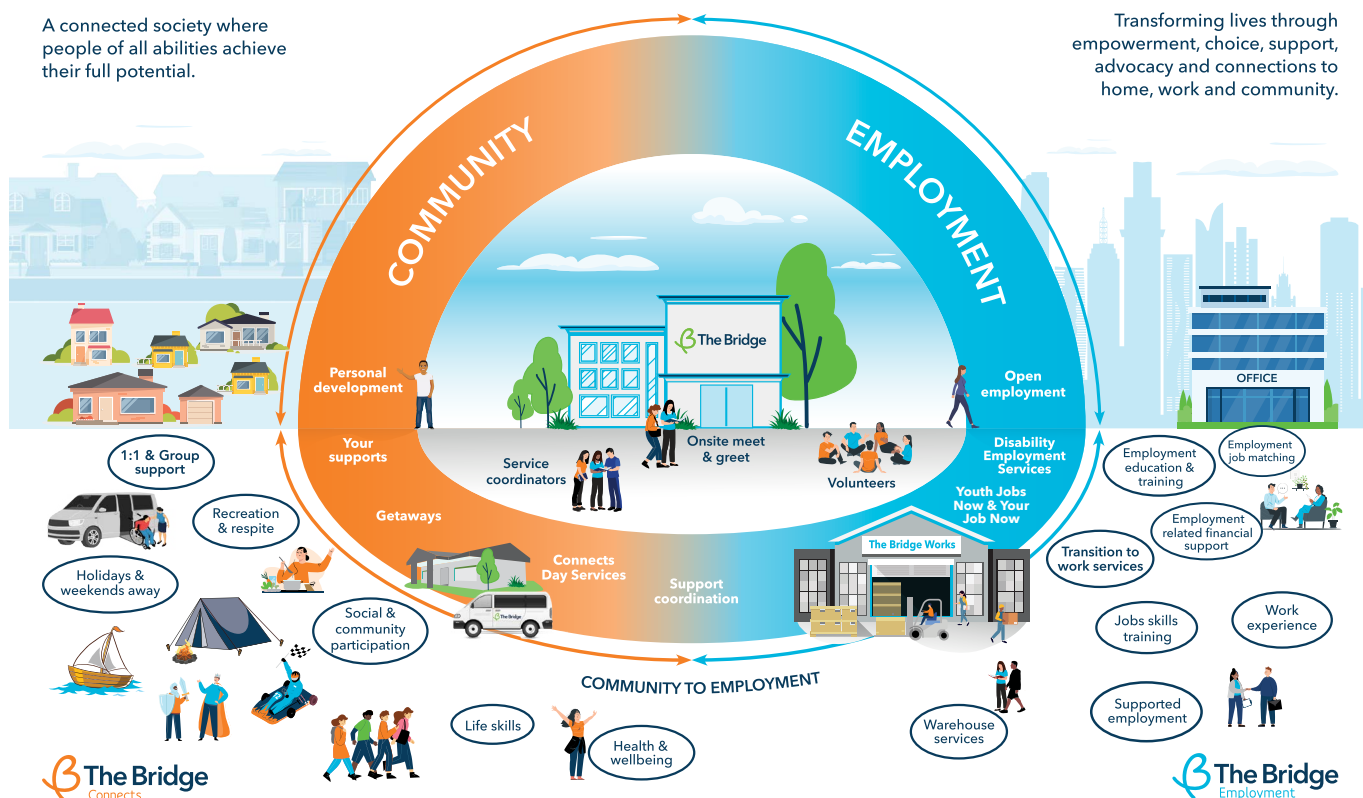


Our Vision:

A connected society where people of all abilities achieve their full potential.

Our Mission:

Transforming lives through empowerment, choice, support, advocacy and connections to home, work and community.

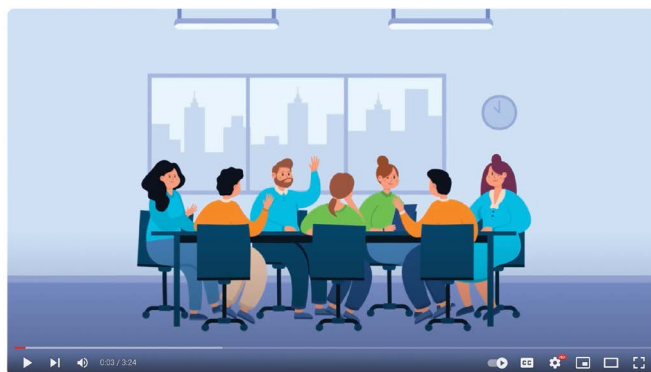


Our Service Model is now animated!

In 1970, a group of committed community members met in the Supper Room of City Hall in Springvale with a vision to form a group that would build a centre for local people with disability. Fast forward 53 years and we have The Bridge as we know it today!

Services now include group-based Day Services, Your Supports group and one to one activities, Getaways' group-based after hours and weekend activities, NDIS Support Coordination, Disability Employment Services, Youth Jobs Now transition to employment services, and Supported Employment via The Bridge Works.

Our service model has been animated to show the various community and employment services available at The Bridge and how they can be accessed. Head to YouTube and search for 'The Bridge Inc' to watch this animation and more!





Message from our CEO Mary-Jane Stolp

Over the last six months, The Bridge has remained focused on achieving our strategic priorities. We have expanded our services to Pakenham and Mornington and enhanced our service delivery models in Connects and Employment. To ensure an outstanding client experience, with the help of our Board Client Experience Committee and Community Voice Advisory Group, we have developed suitable measures to help us evaluate the impact of our services into the future.

From a workforce perspective our people and culture initiatives are supporting our teams to provide safe, quality services that help participants achieve their goals and transform their lives. Our workforce is growing and we remain committed to ensuring we recruit high calibre individuals with the values needed to be part of The Bridge team.

In response to the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS review, we will continue to improve and transform our service to meet the needs of the people we support. Shortly we will commence our consultation process to identify our strategic priorities beyond 2024. Please contact us via info@thebridgeinc.org.au if you would like to provide input into this process.

We thank our wonderful people for their continued efforts and look forward to welcoming you to our newest service locations at Noble Park and Beaconsfield in early 2024.

Best wishes for the festive season.

The Bridge 2023 AGM

Our AGM for 2023 was held in October at Bunjil Place in Narre Warren. Don Elgin, Paralympian and Author was our guest speaker. Our Board of Directors and staff attended including the recipients of our Outstanding Achievement and Recognition of Service Awards for this year.

It was a wonderful event and great to see so many of our participants, families and carers come together.



Merry Christmas!

Now delivering NDIS services in Pakenham!

The Bridge was thrilled to commence services at our newest facility in Pakenham. This multi-purpose centre at Slattery Place is ideally situated to provide disability services to the area's growing population. We will eventually provide our full range of community and employment services but for the immediate future, our initial focus is on our disability day services and transition to employment services.



In August, we held an open event, and it was a full house! We had a wonderful turn out and everyone enjoyed a welcome coffee by social enterprise caterers L'Arte Central on arrival, before experiencing an interactive traditional smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country by Biik Bundjil. Speeches then followed from guest speakers Emma Vulin, State Member for Pakenham and Tammy Radford, Mayor of Pakenham discussing the importance of having disability and inclusion services in the area. Guests then enjoyed some morning tea and had tours of the new facility which provides Connects Day Services, Support Coordination and Youth Jobs Now transition to work services. It was a great way to officially open our latest centre and welcome people from the industry as well as the local community to have a look around.

Successful specialist school expo roadshows

The Bridge has wrapped up its specialist school expo roadshows for 2023 where we met with school leavers to chat about joining our School Leavers Employment Services (SLES), our Day Services, Supported Employment or Your Supports and Getaways options.

Nicole (pictured) from The Bridge Intake team attended all the expos along with various Service Coordinators and Youth Jobs Now and DES Employment Coaches. From these expos, several families from the schools have attended tours at our various day service sites and Youth Jobs Now to find out firsthand about The Bridge services. It has been great to meet with potential participants and their families as they make the big decision of what their next steps are when they finish school.



Congratulations to Special Olympics winner Paul

Paul has been participating in the Special Olympics since 1990. He has competed in the sports of bocce, swimming, basketball and bowling.

Paul has received awards for being a fantastic ambassador for the Special Olympics and encouraging other participants to get involved. He has traveled to Western Australia to assist and support other athletes, including his brother Steven (in swimming) and sister Heather (in gymnastics).

Well done Paul on your most recent medals at the Special Olympics in Berlin, in June this year. What an awesome achievement!



Positive feedback from our team



Our staff survey results for 2023 are in!

The Bridge, along with 340 other Not-For-Profit organisations asked their staff to anonymously fill out staff surveys this year. We are pleased to see The Bridge is now ranked in the top 10% of NFP providers for many items!

We have improved substantially in:

- Investment in people - supporting employees in growth and development
- Long term direction - ensuring everyone understands their roles at The Bridge
- Senior Leadership - communication and connectedness within teams
- Team Leadership and Effectiveness

Mary-Jane Stolp, The Bridge CEO said, "We are delighted this year's results again confirm our positive workplace culture achieved by our high performing teams across The Bridge".

Expanding our employment services

Our Disability Employment Services (DES) have expanded to the Mornington Peninsula!

The DES team have been busy using feedback to refresh sites and services. In May, they renovated their Frankston office to create a welcoming space for clients. A new partnership with Foodbank (the largest hunger relief charity in Australia) means a fully stocked pantry for those participants at the Frankston office. In August, the new office in Mornington opened to grow employment services on the Peninsula.

Working closely with other Employment services at The Bridge (our supported employment warehouse at The Bridge Works and Youth Jobs Now - our transition to work service) the DES team can help even more participants to move into open employment and achieve their goals.



Works Cleaning Crew started

A new micro-business has been born! With a generous donation from John and Judy who have family connections at The Bridge Works, The Bridge Works Cleaning Crew launched in July as a mobile cleaning business initially commissioned to clean some of The Bridge sites across SE Melbourne.

This awesome opportunity will create more prospects for staff and new supported employees to gain employment. David Kazakoff, General Manager, The Bridge Employment said, "We are super excited to have started this new micro-business at The Bridge Works and we hope to expand the program and clean many more of our sites across The Bridge in the future. Well done guys!"



Youth Jobs Now partner with Save The Children

Our partnership between Save The Children and Youth Jobs Now, our transition to work service, successfully trialled a new 8-week volunteering program. Save The Children were looking to diversify their volunteering options and teamed up with Youth Jobs Now in Dandenong. Participants worked at the Save The Children op shop in Dandenong and over 8 weeks, they gained retail experience to sort donations, merchandise products, manage the book library, work behind the counter, and assist customers.

"Young people and disabled people often struggle to enter the workforce," says Carly Lahana, National Volunteer Manager for Retail at Save The Children. "By partnering with these young people, we're both expanding our volunteer pool, pioneering future volunteering practises that are more inclusive, and giving our volunteers skills and experience they can use to take into the workforce and into their future more generally."

The program was so successful that one of the participants, Trent (pictured), has permanently stayed on using his skills in the book library - go Trent!



Graduation of participants from the Bridging The Gap course

It was graduation day for Dandenong Day Service participants who successfully completed their 'Bridging The Gap' course!

Initial assessments identified gaps in learning and focus areas for the course to help participants achieve their goals for employment independence or inclusion. It has been amazing to watch the group come together over the last 12 months and see their potential grow, not just as individuals but as a united team.

Tammie Stokes, Acting Service Coordinator said, "This course has challenged our participants on many levels, socially, intellectually, and also with life skills. Shelia from Go Work Skills has been amazing with our guys and has built up a real bond with them over the last 12 months."

Every single student that graduated can be proud of themselves. It was a massive commitment over a long period of time and challenged everyone to dig deep, put the work in and then get the results."



Getaways fly to Sydney

The Getaways team organised another interstate trip for some lucky participants - this time to Sydney and by plane!

The plane ride went without a hitch and by mid-afternoon the participants had safely arrived at The Meriton Suites Bondi Junction. The trip was action packed and filled with fun adventures including a trip to the top of Sydney's Eye Tower, visiting the Home and Away set (and meeting character 'Kirby'), a day at Taronga Zoo and a visit to Madam Tussauds. The trip was a huge success and as the third interstate trip for Getaways, planning is well underway to visit other States in the next 12 months.



Travelling in style

Our vehicles at The Bridge have had a facelift. We branded all our participant buses and vans at our day service sites and The Bridge Works. Participants helped to prepare their own buses and vans by giving them a thorough clean before they were branded. Everyone is thrilled with the new look!

Look out around the areas of Dandenong, Narre Warren, Cranbourne, Berwick, Springvale and Pakenham and give our participants a wave as they travel around to their activities.



The Bridge Inc.

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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

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NDIS Support Coordination

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Hub31

Dandenong Vic 3175
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Slattery Place Hub

Pakenham Vic 3810
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Stawell Street

Cranbourne Vic 3977
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Webb Street

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

Disability Employment Services (DES)

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Youth Jobs Now (ages 16-24)

Your Job Now (ages 25+)

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Disability Employment Services Provider
Certified Social Enterprise
Registered NDIS Provider



thebridgeinc.org.au