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What is ndis ?

THE National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a scheme of the Australian Government that funds costs associated with disability.

The scheme was legislated in 2013 and went into full operation in 2020.

There are around 4.3 million Australians who have a disability.

Within the next five years, the NDIS will provide more than \$22 billion in funding a year to an estimated 500,000 Australians who have permanent and significant disability.

For many people, it will be the first time they receive the disability support they need.

The NDIS can provide all people with disability with information and connections to services in their communities such as doctors, sporting clubs, support groups, libraries and schools, as well as information about what support is provided by each state and territory government.

The scheme entitles people with a "permanent and significant" disability (under the age of 65), to full funding for any "reasonable and necessary" support needs related to their disability (subject to certain restrictions).

Funding is allocated to the individual, and the individual or their guardian chooses which providers supply the funded goods

and services (subject to certain restrictions).

THE NDIS HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY TO:

- Access mainstream services and supports – like the health system and education systems
- Access community services and supports – like sports clubs, community groups and charities
- Maintain informal supports – like the help people get from their family and friends. This is support people don't pay for and is generally part of most people's lives
- Get reasonable and necessary funded supports – related to their disability and needed for them to live an ordinary life

NDIS - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

National: The NDIS is being introduced progressively across all states and territories.

Disability: The NDIS provides support to eligible people with intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability. Early intervention supports can also be provided for eligible people with disability or children with developmental delay.

Insurance: The NDIS gives all Australians peace of mind if they, their child or loved one is born with or acquires a permanent and significant disability, they will get the support they need.

Scheme: The NDIS is not

a welfare system. The NDIS is designed to help people get the support they need so their skills and independence improve over time.

NDIS KEY WORDS

Permanent and significant disability: A permanent disability means your disability is likely to be lifelong. A significant disability has a substantial impact on your ability to complete everyday activities.

Supports and services: Assistance or products that help a person in their daily life and help them participate in the community and reach their goals.

Early intervention: Providing support to a person, either a child or an adult, as early as possible to reduce the impacts of disability or developmental delay and to build their skills and independence.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE NDIS:

In order to access the NDIS, people need to meet the access requirements. These include:

- Having a permanent and significant disability that affects your ability to take part in everyday activities.
- Being under 65 years of age when you first join the scheme.
- Being an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen who holds a Protected Special Category Visa.
- Living in a NDIS area.

Confidence in the future

Phoebe Doyle

WHEN Karra Taranto was diagnosed with autism at age three, her parents were told by her paediatrician that she would never talk, go to school or even kinder, and never read or write.

"Virtually, he was really blunt and says that she would never amount to anything," mum June Thorogood says.

"But she proved them wrong."

Not only did Karra, now 19, learn to talk, write and make it through kinder, she has gone on to finish Year 12, get her Certificate III in Screen and Media, and is learning to drive.

While June's efforts have been a big catalyst in Karra's successes so far, she also believes a lot of her development is due to the supports they have been able to gain through the NDIS.

"Her father and I thought she would be one that fell through the cracks," June says.

"Living here in Birchip, you don't have any services that can help you with autism, you've always got to travel.

"So with the NDIS, it's put those supports in place where they can travel here and come see Karra and take her out, give her respite, and give her a better quality of life."

Karra, who recently expressed an interest in moving out and becoming more independent, is now able to do that with the support of an NDIS worker, who has been taking her to Swan Hill to get her used to staying on her own, and teaching her practical skills such as learning how to cook.

This is something June was worried might never happen for Karra.

"We are older parents, so we sort of have in the back of our minds, 'What is going to happen when we go? Who is going to look



19-year-old Karra Taranto enjoys drawing as one of her favourite pastimes. Picture: Phoebe Doyle

after her?" June says.

"We never thought that she would ever want to be independent and live on her own."

Karra says she is excited to be able to have the opportunity to move out.

"I get in too many fights with my parents," she says jokingly.

"But it feels liberating, really."

Once she becomes settled in

Swan Hill, Kara has her sights set on completing a TAFE course.

"I'm leaning towards a path which allows me to be creative or make things pretty," Karra says.

June says before she was in the NDIS her daughter was always feeling pretty down and very alone, as was she.

But now, with the help and guidance of NDIS support

workers, both June and Karra are living happier, healthier lives.

"She has really been able to get that confidence happening, she has got that swing in her step," June says.

"She still has a long way to go, and there will always be hurdles.

"But I am confident, with the supports in place, we will get there."

— PHYSIO —

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Staff are trained with the most up-to-date skills and necessary equipment. In order to maintain this level of professionalism constructive criticism is welcomed, regularly reviewed and incorporated into company procedures.

O'Shea Cleaning & Support Services prides ourselves on a client focused approach, ensuring needs are met to a high standard. The team aims to provide a trustworthy, non-judgmental approach to their work, ensuring our client's needs are met in a caring and timely manner.

SUPPORT WORK

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- transportation to appointments or day trips
- having someone to rely on and trust

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NDIS gives family a new outlook on life

Shannon Colee

NEISHA Velleley says she was “naïve” about just how much the NDIS could transform the life of her son, Bailey Macri, and their whole family.

“To be frank, if it wasn’t for the NDIS, I don’t know where we would be,” Neisha says.

Neisha assumed life with her son, born premature at just 25 weeks and suffering from significant health and intellectual disabilities, would always be hard.

“He was ventilated for eight-and-a-half months when he was a baby,” she says. “He was on oxygen for the first two years of his life.”

But by the time Bailey was 13, he had been diagnosed with autism, had faced more health complications and life for his family was becoming unmanageable.

“He started becoming violent and started displaying full-on challenging behaviours and behaviours of concern that were really, really difficult to deal with,” Neisha says.

“We couldn’t go anywhere because unless he was at home, he didn’t feel safe. We could barely have friends over because, you know, they felt scared.”

Neisha says it took a few reviews with NDIS to get to the plan they have today. Originally, they had carers coming into the house a few days a week for Bailey but it meant the family would need to leave and they found he became increasingly withdrawn.

Neisha and her husband

felt like they were in a financial position to help buy their son a house. That allowed him to have more control over the space he lived in, limiting his triggers and anxiety.

“We see him basically every day, but it’s on his terms. And that’s the biggest thing, it’s about choice and control.

“He did not have that as much at home because we had three other children who were younger than Bailey.”

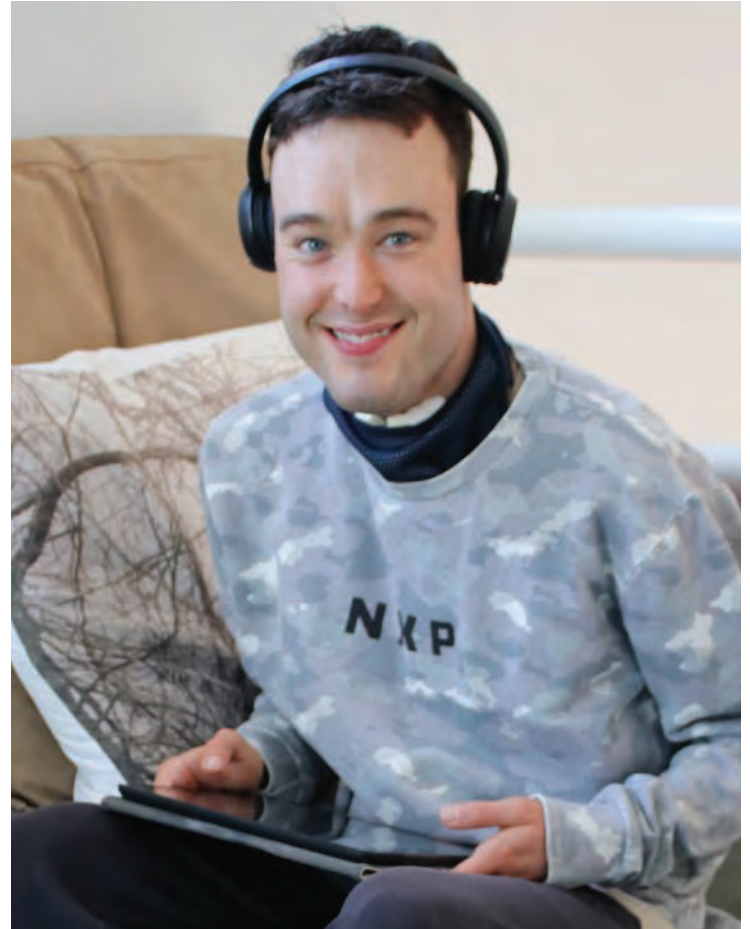
Neisha says NDIS understood how important it was that Bailey was given a way to be out in the community and not stuck at home all day because of his challenges.

“I’ve been able to study. I’ve done my diploma in disability so I’m now a support co-ordinator with NDIS”

NEISHA VELLELEY

“I was confused as to how it would help Bailey in his life because I was thinking that he wasn’t able to do volunteer work, but then I had a meeting with the (local area co-ordinator) and she says it’s about them living their best life and to their best ability,” she says. “Bailey can’t just rock in the corner on his iPad all day, he needs to get out into the community.”

It hasn’t just transformed life for Bailey, but the flow-on effects have been felt by everyone in the family. Neisha says her daughters “were really blown away” by the



NDIS has made a big difference in Bailey Macri’s life. Picture supplied

change in their lives.

“I’ve been able to study. I’ve done my diploma in disability so I’m now a support co-ordinator with NDIS,” she says.

“The girls have started playing sport in the past three years because they couldn’t do that before.”

Neisha says she was surprised by just how life-changing having access to the NDIS would be.

“It was a massive surprise. I didn’t think we’d benefit from it at all, really. To be honest, I was probably a little bit naïve and ignorant. I didn’t understand the capacity that the NDIS would provide.”

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Giving life a better shot

Sarah Buchecker

LISA Condry does not let vision impairment hold her back, earning a range of bowls medals and trophies.

Lisa, born with severe myopia (short-sightedness), says she has no vision in her right eye and only half-vision in her left.

She says she required help around the house, help with travel and help doing her shopping. She says she also required the assistance of a guide dog.

She joined NDIS in 2019, taking stress off her and her husband David.

"I have a cleaner that comes in and she cleans the house for me and I have a gentleman that takes me into town shopping with my guide dog," she says.

"They helped me get to lawn bowls, but when I go away my husband comes with me."

Lisa says she began playing bowls 10 years ago after her husband encouraged her to and had since become quite good at the sport.

"My husband stands behind me, he tells me how far I have to bowl and how far my arm has to swing to send the bowl out and he tells me when to let go and I bowl," she says.

"We have actually been very lucky – we have been selected as a part of the Australian Jackaroos Bowls team."

She now hopes to take part in the IBBA World Championships at Tweed Heads in March.

Lisa says she recently competed in the Victorian Blind National Competition in May and won a gold medal in pairs and bronze in the singles.

“ They have been very helpful for me ”

LISA CONDY

She has also competed in a range of other competitions, almost always bringing home a medal or trophy.

Lisa says having NDIS help meant she and her husband could focus more on bowls and the fun things in life.

She says the scheme had helped her with her guide dog and helped renovate her bathroom to ensure it was safe to use.

"They have been very helpful for me," she says.

"I have never had any problems and if I have any queries everyone is willing to help me."



Lisa Condry with her husband David. Picture: Phoebe Doyle



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Support has changed Glenn's view of the world

Sarah Buchecker

VISION-impaired since birth, Glenn Anton says being able to watch his son play football was something he never thought he could do.

After being born with congenital cataracts, Glenn had surgery on both eyes at a young age.

He says until the age of five-and-a-half, he had sight in both eyes. However, following a BMX accident that caused a detached retina, Glenn lost all vision in his left eye.

Glenn says when he heard about the National Disability Insurance Scheme he was sceptical about whether he would be eligible but, after a successful application, he had positive experiences.

"(NDIS) has allowed me to get in touch with services I previously didn't know were available to me," he says.

"I was able to get looped in with support co-ordinators that can help me access stuff, like to the point where I can get a driver to drive me to an appointment if I don't have family available."

Glenn says one of the most positive services he was provided was technology called IrisVision that allowed him to watch his son play football.

"(NDIS) allows you to access adapted technology," he says.

"(IrisVision) is like a virtual-reality headset. It has got specific software and essentially is digital binoculars.

"I have an 11-year-old son who has started playing football and, my whole life, football has been a sport that I obviously haven't played myself but I enjoy



Glenn Anton says technology called IrisVision has allowed him to watch his son play football.

“(NDIS covering the cost of the glasses) was a godsend. I can access new glasses again more regularly as they are able to help that.”

GLENN ANTON

watching friends play, but it is all very limited.

"With shortness of vision I can't really see what is going on more than 20 metres away so that proves challenging when it's the size of a football field."

Glenn says the IrisVision headset gave him 14-times digital zoom that allowed him to watch his son play from a distance.

"I have been able to wear that and watch my son play football

and I wouldn't have been able to have that happen," he says.

"It has opened up doors that I never thought possible."

As well as improved viewing, Glenn says NDIS had helped him afford new glasses, which had to be cut for him overseas.

"(NDIS) have also been able to help financially with the purchase of new glasses," he says.

"Laboratories that grind the lens for glasses in Australia no

longer have the ability to cut the lenses that I require. I have to get them overseas.

"(NDIS covering the cost of the glasses) was a godsend. I can access new glasses again more regularly as they are able to help that."

He says there were a lot of simple tasks he required assistance for that he now had help with.

"Simple tasks such as clipping my toenails people take for granted," he says.

"I have always struggled with that in that I would cut too far back cause I can't see it so I have been able to access the podiatry services as well for NDIS because it is a health-related issue."

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'Belinda is happy, and

Phoebe Doyle

BELINDA Columbro is in her element at Vivid Swan Hill – so much so that she didn't want to listen to mum Julie skite about her, but would rather be back out with her friends and getting involved in some hands-on activity.

"We never have any days when she doesn't want to come here," Julie says.

"Even when we are driving in she says, 'happy, happy'."

Belinda, 35, has been attending Vivid, a support service working with adults in the region with intellectual disabilities for 17 years, since she finished studies at Swan Hill Specialist School. Belinda has very little speech.

While she was able to attend Vivid before the NDIS, what the scheme gave Belinda was the opportunity to come for an extra day a week, and participate in more activities, including Vivid's night program, which includes going to the movies.

Julie believes that being involved with Vivid has improved Belinda's quality of life immensely.

"It's just the support for her to get out into the community and have a bit of independence

without me," Julie says.

"We can be down the street or something and people will speak to her that I don't even know,"

"So now it's not just my friends, she got lots of friends and knows lots of people."

“It's just the support for her to get out into the community and have a bit of independence without me”

JULIE COLUMBRO

Some of the things Belinda enjoys doing while she is at Vivid include activities such as peeling and chopping up food for cooking, painting, completing puzzles, making mosaics, and getting out and about.

"She always knows the routine and always knows what programs are running – like today is cooking, so she got her apron ready and everything," Julie says.

While Belinda needs someone with her all the time, Vivid support worker Charles Treseder says

he and the support staff at Vivid like to just hover and watch from a distance, allowing space to encourage independence where they can.

"If Belinda can do stuff on her own, we will just monitor her doing that to make sure nothing goes wrong – if she can do it independently I am more than happy to promote that independence for her," he said.

"Independence is key, I reckon, so the more I can do that with her, the better off she will be in life."

As well as giving Belinda her independence, it allows Julie to have a break as well from the demands of being a carer.

"It's really good to have a break," Julie says.

"It is needed for everyone."

But for Julie, the main thing is just to see her daughter joyful and contented.

"Belinda is happy, and that's what matters."

RIGHT: Belinda Columbro, peels potatoes with the help of Vivid support worker Charles Treseder and mum Julie Columbro.

Picture: Phoebe Doyle



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Writing a new chapter

Kevin Casey

WITH a little help, Dean has written a book, essentially a guide to managing mental health. He knows what mental battles are like.

Dean writes from the perspective of someone with a dual diagnosis of bipolar 1 disorder and alcoholism class B. He has had many episodes throughout his life, but two years ago he had major issues at both ends of the spectrum – depression and mania – within six weeks. “It was like a bomb going off in my life,” he says.

NDIS services have given Dean structure and a safety net, enabling him to maintain his health both mentally and physically and cope with the ups and downs of his illness.

Dean’s past two years have been the longest time in the past 40 that he has been able to maintain a healthy mental state.

He says Caroline Ellis, his main support facilitator, “is very patient, helpful and understanding”.

“She has taught me basic computer skills, helping me write a manuscript on mental health management strategies.

“Caroline is also facilitating art, guitar lessons, exercise and more.”



Guitar lessons have been part of Dean’s mental health management.

He is also very thankful to his case manager Nerolea Crossfield for her ongoing assistance.

Entitled Second Chance, the book is a candid and disarming account of his ongoing efforts at managing his illness, stays in hospital, and improvements made to the mental health system in

recent years.

He frankly recounts his “compromised conduct” but the sense of gratitude for those who have helped him – especially his wife – is inspiring to read.

“I got diagnosed in the 1980s, and there wasn’t much help back then,” he writes.

After a major depressive episode, he had to re-evaluate his approach and make changes to his sleep patterns, diet, and other habits.

“Everybody says the past is the past, and you can’t change it, but that doesn’t stop you thinking about it. I had to come to terms with it,” he says.

“Even though I’ve recovered, and things are good, they’ll never be quite the same.”

Dean’s other supports include seeing a psychologist for counselling and Mallee Physio for exercise programs.

“The NDIS has provided services that have made my life better as a result.”

“I credit the improvement to the additional funding available not only to the facilities, but also to the training of health care professionals.”

In turn, this allows patients to create a network of professionals who genuinely have people’s best interests at heart.

Swan Hill District Health has also offered Dean a volunteer role as a peer support worker, which he has accepted.



Your Peer Support

Your Peer Support (YPS) is a mental health support service offering support to NDIS participants with a psycho-social disability. YPS was created to fill a gap in the support space for NDIS participants to ensure they are adequately supported by staff with an understanding background and knowledge in working alongside someone with mental health barriers.

SUPPORT PROVIDED:

- Community access that would otherwise be prevented by mental health barriers
- Psychosocial education
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Skill development relating to mental health strategies such as:
 - o Emotional regulation
 - o Self-care skills
 - o Social skills
 - o Building self-esteem
 - o Personal empowerment
- Support during appointments such as:
 - o Doctor’s appointments
 - o Psychiatrist/psychology appointments
 - o Care team/family meetings
 - o NDIS review meetings

Your Peer Support works from a client-centered approach with the individual needs of each participant as our main focus.

Please feel free to contact Rachel on 0408 204 469 or Sarah on 0460 305 643 for further information
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LiFT Supports provides Support Coordination to NDIS participants.

We assist you to understand your NDIS plan and get the most out of your funding, while ensuring you get the right funding to suit your needs.

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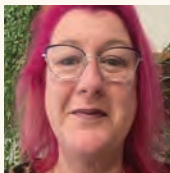
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"LiFT are always trying to help wherever they can. They always make sure I am having a good time. I am always having a blast with Riley!" – Kye

"The LiFT team have become like a part of our family. They make our lives so much easier!" – Ray

"Thank you so much LiFT Supports! I can't explain how they have helped us, I am speechless. Their support has saved us!" – Alaa

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Phoebe Doyle

BIRCHIP mum Monique Russell has her hands full with sons Jakoby and Zayvier.

As well as being typically active boys, both are on the autism spectrum.

"Having two on the spectrum that need help, that's a lot of money that we can't afford," Monique says.

Both nine-year-old Jakoby and seven-year-old Zayvier have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) level 2, meaning they require a substantial level of support as their social interactions may be limited to narrow special interests. They may also have frequent restricted or repetitive behaviours.

Both boys also have attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

For Jakoby, this means he has what may look like ticks as part of Tourette's syndrome, but are referred to as stims. These stims occur quite often, and make it hard for him to do certain things throughout the day.

As part of his ASD, Zayvier also suffers from a pathological demand avoidance disorder (PDA). The main characteristic of PDA is to avoid everyday demands and

“We are very lucky to have assistance for families through the NDIS to help us deal with (Jakoby and Zayvier) daily”

MONIQUE RUSSELL

expectations to an extreme extent.

Monique says that while she has now learnt ways to get around Zayvier's PDA, for example by asking carefully worded questions, it wouldn't have been possible without the support of an occupational therapist (OT) funded through the NDIS.

"We are very lucky to have assistance for families through the NDIS to help us deal with (Jakoby and Zayvier) daily," Monique says.

"It's not an easy job – they are also supporting me as well."

Although they are young, the boys understand and can recognise how NDIS support workers like their OT are helping them, with Jakoby saying that they "help with my problems and thinking". They also see a psychologist and speech therapist regularly.

Through the NDIS consumables fund, Monique has been able to provide things for her boys, such as

a calming pillow for Zayvier.

"It is a cushion about the size of a medium round table," Monique says.

"He goes there when he is feeling overwhelmed or upset and calms himself down with it, and it was \$500 that we can't afford out of pocket."

"So things like that we are lucky to have."

Zayvier agrees that his calming pillow is a great success, saying it helps him to "get into my green zone".

Monique believes that without the support of the NDIS, her life and the lives of her sons would look a lot different.

"I certainly don't think I'd have a very happy, healthy family," Monique says.

"I am very grateful, and to know that (NDIS) will follow them through to adulthood if they need it is a big relief."



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difference



Monique Russell with sons Jakoby and Zayvier, who are both on the autism spectrum.
Picture: Phoebe Doyle

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ON SH1021201

NDIS provides Grace with new-found freedom

Shannon Colee

OVER the past year, the NDIS and the Swan Hill Home of Projects (SHHOP) have helped give Grace Fedele something that most people take for granted – independence.

Grace, the only surviving baby of triplets, and born with limited vision, has always had to be reliant on her extended family for aid.

But for the past 12 months Grace, alongside support worker Tracy Wareham, has used the SHHOP program to work on skills that allow her to carry out day-to-day tasks more safely.

“Our program consists of three days of community work, life skills, the arts, singing, dancing, a lot of those literacy and numeracy skills, cooking and anything that our little group want to do,” Tracy says.

These skills have had an “overwhelming” effect on Grace, giving her greater independence by providing transport and mobility.

“She’s always liked boiling borlotti beans and making authentic Italian recipes and sharing them,” Tracy says. “I think about how, like at the shop, we take her to the wholesalers and a few of them do shopping there. So Grace picks up her beans there and then she can go home and make them.”

Tracy says that the SHHOP program has given Grace the chance to be part of the community on “her own terms” and in ways that she would not have previously dreamt.

“We took the group to the Elvis exhibition at the Bendigo

Art Gallery, and you see, Grace is a long-time fan of Elvis and she absolutely idolises him and it was quite beautiful,” Tracy says. “She was overwhelmed, absolutely overwhelmed, because without the NDIS she couldn’t get there. It would be too difficult.

“But we took her down in our little bus and she was safe and she was assisted around the art gallery so she could see everything closely.

“We read the captions on the exhibition to her and it was just a moment in time that she probably would have found difficult to access otherwise.”

Before having access to NDIS and to the SHHOP program, Tracy says Grace always needed to rely on when someone from her extended family was available.

“Grace has got a great extended family who are all busy with their own family members but now she has independence because she has support workers and support networks who can take her there by herself,” Tracy says. “She’s independent and she does not need to rely on anyone. Nor should she have to. She’s worked hard in her life and she’s had a few challenges but she shouldn’t have to just rely on people. She should be embracing all that independence, which she does.”

Tracy says it’s this independence and resulting connection to her community that the NDIS has helped provide for Grace.

“The NDIS provides friendships, it provides opportunities to travel and to do what most of us take for granted.”



Grace Fedele has a love for the arts.

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Big move is paying off

Kevin Casey

STEVEN Knight made the move to Kerang from Gippsland three years ago, hoping for a lift in life.

He was in luck. Steven is now a supported employee with Vivid Work Crew and works four days a week providing maintenance services to an expanding range of local businesses and organisations.

An NDIS plan has been pivotal in helping Steven not only with his work schedule, but providing plenty of support outside work, such as helping with paying bills and rent. "It's helped me greatly because I couldn't do it without the NDIS," Steven says.

He has managed learning difficulties all his life and continues to have literacy challenges, but says: "It doesn't really affect my work. If I get stuck, I'll ask Rick (Bennett) or Darren or one of my support workers and they'll read something to me and explain it.

"I don't mind asking for help when I need it. I've been that way all my life, I'm just the same as anyone else, I've just got a slight disability."

Rick says: "He's a real asset to me and our business."

Steven has a wide range



Washing vehicles is part of Steven Knight's weekly work routine. Picture: Shayne Mostyn

of duties, from gardening and mowing lawns at dozens of places around Kerang to washing vehicles.

When the weather doesn't allow outside work, there are other options such as preparing survey pegs and kindling.

Steven can be called on whenever needed, even outside regular work days.

"I'll throw my hand up for anything just to help the guys out," he says.

The move to Kerang has been positive in more ways than just work. "I'm happier, I think I've come out of my shell a little bit since I've been up here."

Steven recently upgraded to a Toyota ute and takes the chance to go off-road driving and fishing

and camping when he can.

Rick says: "We were so proud of Steven buying his new vehicle. He initiated the whole thing and, apart from a little bit of help filling in forms, he virtually did that whole deal himself, which I thought was a pretty big thing."

Steven also hopes to buy a house in the coming years.



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Finding peace in her art

Kevin Casey

THE calming effects of creating art has helped one mother cope with the stresses of managing her mental health condition.

Esme Sky Walker was challenged by mental health issues as a teenager. She was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety and Seasonal Affective Disorder at about 17 and has been seeing a psychiatrist and on medication ever since.

An NDIS plan has meant Esme can add some variety to any given week, a shift that has brought many positive effects on her wellbeing.

"I have been able to get out into the community a lot more through the NDIS services," she says. "There has been a lot more opportunities for different things, like art, which I wasn't able to do before."

Esme's six-year-old child has autism and the constant challenges of parenting have weighed heavily on her time and focus.

"Finding time for myself has been very difficult. It would be very rare that I had the chance to sit down and draw, or even read a book," she says.

Over the past two to three years, the chance to enjoy just two hours a week for art has regularly helped Esme's mindset. With the assistance of artist Caroline Ellis, Esme has created a number of striking works in a variety of styles from pencil sketches to oil painting and even jewellery making.

"It makes me happy, and it gives me something that's truly mine. I'm finding more time to do the things I like, having set classes has been really good."

Esme is a fully qualified Beauty Therapist and has completed a Bachelor of Arts degree, and a double major in Literature and History/Art History at La Trobe University, but she has been too unwell for constant work. The added benefits of working with Caroline have helped Esme be more comfortable in the company of others and she now has the time each week to explore more interests.

As well as the brief period each week working on her art projects, Esme sees a support worker for an additional four hours a week.

"I'd like it to continue for as long as it can," she says.



Esme has created striking works in variety of media, improving her mindset.



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We are able to offer our services to NDIS clients, helping participants to work towards their NDIS goals.

Our practitioners are experienced in conducting assessments, writing reports and providing clients with therapy services that align with their goals, and are passionate about helping clients reach these goals in a way that is best suited to them and their circumstances.

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PSYCHOLOGY



Help where it's needed

Kevin Casey

TRIMEAKA Neill is the mother of four-year-old Xavier, who has a rare and debilitating genetic condition.

Trimeaka is remarkably resilient and optimistic, creating a happy environment to enable Xavier to enjoy his life.

The NDIS helps the family support Xavier in a multitude of ways, facilitating therapeutic support, aides, and respite care.

Trimeaka says Xavier's condition is "very rare". "There are only four or five in the world. It is completely different to any other condition like autism or spina bifida.

"Xavier has very severe learning difficulties. He has neurological problems. He has ataxia, which means that his muscles have and will continue to weaken.

"He used to be able to walk, and he can't anymore. The condition will affect every single muscle, every single organ in his body.

"The Royal Children's (Hospital) metabolic team, who manage his care, they don't know what is next. They are guided by the last patient with this condition, but it isn't certain what the path will be

as it is so rare.

"Xavier will probably be prone to seizures. Touch wood, he hasn't had one yet. It is very cruel, but there is not much we can do about it."

Xavier's abilities and challenges are reassessed every six months because the condition is continuously evolving and deteriorating. When Xavier was able to walk, he was very unbalanced. Eventually the muscles in his legs gave in, and stopped him continuing.

Now Xavier needs equipment and a special chair to assist him, and therapeutic professional support.

"We're getting a new high chair, because he has outgrown this one," Trimeaka says. "We have been using a pram, but he is now too long for that. So the NDIS will supply a wheelchair for him. The physiotherapist will assist with getting that organised.

"And we are going to need a specialised car seat that will provide more support and security, especially for longer drives. Currently he bounces around."

The therapeutic services provided for Xavier by the NDIS are speech therapy, dietetics,

occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

The NDIS also offers Trimeaka respite care for a short period day to day. "So that I'm not so worn out from having Xavier all day, every day, and can do the things that I need to do for the family, like shopping.

“ It is a difficult challenge to think of things to try to do with him. That is probably my biggest problem, trying to find things to do that he will like, or that will interest him ”

TRIMEAKA NEIL

"Also, I work on the weekends, so the respite carers provide that extra help to Xavier's dad, just for a short period every second weekend."

Xavier is bright and interactive with his voice and expressions. He is particularly joyful on the day we meet, and when Trimeaka says that is probably because he had

a good sleep, Xavier's face shows agreement. He comprehends talk about familiar things, such as going for a walk.

Xavier started kindergarten two days a week this year. His parents have noticed him becoming more vocal since having more company. He likes being out and about and being in different environments.

With his limited strength, Xavier can't participate in lots of activities or types of play, so seeks variety in other ways. In warm weather Trimeaka takes Xavier swimming, using a life jacket.

"It is a difficult challenge to think of things to try to do with him. That is probably my biggest problem, trying to find things to do that he will like, or that will interest him.

"Those things are difficult, but day to day, we do what we need to do. We don't look at what will be. We just focus on what today is, and if today is a good day."

Trimeaka remains strong and positive. "We don't want to show Xavier that there is something wrong. If we imply that there is something wrong, that will impact on how he feels. We try to keep as upright and positive as we can."



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Xavier likes being out and about in different environments.



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Support means so much

Kevin Casey

FATHER of four Marty Hill was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 50.

Before the diagnosis, Marty was a welder-fabricator with Swan Hill Engineering, proud of his trade and enjoying his work a great deal until symptoms became unmanageable. His employer was very supportive and assisted Marty to work for as long as he could.

At the time, Marty lived independently in his Swan Hill flat. The flat was "all worked out for the wheelchair" but eventually living independently "became too much" and he chose to move to Jacaranda Lodge in Nyah West.

The move "worked out really well", as he could live only 8km from his mother and father.

"The support workers got me out and about, which I did not get to do before NDIS," Marty says. "I didn't go anywhere, I just stayed around home all day. The NDIS helped me get my new chair, which has bigger wheels and helps me get around easier."

"My workers take me to go get coffee, go up the street to do shopping, go to the pub for lunch and they have taken me to



Marty Hill says NDIS has helped get him "out and about".

Deniliquin to see my family for the first time (since they moved there from Swan Hill)."

Chevy Barclay of Swan Hill disability service Ability and Ambition says: "Marty thanks us for helping him get back into the community every single time

he sees us and asks us to send thanks to Maddy, his support co-ordinator, as well."

Marty's friend and NDIS plan nominee Peter says there has been significant change in Marty since engaging with direct support workers. "He's just happier,

his motivation and zest for life has returned and even in his functionality we've noticed that since he's been going out his speech is clearer.

"Maddy – the support co-ordinator from VIVID – has been incredible. She knows the NDIS from the ground up and she has been so supportive throughout the whole process since she came on board. She does so many little things behind the scenes and achieves so many big things, it all means so much to Marty."

Maddy, with Marty's occupational therapist Judy, has organised a more suitable motorised wheelchair for Marty.

It was Maddy who linked the Ability and Ambition team with Marty in September last year.

Since then, Maddy and Ability and Ambition have collaborated to organise things such as Marty's Deniliquin trip to see his kids and grandkids. This was a particular highlight for Marty.

Maddy says: "COVID had such a big impact on isolating Marty, and being able to support Marty to be able to see and re-engage with his family has been one of the biggest wins."

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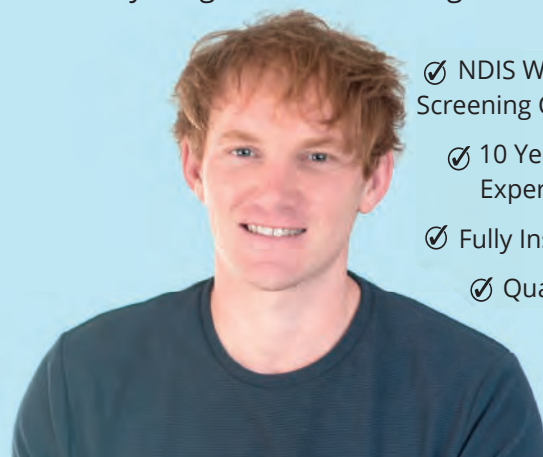


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'Bowled over' by NDIS

Lillian Altman

SWAN Hill's Kye King has not just gained a career through the NDIS, but a "good friend".

The 27-year-old lives with an intellectual disability, and has been on the NDIS for two years - his plan was recently extended another year.

Before being on the NDIS, Kye said life in Swan Hill was quieter.

"There wasn't really much to do except ten pin bowling," he told The Guardian.

Kye was also working three days a week.

He said it was also difficult for them to get the funds "for the things we wanted to do".

Kye now has a carer he can turn to for support - who is of a similar age to Kye and has similar likes.

Kye had never met him before, but the pair have now become good friends.

Kye graduated from Swan Hill Specialist School nine years ago, during which time Kye's strong subject was mathematics.

While there, he also studied a Certificate II in Hospitality VET (Vocational Education and Training) and gained employment certificates.

Kye has a passion for the arts, including filmmaking, with experience in directing, supervising, scriptwriting and acting.

He has also been part of the Swan Hill Theatre Group and Swan Hill Expressive Arts Group.

His NDIS provider assists the family with information and support, and in delivering a range of services.

Kye has been employed by a business in Swan Hill for the past three years, where he has learnt to make planks for pallets and use tools.



Kye King loves watching movies. He is pictured here with his mother Tracy McLoughlan. Pictures: Lillian Altman

“ Kye has a passion for the arts, including filmmaking, with experience in directing, supervising, scriptwriting and acting. ”

TRACY McLOUGHLAN

He is also able to participate in supported holidays, recreation and leisure activities, personal training and healthy living.

Through disability services and support organisations Kye is also able to participate in ten pin bowling, slot cars, weekly outings, and movies, among other things.

Kye's mother Tracy McLoughlan is his nominee who regularly works with the NDIS,

supported by businesses and organisations.

Ms McLoughlan said when Kye finished school nine years ago, there was nothing for him to do.

She said it was up to the parents, including herself, to form a group, to support their children who live with a disability, by helping to create employment opportunities and organise activities for them.



Kye King with some of his ten pin bowling trophies.



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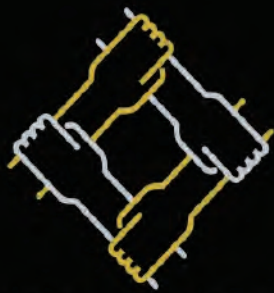
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ECHUCA DISCOVERIES

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SWAN HILL



Echuca Discoveries was founded in Echuca in 2011 by PJ McCoy, drawing on his 34 years in the field of disability. His company motto says it all- "All about abilities"

In 2018, Echuca Discoveries expanded into Swan Hill, under the guidance and leadership of Joanne O'Bree, with 20 years experience in the sector herself.

Echuca Discoveries Swan Hill is a multi-faceted organisation, offering an extensive day service program, respite support and supported holidays, in both group and individual settings as requested.

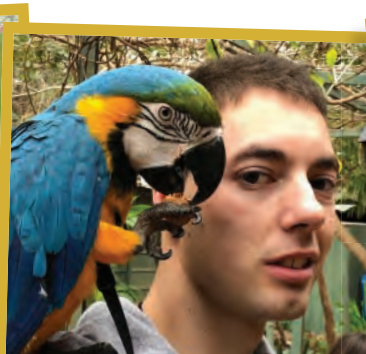
All our staff are experts in their own fields and take great pride in passing on their skills to our clients- including a cabinet maker, chef, tennis coach, artist, horse riding coach, dancer/singer, lifeguard/fitness instructor, to name a few.

Our regular weekday programs reflect this, with swimming and gym programs, art & craft, sport & leisure including tennis, bowls, croquet, cooking & catering program, a horse-riding program, animal education and voluntary work.

We are always on the lookout for new experiences and our groups regularly attend live shows, rodeos, exhibitions, bands etc.

One very important aspect of Echuca Discoveries Swan Hill is the flexibility to work around client and family needs. With respite care available, planned either well in advance, or when the unexpected happens, we will do our best to accommodate.

The friendships and camaraderie within the people we support and the staff we employ, is a privilege to be a part of!



All enquiries to Joanne O'Bree 0408 305 525

Am I eligible?

Eligibility checklist



If you are aged between 7 and 65, a local area coordinator can help you to understand the NDIS, apply and connect with other government and community supports.

If you have a child aged under 7, an early childhood partner can provide supports to children before they apply, and let families know if the NDIS is right for their child.



AGE REQUIREMENTS

Question 1: Are you aged between 7 and 65?

Yes. Go to the next question.

No. I have a child aged under 7.

No. I'm over 65. You must be under 65 to access the NDIS. You may be able to access other supports.



RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Question 2: Are you an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or Protected Special Category Visa holder?

Yes. Go to the next question.

No. You may be able to access other supports. The NDIS is only available to

- Australian citizens
- Permanent Visa holders
- Protected Special Category Visa holders

Question 3: Do you live in Australia?

Yes. Go to the next question.

No. You may be able to access other supports. The NDIS is only available to people who live in Australia



DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Question 4: Do you have a disability caused by a permanent impairment?

Yes. Go to the next question.

No. The NDIS is only available to people who have a disability caused by a permanent impairment. The impairment may be intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, physical, or psychosocial.

Question 5: Do you usually need disability-specific supports to complete daily life activities?

Yes. If you usually need disability-specific supports to complete daily life activities you may be eligible.

No. Go to the next question.



EARLY INTERVENTION REQUIREMENTS

Question 6: Do you need some supports now to reduce your future need for support?

Yes. You may be eligible if you need some supports now to reduce your future need for support.

No. Go to the next question.

Question 7: Do you need some supports now for your family to build their skills to help you?

Yes. You may be eligible if you need some supports now for your family to build their skills to help you.

No. The NDIS may not be the best way to support you. But a local area coordinator can help you connect with other government and community supports.

PORT OF ECHUCA DISCOVERY CENTRE

Transport yourself back to the 1860's and learn about Echuca Moama's origin story.

ALL DAY ACCESS:

Explore the legend of Australia's pioneering spirit and learn how Australia's inland river system connected a fledgling colony to its growing cities and outside world. Walk the path of our river pioneers and experience Echuca Moama's rich history and captivating stories.

- Interactive Displays
- Working Steam Exhibits
- National Heritage-listed Echuca Wharf
- Evans Sawmill Display
- Cargo Shed Kids Display
- A2 Locomotive
- Strathmerton Railway Station & Rolling Stock
- PS Success Remains
- Historic Children's Games
- Gift Shop
- Incredible Views of the Murray River & Paddlesteamers



GUIDED TOUR:

For a full Port of Echuca experience, join one of our guided tours (11.30am and 1.30pm daily). Our tour guides will teach you the history and importance of the river trade in Echuca/Moama, whilst also pointing out interesting exhibits and artefacts along the way.

THE PORT OF ECHUCA
DISCOVERY CENTRE IS NOW
FREE ENTRY



PORT AFTER DARK:

Running every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday night – the Port After Dark lantern tour will take you on a journey back in time to discover dark secrets of the past.

Uncovering the spirits of the Murray, our tour guide will help you explore the nooks and crannies of the Port Precinct whilst telling you Echuca's historic stories of greed, murder and betrayal.



74 Murray Esplanade, Echuca Victoria. E enquiries@portofechuca.org.au
T (03) 5481 0500 W www.portofechuca.org.au



PORT OF ECHUCA
DISCOVERY CENTRE



Reliability Australia
Central Victoria's longest
serving registered NDIS
independent Support
Coordination provider.

Now servicing the Swan Hill
and Murray regions.



NDIS Support Coordination

At Reliability Australia we pride ourselves on collaboration with all stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for our NDIS participants.

Through our industry experience we have a thorough understanding of NDIS funding and how it can be utilised.

We are totally independent with no allegiances when assisting participants to choose service providers who will meet their needs and in turn achieve their goals.

We offer a free consultation with any participant who would like to know more about the service we offer including;

- Our plan working book and mapping process
- How we work with you to implement and monitor your NDIS plan
- How to identify options for community, mainstream and funded NDIS supports
- How you could meet with, choose and establish service agreements with providers
- Setting up services agreements
- Monitoring outcomes

Reliability Australia can help with:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Support Coordination | • Payment claims | • NDIS reporting requirements |
| • Consultancy Services | • Service agreements | • NDIS registration |
| • General NDIS enquiries | • Troubleshooting | • Monitoring outcomes |

NDIS Consultancy Services

The Reliability Australia team has vast Disability Sector experience. Our combined knowledge of NDIS and the sector is extensive and we're available to share our knowledge and experience with your organisation.

Want to know more?

Feel free to call Reliability Australia on **0488 609 352** or visit us at **www.reliabilityaus.com.au**



Better Bookkeeping Management have moved!

Now located at Suite 9 Beveridge Dome, Swan Hill

In early June 2022, Better Bookkeeping Management (BBKM) moved into the newly renovated office located at Suite 9 in the Beveridge Dome, Swan Hill.

BBKM provide NDIS Plan Management locally in Swan Hill, as well as Australia wide. At BBKM we give you more choice and control over your support services by taking the financial stress from your NDIS Plan Management.

“It is fantastic to have moved into our new space recently. We have been working hard for the last 6 months to get it ready” - Sam Cottingham, Owner and Plan Manager.

“Come and visit us to say hi to the team and check out our new space”.



OPENING HOURS:
Monday - Friday: 9am to 5pm
P: 03 5033 0758

Kraighon Pty Ltd
is a CPA Practice



Liability limited by a scheme approved under
Professional Standards Legislation

Creating a community where people of all abilities thrive



Vivid Living offers support and services to ensure adults living with disability have choice and control over the life they want to live.

Services include:

- Day programs
- 1-on-1 flexible support
- School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)
- Supported accommodation
- Transport



Vivid Work Crew are an Australian Disability Enterprise that offers paid, meaningful employment to adults living with disability.

Services include:

- Car wash
 - Gardening & lawn mowing
 - Commercial cleaning
- Social Trader certified.
- Join Work Crew as a supported employee or a business partner.



Vivid Learning offers a range of short courses for people with disability to learn new skills.

Courses include:

- Cooking
- Energy & Environment
- Digital Literacy
- Finances



Dedicated Support Coordinators at Vivid provide assistance to strengthen each Participant's ability to organise and choose the supports they need to engage fully in life and in the community.

LOCATED: SWAN HILL, KERANG, ECHUCA & KYABRAM



FOLLOW

us on Facebook & Instagram



(03) 5480 6611



461 High Street, Echuca



info@wearevivid.org.au



wearevivid.org.au