

Community Catch-up



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A Message from The Chief Executive



Mark Kulinski, Chief Executive

Welcome once again to our quarterly newsletter.

This newsletter coincides with a time that has been particularly challenging for our community at a global, national, state and local level – due to the unfortunate reality of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the outset, we have worked hard to ensure that the health and wellbeing of our clients, employees and broader community during this time is our utmost priority.

We acted quickly to protect clients, their families/carers and our team from the spread of the virus. We suspended non-critical services, responded to the essential needs of clients as they changed, implemented additional safety measures, trained all our staff in infection control, implemented initiatives for the safety, wellbeing and retention of our team, created a COVID-19 response team to answer queries and provide advice and maintained regular communication to ensure everyone is informed and safe.

The temporary changes to some of our services, while necessary, have been difficult for us all. We understand that the circumstances have been frustrating for some; I thank everyone for their understanding and patience.

Our current focus is on reinstating services whilst acknowledging that some may require ongoing review to maintain everyone's safety and wellbeing.

At times like this, it's important to acknowledge the good news in our community. You will see how some of the people within our community have in fact thrived during the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team for their ongoing commitment and professionalism. I am proud to work alongside you.

I appreciate and thank the clients, families and employees, that I have spoken to directly, to see how they are and get first-hand feedback. I have been delighted with the creative ways our team has supported people to continue to be engaged, learn new skills and thrive in uncertain times.

If you have any questions regarding COVID-19 or Community Living Australia's response to the pandemic, please contact our COVID-19 Response Team by email at clacovid@claustr.com.au or by phone on (08) 8536 5881.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Kulinski'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Mark Kulinski

NDIS Update

With most attention during this period focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reinforce that the NDIS is still moving forward and developing as a scheme.

The NDIS has completed its rollout across the nation with all participants completing their transfer from the old state-based systems. We are proud as an organisation, looking back on our efforts in supporting clients and families/carers to make the transition to the NDIS.

Many people are now having their NDIS plans reviewed. The reviews define people's goals, determine the supports they have been receiving and whether they have been effective in supporting them to achieve their goals and engage in community. As an organisation, we want to emphasise that we are here to support our clients and families in the plan review process and if you are approaching your review and need support to prepare, please contact us. We are committed to supporting our clients and families to get the greatest benefit possible from the NDIS.

Recent data released demonstrates that the NDIS is growing, that the number of people accessing the scheme is increasing and that plan utilisation rates are also improving. This is positive news as it shows that the benefits of the scheme are reaching more of the people who need it.

Despite this positive trend, a review conducted in 2019 made a range of recommendations on how to improve the National Disability Scheme Act. One of the key recommendations from the review was to introduce a Participant Service Guarantee. The Participant Service Guarantee will set the standard of how the NDIA fulfils its obligations to participants of the NDIS, addressing the issues uncovered in the review. The Participant Service Guarantee is due to be rolled out on 1 July 2020. Community Living Australia will provide updates on this once they become available.

Although the NDIS is still demonstrating some limitations and pain points, Community Living Australia remains supportive of the scheme and maintains its commitment to supporting its ongoing development and improvement. Together, we can continue to improve the NDIS and the outcomes it delivers for people with disability.

If you are coming up for review, or have any questions regarding the NDIS, please contact us so we can help you to achieve your goals.



Philippa, Joel and Neisha at our Day Options venue.

Staying Connected, Learning New Skills and Meeting New Friends During Challenging Times

Who said social distancing had to be boring and unproductive?

Our team in the Riverland has absolutely quashed this perception, setting up a program including a variety of fun and engaging challenges that have helped people we support feel connected with friends and develop new skills.

With tomato-based products (particularly pasta sauce) in short supply in supermarkets during the pandemic, the Riverland team took advantage of the abundance of fantastic fresh local produce available and devised a passata-making and blind taste-testing challenge!

Using delicious local produce, people made batches of passata (pureed tomato) and participated in a blind taste test competition via Zoom video conferencing. The gang at Seventeenth Street was determined the winner

having been deemed to have made the most tantalising passata of the lot!

In the end, everyone was a winner with everyone's pantries now well-stocked for the cold months ahead and a very useful new skill up their sleeves.

The initial competition was such a success and fun that the local team is expanding the program for more people across the region so that new friendships can be formed.

A great example of how a little creativity, wonderful local produce and technology can be used to bring everyone together.

Well done everyone.



Friends in the Riverland participating in the challenge.

A Love Story That Even a Pandemic Cannot Stop

It's no secret that Ken and Amanda — one of our wonderful couples living in Murray Bridge — were planning their wedding for this year.

Amanda and Ken first met at a local day centre in Murray Bridge. They immediately hit it off, and soon found themselves spending a lot of quality time together.

Last year while on holidays, Ken — bent on one knee — proposed to Amanda in front of the family. There was no hesitation in Amanda's response: "Yes!"

Since then, our Murray Bridge team has been busy helping Amanda and Ken with wedding plans and their plan to move in together at our Nelson Court accommodation.

Unfortunately, due to current restrictions, they

had to reschedule their plans to later in the year.

However, this minor setback hasn't gotten in the way of progress, and our team has been helping the couple transition into their new home, with Amanda staying over a few days a week.

Speaking with Ken, he emphasised how grateful he is to our local team. "They have been so supportive with our wedding plans and move," he said.

We'll continue to keep you updated as we are sure this love story has more to come!

Congratulations Amanda and Ken, we cannot wait for the wedding!



Ken and Amanda — a very happy couple.

Using Down Time to Make Real Improvements to the Lives of Local People

During our short postponement of Day Option services in the Southern Metro region, we took the opportunity to make improvements to enhance support to the people in the local community.

Moving across the road from our previous Day Options venue to 31 Beach Road Christies Beach, our new Social, Recreation and Learning program has been designed to better meet the needs of the people we support.

With further enhancements expected to this great new space soon, we are delighted to have welcomed people back and the initial feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.



Our clients and team are adjusting well to the new venue.

Client Consultative Committee Re-established

Community Living Australia recently sent out letters to advise clients about the refreshed Client Consultative Committee and we would love as many people as possible to be involved.

Clients will be fully supported to participate and provide feedback.

For anyone interested in joining the Committee, simply return the feedback form or call Community Living Australia on 8536 5888.

Engaging Activities in the South East Community

The Mount Gambier Engage program just keeps getting bigger and better!

Engage offers a variety of regular, community-based social and recreational experiences for people with disability to enjoy in the South East.

We're running a five-day program, and new enquiries are coming in each week from people wanting to join the program. Participants can register for as many activities as they like.

There are many popular activities including eight ball, swimming, café outings, cooking and mindfulness. What sets the program apart is its focus on skill-building and engagement with the local community.

One ever-present fan favourite is lawn bowls, where participants can enjoy the sport, get some exercise and fresh air and spend time with members of the club. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Mount Gambier RSL for their continued support of the program and for the time they spend with our team.

If you would like to learn more about the Engage program, call us on 08 8725 9057 or email info@claustr.com.au.



Jon enjoying the outing.



Lee playing lawn bowls.



Simon at the lawn bowl club.



Shannon showing his approval.

Staying Safe Communicating Online

The use of digital technology has been increasing rapidly over the past few years and decade, becoming an ever-present and influential part of our daily lives.

The recent requirement to socially isolate and practise social distancing due to COVID-19 certainly hasn't bucked the trend, and it shows no sign of slowing. During this time many of us have increasingly relied on technology to communicate and stay in contact with others and to fulfil our social needs.

Community Living Australia remains committed to ensuring that its employees, clients and stakeholders remain safe and healthy in every way – including online. With social media, internet, video chat and email forming a larger part of our lives than ever before, we felt it was a good time to brush up on etiquette and how to stay safe online while making use of all the positives it has to offer.

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are a great way to stay in touch with the world and be a part of an online community. However, while using these platforms, it is important always to consider your safety and privacy. This can be done by:

Remembering that anything you send on social media has the potential to be seen by anyone else around the world: your comments, pictures and personal details can be easily taken and shared so make sure you don't send anything that you wouldn't want your friends, family, employer or a fraudster to see.

Consider keeping your profile private so that only your close friends and family can see it.

Don't share personal information (date of birth, address, email and phone number)

Keep your social media account passwords a secret and do not use the same passwords for multiple accounts and platforms.

It's also important to be respectful towards others on social media. If someone is rude to you online, try to de-escalate the situation by responding thoughtfully or by simply ignoring them. But if they are abusive, it's best to block the abuser or even report them. It is important to never be rude, disrespectful or abusive in return. Make sure to always treat people with respect online.

Email is an effective alternative to posting letters. They do, however, create an opportunity for fraudsters to attempt to steal your information. Be careful of people who email you pretending to be a company or person. Fraudulent emails can sometimes look very authentic. Be very wary of any email that asks you for your personal or banking details. If you are unsure about an email: do not respond to it or click on any links in it. Instead, ask for advice from a tech-savvy friend.

For a comprehensive guide to staying safe online, an easy read resource is available at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/staying-safe-social-media-and-online.

Celebrating Easter During a Pandemic Doesn't Have to be Boring

Sarah and Sophie — two friends and housemates supported by Community Living Australia — were a little concerned that they couldn't celebrate Easter like they used to because of social distancing and limits on the number of people getting together.

All was not lost, and with the help of their support worker Amy, wonderful new memories were made, starting early on Easter Sunday morning.

Waking up to find Easter eggs outside their bedroom doors, the surprises continued with an Easter egg hunt.

Like many of us, whilst Sophie and Sarah couldn't connect with their families in person, they used technology to catch up and wish them a Happy Easter.

Avid cooks, Sarah and Sophie cooked up a storm and enjoyed pancakes for breakfast and a delicious roast in the evening using veggies they grew themselves in their veggie patch.

The veggie patch has been an 'iso project' that the women and their support workers have been working on. The veggie patch has been great to focus on during a time when many of the activities Sophie and Sarah enjoy in their local community have been postponed due to the pandemic.

Sophie and Sarah have loved learning to garden and using their freshly grown veggies in new recipes.



Sophie prepping her seedlings for planting.

Carer Satisfaction Survey

Community Living Australia is committed to providing the people we support a high quality service that meets their needs.

To maintain and improve upon our service quality, we recently communicated with carers, asking them to invest 5-10 minutes to complete our Carer Service Satisfaction Survey.

The survey informs us of their perception regarding the quality of our services and overall experience with us.

The survey can be completed online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/CLAcarsersurvey2020 or carers/families can request a copy to be posted or emailed by contacting us on 08 8536 5888 or info@claut.com.au.

Thank you to those who complete the survey. Your feedback is very important to us.

If you do not want to continue to receive a printed copy of this newsletter, please let us know and we can send it to you electronically.



Community Living Australia

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