

# Community Catch-up



New Home Owner in the  
Murraylands

Page 10

## NEWSLETTER Q3 2021

**Introducing  
the Client  
Consultative  
Committee**

Page 5

**Sports Day  
Action With Jo  
Hill**

Page 6

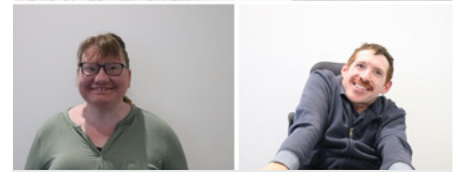
**Jacalyn's  
Volunteerism at  
the Big Lobster**

Page 14

**COMMUNITY  
LIVING  
AUSTRALIA**

# Contents

	Page
A Message from the Chief Executive	3
AGM — Changing of the Guard and Annual Report 2021	4
Introducing the Client Consultative Committee	5
Sports Day Action With Jo Hill	6
New Home Owner in the Murraylands	10
Rewards and Recognition Program Seeking Nominations	12
Jacalyn's Volunteerism at the Big Lobster	14
New CLA Intranet System Coming Soon to Our Team!	15
Farm Adventures on KI	16
Be Strong, Speak Up, Stay Safe Videos	17
Disability Royal Commission Update	18



*Page 5 — Introducing the Client Consultative Committee*



*Page 6 — Sports Day Action With Jo Hill*



*Page 10 — New Home Owner in the Murraylands*



*Page 14 — Jacalyn's Volunteerism at the Big Lobster*

# A Message from The Chief Executive



*Mark Kulinski, Chief Executive*

Welcome once again to our quarterly newsletter.

There have been many success stories and innovative programs that CLA has been proud to be part of over the last few months

These have included a very popular sports initiative with our Ambassador Jo Hill ([p6](#)), a great example of community involvement in the South East ([p14](#)) and a wonderful and inspiring story of determination and success for one of our clients in the Murraylands ([p10](#)).

These stories make us at CLA so proud to be involved in the everyday happenings of our clients. They help us keep focused as an organisation on our purpose and the momentum to keep striving to continue supporting our clients learn new skills and fulfill their dreams.

Quality and the safety of our clients remains a focus and we therefore are pleased that the Disability Royal Commission has been granted an extension to September 2023 to continue hearing the stories and gathering the evidence about people with disability experiencing violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation so that real change can be brought about to give every person in our community an opportunity to have confidence in the support they receive and how they are treated in their communities.

Community Living Australia has developed a series of short animated videos to help inform people with disability of their rights, identify

the different kinds of abuse and how to be confident in speaking up about abuse. You can find out more about these videos ([p17](#)) in our newsletter.

There is nothing more empowering than having a voice that is heard and that is why I am pleased to introduce the members of our Client Consultative Committee. Their purpose is to be the voice of our clients through feedback regarding important business and service decisions and to keep a pulse check on how the organisation is performing against its purpose and values. The committee members are clients from across our regions and with their lived experience and insights as support users, they play an important role in shaping our decisions and services ([p5](#)) in our newsletter.

Community Living Australia has met the challenge of Covid head on by lobbying Government to make it easier for people with disabilities, their families and our staff to gain access where they wish to be vaccinated. The safety of our clients/families and staff has been uppermost in our strategies.

Vaccination has enable roadmaps across the states to be developed and I know our clients/families and staff look forward to the freedoms that will follow and allow some normality back into our lives in time for the Christmas/New Year festive season.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Kulinski'.

Mark

# AGM - Changing of the Guard and Annual Report 2021

In September, Community Living Australia hosted our Annual General Meeting (AGM) where we reviewed the challenges faced and the successes achieved over the past 12 months. Once again, we are proud of the achievements of our clients and the work of our employees.

At the AGM we welcomed the commencement of new Board members Beata Mitkas and Emily Cordell. We are looking forward to their input and the skills, experience and perspective they will bring.

We thanked Rex Keily AM, JP, Roslyn McGowan and John Greenslade for their committed service as they stepped down from their responsibilities associated with serving on the Community Living Australia Board. Their impact and direction to the organisation has been tremendous over the years and will be sorely missed.

After 15 years of service on the Board for CLASS and then CLA (4 served as Chairperson for CLASS), Rex Keily AM, JP was awarded with an Honorary membership — an honor bestowed on people who have made a significant contribution to the organisation over an extended period of time. We thank Rex for this work and wish him all the best for the future.



*Rex (left) receiving an honorary membership trophy from Bill.*

We also saw a change to the Chairperson position with Bill Rowe — who has chaired CLASS and CLA for the past nine years — stepping down from the role, but still remaining on the Board and Jill Coombe stepping up to take on this role.



*Bill (left) receiving a gift basket from Mark.*

The Deputy Chair position was accepted by Edwina Stevenson.

In addition to these celebrations, we launched the 2021 Annual Report.

The theme of the annual report is 'rising to life's challenges' and demonstrates how the organisation, our employees and our clients have gotten on with the job and risen to the challenges presented by COVID-19. Despite all of the disruption to our lives, community and services, the annual report is full of information and examples of key achievements by the organisation, our employees and our clients throughout the year.

You can access the report on our website at [claust.com.au/forms-publications](https://claust.com.au/forms-publications) or scan the QR code below:



*Annual Report 2021*

# Introducing the Client Consultative Committee

Our mission statement here at Community Living Australia is to be a trusted partner who develops and delivers high-quality services and provides a strong voice for people with disabilities to accomplish their life goals.

Back in 2020, CLA sought an expression of interest for potential membership of a Client Consultative Committee (CCC). The purpose of this Committee is to listen to our clients and provide them with another platform for their voice to be heard. CLA will also gain important insight to assist us in improving current and future services.

After overcoming challenges caused by the pandemic, we met for the first time in June this year.

Our Client Consultative Committee consists of seven CLA clients, a Chairperson (not associated with CLA) and one CLA staff member.

The Committee's independent chairperson — Nick Schumi — is a strong, passionate and active disability advocate. He has lived experience and understanding of the disability sector. As a certified Youth Worker, Nick specialises in youth and disability engagement with a strong emphasis on empowerment.

Going forward, the Committee has indicated that it intends to hold monthly meetings. Members attend meetings online and in person.

CLA would like to take this opportunity to thank Committee members for their contributions to date. Senior Management is looking forward to continuing to hear from our clients and to build this Committee into what the clients want it to be.

Should you wish to know more about this Committee or how to become involved, please email [clientconsultativecommittee@claut.com.au](mailto:clientconsultativecommittee@claut.com.au) or call your Team Leader to discuss.



*Nick — CCC Chairperson*



*Kristy — Member*



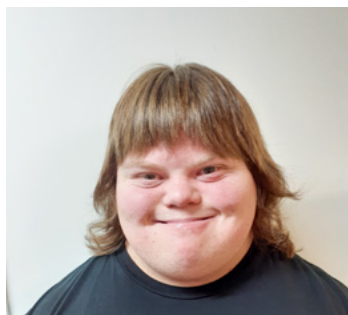
*Sophie — Member*



*Daniel — Member*



*James — Member*



*Rory — Member*



*Lucinda — Member*



*Julie — Member*

# Sports Day Action With Jo Hill

What a way to spend the day! Shoot'n hoops with the one and only Jo Hill — Olympic Silver Medallist, WNBL All-Star, SANFLW Leading Goalkicker and Community Living Australia Ambassador.

Clients from our Hills and Murraylands services had an absolute ball (pun intended) and learnt a tonne from our amazing ambassador Jo.

Held in Mount Barker, Jo ran multiple sessions over two days, open to people of all ages with disability.

The group got the ball rolling with mobility drills before moving on to dribbling, layups and shooting.

Jo's training regime kept the group highly motivated while tailoring her coaching to each individuals' ability and skill level.

Whether they were new to the game or a seasoned player, everyone had a blast and learned some new skills.

While events like this are both fun and rewarding for some, they can be life-changing for others, as described by a parent of one of our youth participants who, before that day, had never participated in a social activity before.

Jo did a fantastic job connecting with participants and teaching them new skills. Jo has shared her commitment, as an ambassador, to build strong connections with all our clients and she is looking forward to being involved in more activities — both on and off the court and field.

We thank Jo for her continuing support of our organisation and for running such a fantastic program.



*Jo Hill — Community Living Australia Ambassador.*









# New Home Owner in the Murraylands

We'd like to congratulate one of our clients for recently becoming a homeowner!

Norman has diligently saved for five years with the support of his family, Community Bridging Services (CBS) and our team in Murray Bridge.

He gradually accumulated a deposit using his disability pension and his part-time job at John Hickmont Racing, where he works as a trainer. CBS helped Norman land the job and continues to support him in his employment.

Our team has also supported Norman with getting ready for work, budgeting and learning life skills so that he can live more independently.

After five years, Norman was able to save \$19,000! On receiving the \$10,000 first home

owner grant and with the help of Homestart, he was successful in receiving a loan which led to his purchase of a house in his hometown of Murray Bridge, moving in on 19 July this year.

Norman has been immensely delighted by this momentous achievement which has been a long-term life goal of his.

With one of life's biggest financial hurdles now ticked off his to-do list, Norman can now focus on one of his greatest passions: video gaming!

A great example of what can be achieved with determination and the right supports, Norman's story also shines a light on the challenges people with disability face in purchasing their own home and enjoying the stability and agency in their life that comes with this.

Having access to gainful employment and affordable and accessible housing close to community amenities are key to homeownership, especially for people with disability.

Homeownership has many benefits – it creates financial security, safety and can be important for people's wellbeing.

While people with disability face barriers that make homeownership less likely, people with intellectual disability are at an even greater disadvantage.

Whether or not homeownership is the best option for an individual – people with disability should have the same opportunities as people without. Governments, advocates, and the community play an important role in ensuring that more people with disability, regardless of means, can achieve homeownership. Community Living Australia is passionate about playing its part in making this more possible for more people with disability.





*Norman sitting on his front porch.*

# Rewards and Recognition Program Seeking Nominations

At Community Living Australia, we are committed to recognising the many wonderful achievements of our clients, staff, volunteers and those in our communities.

Community Living Australia's Rewards and Recognition Program celebrates people who exemplify our organisation's values and demonstrate a commitment to achieving their goals or improving themselves or the lives of others.

Last year, we were delighted to celebrate the achievements of many inspiring people but there are many more, deserving of recognition.

The awards you can nominate for are determined by three categories: Staff & Volunteer Awards, Client Awards and the Community Award.

The **Client Awards** categories are:

**Chairman's Achievement Award** — for clients who accomplish the goals in their individual support plans whilst demonstrating achievements for continued learning and growth outside of their plans.

**Encouragement Award** — for clients who set personal short term and long term goals, are motivated to reach these goals and who are willing to keep striving towards their goals no matter the barriers they face.

**Educational Award** — for clients who commit to learning through educational programs to support them in achieving their potential, reach their goals, strengthen and preserve mental functions, increase social engagement and support participation in our communities.

**Community Participation Award** — for clients who are actively engaging in their community to support their wellbeing, healthy living and social engagement through participation in activities and environments out in our communities.

The **Staff and Volunteer Awards** categories are:

**Client Award** — an award nominated by clients and/or family/caregivers to staff who provide exceptional services to CLA clients and demonstrate a willingness to extend themselves beyond their normal role responsibilities to help others and improve the quality of life for our clients.

**Impact Award** — an award for Community Living Australia team members who have demonstrated creative ideas and jump at the chance to investigate new and exciting opportunities to build positive relationships and collaborations with our teams and clients.

**Dedication Award** — team members, clients, families or community members can nominate staff or volunteers for this award who have shown an ongoing long-term commitment to the service they provide and continue to improve the way they dedicate themselves to improving the lives of our clients.

**Volunteer Award** — nominate one of our committed volunteers who demonstrate the CLA values every day and who continue to have a positive impact in assisting CLA achieve their organisational goals.

The **Community Award**, awarded at the discretion of our Chairman:

Recognises the long-term positive impact of services provided by a group or individual in a region where Community Living Australia operates. Anyone in our communities can nominate for this award or be nominated – including clients, families and employees of Community Living Australia.

Nominate someone – or even yourself – at [claut.com.au/events/rewardsprogram](https://claut.com.au/events/rewardsprogram), scan the QR code or ask for an application form from one of our offices.

Nominations have been extended to 5pm, Friday 5 November 2021, with winners being announced in December.

Please show your support and nominate one of the many deserving people in your community!



*Scan this QR code with your smart phone to nominate someone today!*



*Award recipients at last year's awards event.*

# Jacalyn's Volunteerism at the Big Lobster

We have a good news story that's a bit of a big deal. Almost as big as the Big Lobster down in Kingston in the South East!

Well, it's actually identical in size, literally taking place there!

Jacalyn, one of our clients in Kingston, has been volunteering regularly at Janet's Takeaway, located at the iconic Big Lobster.

Volunteering, engaging in the community and learning new skills have been goals of Jacalyn's for some time, and thanks to the support of the local team who initially raised the idea with Janet — the proprietor of the venue, Jacalyn has been happily achieving all three.

After an initial meeting to go over Jacalyn's duties, she and Janet were so keen for her to start that she started immediately!

Jacalyn's duties vary week to week and revolve around ensuring the venue is presentable for customers, including cleaning floors, tables and windows and arranging chairs and bookshelves.

Jacalyn completes her tasks with diligence before enjoying a tea break with the other staff. Mingling with her new workmates has established her position in the team and gives Jacalyn a wonderful sense of belonging.

In addition to supporting Jacalyn in her volunteerism, Janet (the proprietor) has also generously offered our clients the use of her kitchen facilities for their own projects.

Well done, Jacalyn, and thank you, Janet and Janet's Takeaway at the Big Lobster, for providing people with disability the opportunity to give back and be involved in their community.



*Jacalyn volunteering at the Big Lobster.*

# New CLA Intranet System Coming Soon to Our Team

We are excited to announce a new look, refreshed version of our employee app and intranet called 'Our Space'!

Our Space has been developed with a key focus on greater inclusion and communication across the organisation and brings many features that allow us to better share and collaborate. New social aspects such as Facebook, the ability to recognise our peers, share our ideas or simply comment on a news item are all new additions we're excited to share.

Another key goal was to create a space that was easy to navigate, made information quick and easy to search, and made all the important things forefront of team members' online experience. We have given careful consideration to all the feedback received and have created a tool kit

focused on each role, making everything users need just one click away. We want it to be the one place people need to go to do their jobs and a place where people can easily access the information and tools they need.

Team members will continue to see some of the old familiars such as email, online forms and up to date news, except now they'll find them in a bright new space tailored to them.

These improvements will help our team work more effectively and increase collaboration, leading to improved outcomes for our clients.

At time of writing, the new site is scheduled to launch on 25 October.



# Farm Adventures on KI

Our Kangaroo Island Day Options group didn't waste any time enjoying the warming weather of spring, getting out and about and enjoying a relaxing day in the September sunshine at Blue Hills Farmstay. A holiday retreat near Seal Bay spanning 1,500 acres of grassy, tree-lit fields — its abundant farm animals is one of Blue Hills' many highlights.

Our group was welcomed by Jenny Dunn, proprietor of Blue Hills, who promptly took them to feed the chooks and pat Buddy, the farm's rooster. This was followed by a visit to the lambs who nuzzled their fingers, eager for a bottle of milk.

Following that, the group met Petal the cow and were amazed by her horns. Then, they meandered to an enclosure for Araucana hens and were surprised by the unusual blue coloured eggs they had laid.



Feeding and interacting with the animals left everyone hungry, so they walked to the farmhouse to prepare wood oven pizzas. While the pizzas baked, the group fed carrots to an alpaca and Shetland pony, soon joined by the local kangaroos.

After pizza, people tucked into homemade sponge cake and biscuits followed by a game of Rummikub with Jenny.

When planning excursions and programs, we strive to include as much added value as possible to support our clients maintain mental health and wellbeing, engage with community, learn and experience new things and achieve their individual goals.

The day at Blue Hills Farmstay was a relaxing, revitalising and sensory experience for everyone. It was also an opportunity for our clients to meet new people, learn about farm life and connect with animals.

We thank Jenny Dunn for her kind hospitality and for sharing her beautiful farm, animals and food with us.



# Be Strong, Speak Up, Stay Safe Videos

The rights and safety of people with disability are a priority at Community Living Australia.

Abuse should never be tolerated, and in the event that abuse does occur, it is important that people subject to abuse understand their rights and let their voice be heard.

For that reason, Community Living Australia has released a series of seven animated videos which inform people with disability of their rights, identify the different kinds of abuse, and communicate how to be confident in speaking up about abuse.

Watch the videos now on our website at [claust.com.au/be-strong-stay-safe](http://claust.com.au/be-strong-stay-safe) or scan the QR code below.

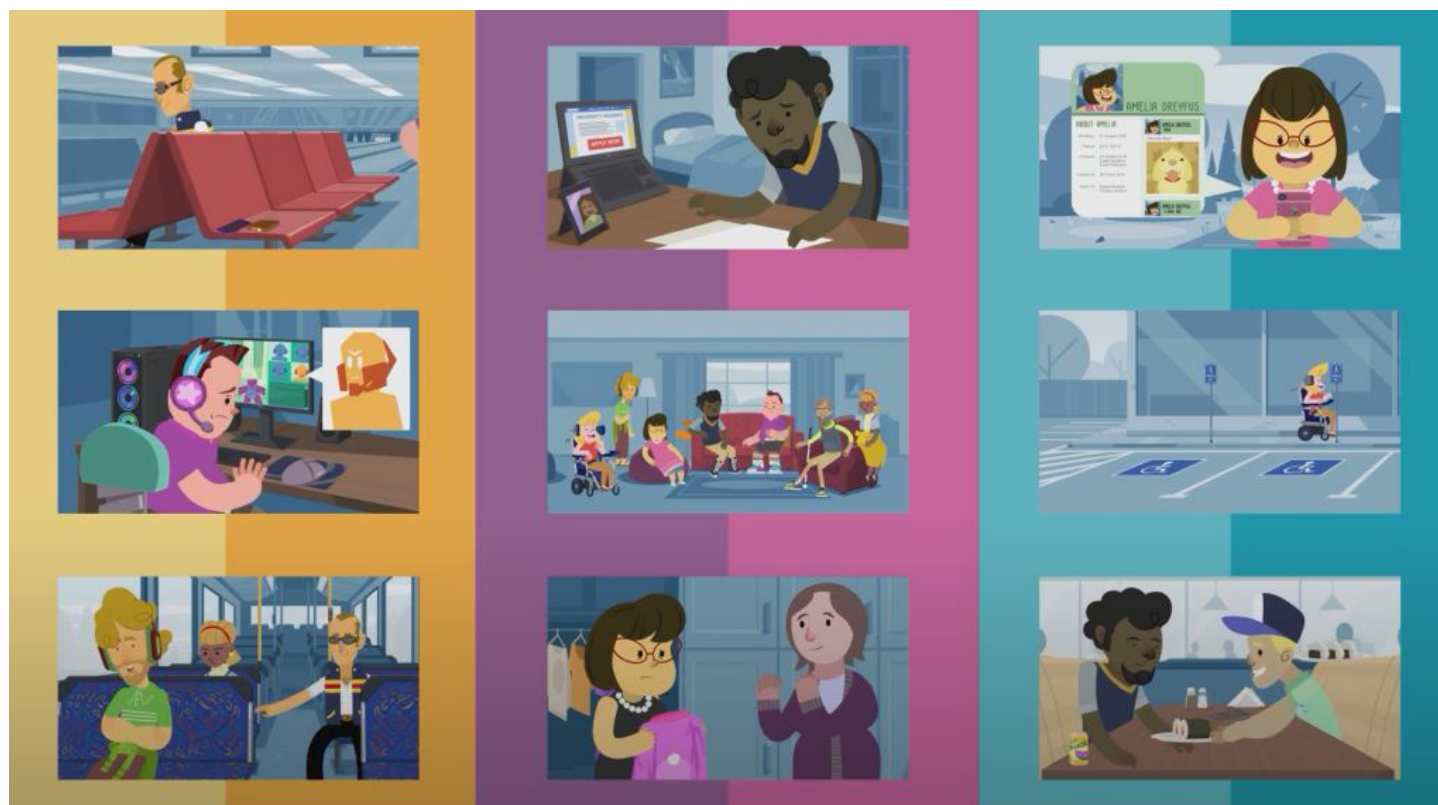


Scan this QR code to watch the videos.

We are proud of these videos and believe they can be a valuable resource in supporting people with disability to understand their rights, how to report and respond to abuse, and how to keep themselves safe. It is on all of us in the community to help keep people, particularly those who are vulnerable, safe. However, it is also important that we improve the capacity and self-reliance of these people so that they are better able to protect themselves.

If you have experienced abuse, you can tell:

- Your Support Worker or Team Leader
- Community Living Australia on 8536 5888
- National Disability Abuse & Neglect Hotline 1800 880 052
- Emergency Services 000 in an emergency where you are badly hurt, sexually abused or in danger.



# Disability Royal Commission Update

The Disability Royal Commission was established in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence against, and the neglect, abuse and exploitation of people with disability.

The Disability Royal Commission holds a series of public hearings around the country to gather evidence about violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of people with disability. Public hearings are formal proceedings in which witnesses give evidence, under oath or affirmation, about events and issues that are relevant to the Disability Royal Commission.

The Disability Royal Commission has held public hearings on issues such as:

- Education
- Group Homes
- Healthcare
- COVID-19
- Medication
- Behaviour support and behaviours of concern
- Barriers to employment
- First Nations people's experiences
- Training of health professionals
- Criminal justice system
- Preventing and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in disability services

## Extension and Schedule

The Royal Commission has had its request for a 17-month extension granted, moving the due date for the final report to the Australian Government from April 2022 to September 2023. The Chair of the Royal Commission advises that they are now in a position to discharge their considerable responsibilities to an appropriate and acceptable standard. The full media release can be found at:

**[disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases)**

Schedule of Future Activities, Hearings and Engagements

\*This schedule is subject to change due to a number of reasons i.e. COVID-19 restrictions, etc.

October 2021

- 13 - 19 October, Hobart - The health and safety of women and girls with disability

November 2021

- 8 - 12 November, Brisbane - Preventing and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in disability services
- 22 - 26 November, Melbourne - Measures taken by employers and regulators to respond to the systemic barriers to open employment for people with disability

## New Legislation

The Australian parliament passed legislation to protect confidential information to a Royal Commission beyond the life of the Royal Commission. The passed legislation was necessary to ensure people felt safe to engage with the Disability Royal Commission.

For more information, visit:

**[disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases/disability-royal-commission-welcomes-new-law-protect-confidential-information](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases/disability-royal-commission-welcomes-new-law-protect-confidential-information)**



Community Living Australia supports the Disability Royal Commission and welcomes the improvements it can bring to our sector in terms of keeping people with disability safe. We also encourage people to make submissions to the commission if they need to.

To find out more about the Disability Royal Commission, please refer to:

**[claut.com.au/royalcommission](https://claut.com.au/royalcommission) or [disability.royalcommission.gov.au](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au)**



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