



## Rising to the Challenge!

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**CLASS**  
our doors open worlds

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# A WORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## *Rising to the challenge!*



Mark Kulinski, Chief Executive  
Community Living Australia

### *What a whirlwind 2016 has been so far!*

We have welcomed many new clients, families and staff to our community and the list of client achievements continues to grow this year.

Our work during the first part of the year has continued to bring together the best of Community Lifestyles and CLASS. Our Client Services teams are collaborating to continually improve the services and supports we provide to clients. Our commitment to mental health has continued with over 191 employees attending and completing the Mental Health First Aid Training since its inception, with over 60 employees completing it this year alone.

The Mental Health First Aid Training is critical to us delivering high quality support to clients and also in supporting each other in the demanding, yet rewarding roles we do. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of my team who has committed to the training and are now using their new skills day to day.

In this newsletter, you will also see two of our respite services highlighted. These high quality services reinforce our commitment to ensuring we meet the specific needs of each client in a safe and welcoming environment. Entering new environments can be daunting and I am proud of my teams who provide end-to-end support for our clients and their carers, ensuring peace of mind and client and carer satisfaction.

Our services also reinforce our organisational commitment and work towards ensuring people with disability achieve true social inclusion.

The concept of social inclusion is not new. Simply, social inclusion is about participation, equal opportunity and empowerment.

Our challenge is to ensure our services support true inclusion rather than just integration. At every level of our organisation we are mindful of assisting our clients to be full citizens of their community, not just passive recipients of care or being on the edges of events and not

fully participating. It's not easy and we must not negate the important friendships, connections and events that people with a disability have with other people with a disability, but it should not be the only thing that people have in their lives – as it so often is.

I have every confidence in us rising to this challenge. However, to achieve true inclusion it is important to understand our clients and their needs. We do this in many ways and in this newsletter you will find an invitation to attend focus groups so that clients and families can provide us with their thoughts and opinions which we will use to help shape our services.

In closing, as always I would like to thank our clients and families who place their trust in us to provide them with the critical supports they need to live a good life.

Best wishes,

Mark Kulinski

# MEETING OUR MINISTERS

## March 4 2016 - Australian Disability Reform Council

On March 4 at the Australian Disability Reform Council, our Chief Executive - Mark Kulinski had the privilege of meeting with The Hon. Leesa Vlahos, MP Minister for Disabilities and Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse along with The Hon. Christian Porter, MP Minister for Social Services.

The Australian Disability Reform Council was meeting to discuss the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Disability Reform Council oversees the trial and implementation of the NDIS, providing recommendations to government through the transition to the NDIS full scheme. These are made in



The Hon. Leesa Vlahos, MP Minister for Disabilities and Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse with Mark at the Disability Reform Council meeting in South Australia on March 4 2016.

order to ensure a broad range of reforms are implemented to support people with disability, their families and carers to be able to access the best NDIS possible for them. Mark attended in his capacity as Chief Executive of Community Living Australia and as State Committee Member of National Disability Services.

This provided Mark with a great opportunity to advocate on behalf of our clients, their families and our employees to help ensure a smooth transition for them to the NDIS.

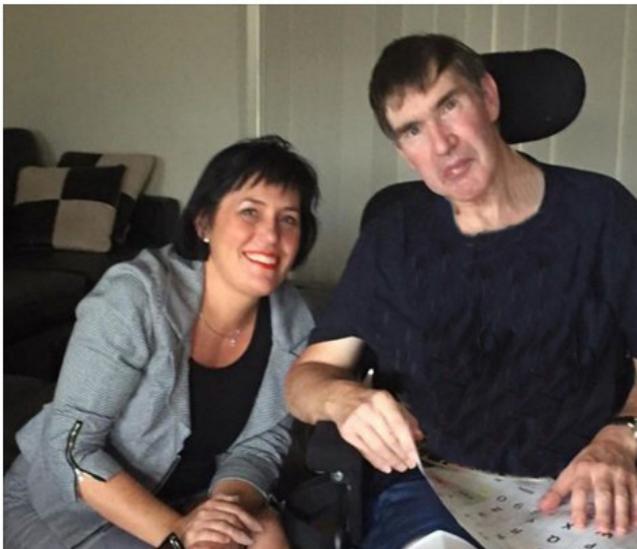
This led to the opportunity to show Minister Vlahos through some of our services in Mt Gambier, introducing her to Craig - one of our clients who is very happy in his new home.

The supportive staff there are assisting Craig to maintain his independence. One strategy has been to support Craig to attend a computer course to learn how to email and operate his own personal Facebook account. Craig wants these skills so he can keep in contact with various friends and family.

Craig is enjoying his new home and maintaining his circle of friends. He is more engaged with his local community and recently visited Robe to attend a party where he caught up and spent time with friends and family.

 **Leesa Vlahos Member for Taylor** with Leesa Vlahos. 15 hrs · 🌐

Today I got to talk to Craig who had been a long stay inpatient at a local hospital, via his communication sheet about his new home with Class disability services. Craig is very happy with his new home and carers.



Minister Vlahos with Community Living Australia client Craig - Facebook post and image courtesy of Minister Vlahos' Facebook Page

# THE FARMHOUSE - CHILDREN'S RESPITE



Thomas shows off his masterpiece

The Children's Farmhouse is a vibrant respite facility for children with disability situated in Murray Bridge. Every weekend sees a regular group of children utilise the Farmhouse to develop, play and be with friends.

The Farmhouse is also used as part of our growing School Holiday program and is often a hive of activity with cooking days and lots of play in the Pirate Playground.



Corey learns the skills to make a cake

Caring for children with disability is one of the most important things our organisation does and we take our responsibilities very seriously.

*Julie - the mother of one of our clients Ben, loves the Farmhouse telling us;*

*"Our experience with Community Lifestyles and their staff has been excellent. Without exception all staff have collaborated with our family to provide the best support for our son. Ben is supported 3 nights a week immediately after school where he is on occasion supported to attend haircut or speech therapy appointments. We have been able to build a framework of support for Ben outside of our immediate family and he is offered the chance to interact and socialise with his peers in a safe setting whilst having new and meaningful experiences in the community. Without the support of Community Lifestyles our lives and financial situation would be greatly impacted."*

Every year we go through an extensive review process which provides us with the time to renew and refresh the facility, its equipment and the programs to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our clients. As a result of this year's review many improvements have taken place over the last three months ensuring that the Farmhouse

continues to be a safe and inviting place that supports the development of the children enjoying our services. The improvements will continue with more therapeutic, play and sensory equipment to be added to the Farmhouse's inventory over the coming months.

A NDIS registered service with a growing list of NDIS registered clients, we liaise with families and other professionals to provide tailored, individual support for the children attending respite. This respite can be for a weekend, for single day support/mentoring or it could be for a whole week- whatever is required to meet the individual client's needs.

If you require any further information about the Farmhouse program, please call the Murray Bridge Office on 8531 0815 and ask to speak to Gaynor Davies or Michael Higginbotham.



Ryan making pizza at the Farmhouse

# MELANIE - RISING TO NEW CHALLENGES



Melanie describing a piece in her exhibition

Melanie, a long-time client of our Community Lifestyles services has just recently completed her first solo photography exhibition titled **“Through My Eyes”**, which was officially opened on Feb 20 and ran until March 24 at the Murray Bridge Studio Gallery.

**“Through My Eyes”** featured many stunning photographs of Murray Bridge and the surrounding Murraylands area with Melanie placing a particular emphasis on landscape photography and sunsets. **“My favourite thing to photograph would be landscapes and sunsets, I find them really pretty and they make a great photo,”** Melanie said.

Melanie’s passion for photography has been developing for some time having come from a very artistic family. Melanie’s mother is an avid painter and her dad is also a professional photographer, introducing Melanie to the art of photography many years ago. **“I think I got my dad’s genes, it definitely runs in the family. I started three years ago when dad got me into it, I used to follow him at work and one day he gave me an old camera to use and I started taking photos,”** Melanie explains.

Following in dad’s footsteps Melanie has followed her passion and developed her skills to become a fully-fledged professional photographer in her own right. **“I have sold heaps of photos, heaps, heaps too many, too many to count,”** Melanie said. **“I would like to do another exhibition, this one has been busy, busy, but I have enjoyed it. I have improved but I still have a little bit to learn to be honest.”**

Initially shy and uncomfortable around large crowds and people she didn’t know when first becoming a client, Melanie gave an address to a crowd of more than 50 people at her exhibition’s opening ceremony. **“The fact that Melanie did this was a significant achievement in itself, which shows that her level of self-confidence and her communication skills are improving. We already knew this, but it is great to see it come to fruition with this exhibition,”** added Gaynor Davies, Community Lifestyles Service Coordinator.

This personal development has enabled Melanie to pursue other passions and interests outside of photography with

support to attend art classes in Mount Barker, the gym in Murray Bridge and to develop her independent living skills. Melanie has also started volunteering at a Child Care Centre. **“All the workers at Community Lifestyles have been fantastic, they are very helpful,”** said Melanie.

**“Community Lifestyles have been very supportive and have really got behind Melanie and the exhibition, which has been great, we are really happy with how her support is going at the moment”** added Pam, Melanie’s mother.

**“It has been a pleasure to support Melanie over the past number of years and we are so proud of her achievements. It just goes to show that disability does not mean inability and that it is definitely no barrier to creativity,”** said Wayne Smith, Executive Manager Community Lifestyles Client Services.

We are sure we speak on behalf of all our clients, families and employees when we say we wish Melanie all the best for her future endeavours.

Keep up the great work Melanie!



One of Melanie’s pieces titled - ‘Old House’

# KINGSCOTE HOLIDAY RESPITE HOUSE



Kingscote Holiday Respite House



Inside Kingscote Holiday Respite House

Set on magnificent Kangaroo Island, Kingscote Holiday Respite House provides an experience like no other for people with disabilities. With access to world renowned attractions, guests are supported by our team of caring professionals who support their unique needs.

Purposely renovated for people with disability Kingscote Holiday Respite House has four bedrooms (one with ensuite) and overhead lifters for guests with mobility needs.

With an extensive DVD collection, table tennis, outdoor entertaining and BBQ area and modern kitchen facilities, guests enjoy a range of activities when not taking in all that the Island offers.

Jake, one of our clients who stayed with us in January explains his holiday on Kangaroo Island;

*"Mum dropped me off in Cape Jervis where I met one of the workers from CLASS who went with me on the boat over to Kangaroo Island. It was really well organised by the people from CLASS and I got to enjoy a BBQ at the footy clubrooms one night, I did craft at Emu Bay which I really enjoyed and I even made a new friend called Barbie. I really want to go over again for another holiday soon."*

The service is not just restricted to people living on the island, our friendly team will meet clients at Cape Jervis and accompany them to and from the Island at the beginning and end of their stay. This is a much cheaper option for people

wanting to travel to the Island and is a feature of the service extended to all guests.

Able to meet the needs of adults and children with disabilities including autism, physical, intellectual, acquired brain injury, neurological and sensory just to name a few, we cater for children aged 6-18, adults and entire families - so they can enjoy a family holiday together.

Gillian - a mother of one of the clients accessing our service tells us:



There is so much to see on Kangaroo Island



The local wildlife



**Kingscote Holiday Respite House provides plenty of room to move**

*"I find your service to be fantastic! I am a little bit selfish and hope others don't find out because there are not many places that offer the service you do. It was extremely convenient for myself not having to travel over on the ferry and we will definitely be using your service again. My son said it was "fantastic" - not a word he uses often."*



**Clients enjoying local attractions**

We pride ourselves on flexible service, with school holiday time being a big part of the service! We are happy to tailor the service to meet individual needs and are already looking at developing an after school program for during the week.

Most guests are able to use their funded allocation through Disability SA or the National Disability Insurance Scheme to fund their stay - we already have many NDIS registered clients accessing the service. Any out of pocket expenses are



**Fully accessible bedrooms are well appointed**

determined upfront and can be negotiated.

Word of the great service is spreading with future bookings filling fast.

If you are interested in taking a holiday to Kangaroo Island or simply want to learn more about the service, call us on 8553 2310 and discover how you can take advantage of all that Kangaroo Island and the Kingscote Holiday Respite House has to offer.

## NDIS QUICK FACT - SA Rollout Timeframe

The image below outlines the rollout dates for the NDIS full scheme in South Australia.

If you are over 17 years of age visit <http://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/sa> to find out exactly when the region you live in will begin to join the scheme.

If you would like to know more about the NDIS and be up-to-date with all the latest developments, subscribe to our NDIS Newsletter by sending an email to [ndisreadiness@claustr.com.au](mailto:ndisreadiness@claustr.com.au). Please include your first and last name and the email address that you would like our NDIS information to be sent to.

1 February 2016	1 January 2017	1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018
Children 0-14 years old	Young people 15-17 years old	Adults 18-64 years old
State-wide	State-wide	Roll out will be based on where you live
		

Image sourced from the NDIS website:  
<http://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/sa/5-things-about-ndis-south-australia>

# EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: CLIENT AND FAMILY FOCUS GROUPS

Your say is important to us!

We invite clients and families to take part in a focus group (small discussion group) on the dates outlined in the table below about how we can ensure that our services meet your needs. The focus group should last no longer than one and a half hours.

Your views will help us know what is working well, what vision you have for the future as a result of the NDIS, what improvements we can make to help clients achieve their life goals and what we can do in the community to further assist with social inclusion.

This information will help us shape our services for the future.

Additional background information will be sent to those who confirm their attendance. If you would like to take part in any of the focus groups please let us know by contacting our office on 8536 5888 or by e-mailing [info@claut.com.au](mailto:info@claut.com.au)

**If you are unable to attend but would like to provide input, please call or email via the details above and a survey will be forwarded to you for completion.**

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
2 Sandergrove Rd, <i>Strathalbyn</i>	Wed, 11 May	4pm-5:30pm
62a Gardiner St, <i>Goolwa</i>	Fri, 13 May	4pm-5:30pm
2 Sandergrove Rd, <i>Strathalbyn</i>	Mon, 16 May	4pm-5:30pm
30B Beach Rd, <i>Christies Beach</i>	Wed, 18 May	3:15pm-4:45pm
161 Renmark Ave, <i>Renmark</i>	Thurs, 19 May	4pm-5:30pm
6 Third St, <i>Murray Bridge</i>	Fri, 20 May	4pm-5:30pm
8 Stephens St, <i>Mount Barker</i>	Mon, 23 May	4pm-5:30pm
Acacia Apartments, <i>Kingscote</i>	Wed, 25 May	1pm-2:30pm
6 Third St, <i>Murray Bridge</i>	Thurs, 26 May	4pm-5:30pm
Mount Gambier Hotel, <i>Mt Gambier</i>	Wed, 8 June	4pm-5:30pm



Murray Bridge clients coming together to celebrate Harmony Day



P. 08 8536 5888  
E. [info@claut.com.au](mailto:info@claut.com.au)

[claut.com.au](http://claut.com.au)



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## COMMUNITY LIFESTYLES

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[comlife.org.au](http://comlife.org.au)



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LIFESTYLES

CLASS and Community Lifestyles are now  
part of Community Living Australia