



afford news

March 2023



The Australian Foundation for Disability acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their deep connections to land, sea, and community.

The Australian Foundation for Disability (Afford) provides essential services in accommodation, lifestyle and recreation, and employment for people who have a disability.

Afford's mission is to provide innovative, flexible and high-quality support to enhance lifestyle, learning and vocational opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers. Our vision is to be the partner of choice, supporting people with disability to shape their own lives.

Everything we do is underpinned by the values of integrity, cooperation, empathy, respect and excellence.

This magazine is published to tell stories of interest to our community, to share news and information, and to celebrate our people – including our clients, our clients' families and friends, and our employees.

If you have any questions or want to suggest a story contact b&e@afford.com.au

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Joanne, Amanda, and Bianca bond over getting fit!
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From the CEO



Afford has been in the news over the past month, following our appearance at Hearing 32 of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. I represented Afford at three panel hearings focusing on workplace and governance.

The Afford of today supports the aims and purpose of the Disability Royal Commission. The Commission was established to make sure our society provides services and supports for people with disability where they are safe; where rights and respect govern every decision and action; and where transparency and accountability are the cornerstones of service providers' operations.

We are committed to transforming this organisation to being client-centred and rights-led, with safeguarding and quality of service at the core of everything we do. This change is already underway, and it will progress even further with the election of the new Chair of our Board of Directors, Carol Bryant, and the steps the organisation is taking to appoint leaders with the skills we need, and who have lived or actual experience of disability.

We support the vital work of the Royal Commission and the positive change it will bring. We recognise the importance of the process in providing a platform for voices to be heard and the opportunity for Australians to listen and understand the lived experience of people with disability. We also acknowledge and accept the Commission's findings in relation to Afford and know that we did not have the right practices and policies in place to provide our clients with quality service and safety. We take full responsibility and accountability for that, we are sorry for those failings and have expressed this personally to the clients and families impacted.

Everyone working at Afford today is committed to the safeguarding and rights of our clients. We will continue to update you, our clients, families, employees, and the community on the steps we are taking to continue improving and providing services that are always rights-led in client choice and practice.

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer



In depth with The fitness influencers of Glen Alpine

On any given afternoon you will hear laughter from the garage of an Afford Supported Independent Living (SIL) home in Glen Alpine, NSW. It's usually followed by cries of "go, go, go" as the residents of the house motivate each other to work out in the gym they created.

Amanda, Bianca and Joanne have been living together for the past five years and in the last few months they have really bonded over their goal of getting fit.

"We're trying to lose weight and it's pretty much for our health so yeah, it feels good," said Bianca, who can usually be seen to lead the charge when it comes to encouraging her housemates.

"I usually bring out my speaker and sit on the ground and play work out music. So you're helping the other person, I push them because I push myself. I burn like 100 calories on this treadmill."

The fitness trio take pride in their home gym and enjoy using the equipment they've sourced with staff.

"I like the bike," said Joanne.

"I like the punching ball and the step thing. I use the exercise ball too and I've noticed that I'm stretching more with the ball and I'm getting more confidence. We have fun and we get fit," said Amanda..

It's a journey for the housemates who are seeing improvements in each other. Fitness influencers move over! Because these three are unstoppable.

If you would like more information about Supported Independent Living at Afford call **1800 233 673**. 

LET'S GET STARTED!

HARMONY WEEK

HARMONY.GOV.AU



Harmony Week recipes and resources

Harmony Week recognises diversity and brings together Australians from all different backgrounds. It's on from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 March 2023. To participate, you can wear orange to show your support, or you can attend or even host a Harmony Week event. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Recipes for Harmony

A love of food is something all people have in common. We all need food to grow and stay healthy. But food in different places and cultures can look and taste quite different. Why not experience and celebrate diversity with your friends or community through food? The Taste of Harmony recipe collection has more than 200 ideas for morning tea and lunch events. You can search for recipes by cuisine, sweet or savoury, dietary requirements, or ingredients. Some of the recipes have

come from famous people. You can also submit and share a recipe of your own! Get more information and ideas on Harmony Week recipes at: tasteofharmony.org.au/recipes

Resources for Harmony

Harmony Week is all about inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of belonging for everyone. There are lots of resources online that you can use to show your support. There's an event planning kit that includes ideas, tips, and tricks for celebrating Harmony Week. There's also an online promotion kit to help you spread the word about your Harmony Week event online and on social media. The kit includes graphics and tips to promote your event. The resources include posters, invitations, instaframes, snapchat filters, infographics, web banners, and craft activities. Have fun! Get more information and ideas on Harmony Week resources at: harmony.gov.au/resources 🐣



Pictured above: Afford DES client, Marites Cruz

5 things to know about...**Disability** **Employment Services**

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, Afford DES Team Leader, Layla Naji received a phone call from Marites Cruz. Marites met Layla at a community event. They got to talking about Afford's Disability Employment Service (DES). Born in the Philippines, Marites's training was in customs administration. After moving to Australia, she became the primary carer for her parents and her two sons (now 28 and 20). Marites also lives with schizophrenia and struggles with concentration. Marites had not worked for 10 years. But now, Marites was keen for a job. As soon as lockdown ended, Layla found her one.



1 Our approach looks at the individual's goals

Every Afford DES client with has specific goals, skills, experience, and barriers to employment. Marites was looking to develop her confidence, to have time for family, to have social connection and a sense of purpose. "It's crucial to build a trustful relationship and have an honest dialogue with our clients and the employer. This includes identifying the client's needs and the support Afford will be providing to ensure sustainable employment.," said Layla.

2 Understanding and support makes a difference

"We have a network of supportive employers who understand and support people with disability, and appreciate the post-placement support Afford provides to our client and their business," said Layla. For Marites, the perfect fit was working with media and marketing company, Imbuity. Over four days, for two hours per day, Marites provides cleaning services – which has been a vital service due to COVID-19. She is supported by the Afford Bankstown DES and Imbuity teams.

3 Successful placements involve give and take

Fouad is a Manager at Imbuity and says that Marites goes above and beyond in her role. Fouad considers Marites part of the family at work and she does too. "I am happy in my work – it gives me time for

life," said Marites. "On my first day at work, I couldn't make the vacuum cleaner work, so they cleaned the vacuum cleaner for me and if I need time to care for my husband or for appointments, they understand."

4 Meaningful employment builds confidence and skills

"I had not worked for 10 years but Afford supports me to feel good about going to work," Marites said. "And I do – I feel happy, I feel good about myself, I like to work with people and come to work."

5 We know that one size doesn't fit all

The Afford DES team at Bankstown works primarily with local small businesses. The multilingual team are fluent in Arabic, Vietnamese, and English, and they connect with the diverse community in the region. "It is important to know the culture of the community you are working in when it comes to DES," said Layla. She also says there is an opportunity for corporate Australia to scale up the channel of talent that DES provides, however, Layla pointed out that employers need to have flexibility and adaptability when hiring a person with disability, and that sustainable employment placement relies on being open to your DES partner providing training and support.

If you would like more information about Disability Employment Services at Afford call **1300 562 700**. ➤



5 things to know about...**Feedback and complaints at Afford**

It is your right to give feedback or make a complaint about the services you receive. When you talk about a problem or someone or something that makes you unhappy, it's called a complaint. When you talk about something you think could be improved or done better, it's called feedback. When you talk about someone or something you like or that makes you happy, it's called a compliment. Here is more information about how to give a complaint, feedback or even a compliment about your Disability Service Provider.

1 Hearing from you helps us get better at what we do

Hearing about what's working or going well, and what's not working or going well, is important. It helps everyone in the disability support sector to understand what you like and don't like, and how to support you. Afford committed to providing high quality services to people with disability. When you tell us about a problem or worry you are having, we will listen and do our very best to make things better.

2 You'll never get in trouble for talking to or about Afford

Sharing your feedback and complaints will never have a negative impact on our clients' services or relationships at Afford. It is your right to talk about things that could be done differently or better and you are safe to do so. If you want to, you can choose to be anonymous. This means you can keep your identity private and do not have to tell us who you are when you talk to us.

3 How to provide feedback or make a complaint to Afford

You can talk to us in person, on the phone at 1800 233 673, by filling out the Afford website form at: afford.com.au/feedback. You can also send us a letter in the post to: 3-7 Marianne Place, Minchinbury, NSW 2770. We can help with interpreters, aides and assisted technology.

4 How to provide feedback about another Disability Service Provider

If you want to talk about something that is happening at another service, you can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission).

5 How we shared the information

The NDIS Commission is an independent agency set up to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. It can take complaints from anyone about NDIS services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way, not delivered to an appropriate standard, or how a NDIS provider has managed a complaint about services or supports. You can make a complaint to the NDIS Commission over the phone or online. For information about making a complaint, visit: ndiscommission.gov.au ➤

New Chair of the Board at Afford

Afford has formally announced the election of Carol Bryant as the new Chair of our Board of Directors. Carol's experience and knowledge has been gained in senior executive roles across healthcare and complex organisations. You can read more on our website or in the article recently published by Third Sector News: thirdsector.com.au 



DRC report emphasises the importance of social inclusion

On 7 March, the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) released the findings of a commissioned report, titled 'Outcomes associated with 'inclusive', 'segregated' and 'integrated' settings for people with disability'.

The research was conducted by the University of Melbourne, focusing on the areas of accommodation, community living, education, and employment. The report found that people with disability will only be able to live lives free from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in settings where social inclusion is achieved.


Afford is building strength in our service through consultation and we are continuing to develop our plans for co-design with our clients, making sure the voice and choice of our clients is core to everything we do. This inclusive approach will cover all facets of our work, including at Board level where we will shortly commence our search for new Board Directors with varying skills, experiences and perspectives including that of lived experience of disability.



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

Research Report

Outcomes associated with
'inclusive', 'segregated'
and 'integrated' settings
for people with disability

You can read the full DRC report here: disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications 

Learn more about the Disability Royal Commission

The Disability Royal Commission is holding free face-to-face information sessions for people with disability, their families, carers, advocates, and other stakeholders. These sessions will explore the Commission's work to date, major themes raised by the community and how you can stay informed. The first session was held in Brisbane on 16 March and subsequent sessions take place in all capital cities across Australia. You can find out more and register here: disability.royalcommission.gov.au



Callout for NDIS CALD Strategy

Do you have lived experience of disability and are you from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background? The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wants to hear from you. They're developing a new CALD Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the needs of people with disability from all cultures are considered and reflected. Information packs about this project are available in a range of languages. You can also share your feedback in your language by online survey, email, or mail. Learn more and have your say before 24 March at: ndis.gov.au/community ➤

Working towards change

Young people living with intellectual disabilities in Western Australia are shining in the workforce, thanks to a partnership between the Australian Human Rights Commission, Woolworths, and social enterprise Good Sammy. As part of a 12-week pilot program, around 20 Good Sammy employees living with intellectual disabilities will be employed at Woolworths. They will gain experience, while the Commission provides training on effective and inclusive employment of people with disability to participating Woolworths' team leaders with learnings shared across the organisation. Read more at: humanrights.gov.au ➤



NSW election: your vote matters

The NSW State Election is fast approaching. To help you decide on who you would like to vote for on 25 March, we've compiled the following resources that you might find helpful:

- > National Disability Services have outlined the key election issues for people with disability here: nds.org.au/resources
- > You can also see what People with Disability Australia's election platform for NSW is here: pwd.org.au/wp-content

For information on voting options and what to do if you need assistance, visit: pwd.org.au/2023-nsw-state-election ➤



Image source: Australian Human Rights Commission

NDIS Code of Conduct


Afford is committed to delivering our services and working with the community in accordance with the NDIS Code of Conduct. This commitment ensures we:

- > act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
- > respect the privacy of people with disability
- > provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
- > act with integrity, honesty, and transparency
- > promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability
- > take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of people with disability
- > take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

Feedback & Complaints

Afford is committed to continuous improvement and client-centred service, so we welcome open feedback and complaints. If you want to share your feedback with Afford, or you have a complaint, please visit our website or speak to our Service Delivery Directors in your region. afford.com.au/feedback/



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