

FRIENDS OF ABLE



Amara Wagner, Able Australia client

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Amara is one of our Supported Independent Living clients. She is 31 and lives with three other housemates in Melbourne's east. Together the house is supported by Able Australia staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Amara and her housemates live full and independent lives within a supported environment.

"I like living in this house very much. I like the staff, and I like my housemates. And the food is pretty good. I have been here for two years... two years and counting."

- Amara Wagner, Able Client

While funding for this form of service is covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme, in many instances, the bricks and mortar of the house itself are not. It's why there are so many people with disability living in accommodation that isn't appropriate for them.

There is a real shortage of housing for people in need of complex supports. It's why there are so many people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care facilities across Australia.

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TOGETHER WE ARE ABLE



Patricia and Colin, Able Australia clients

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS *(CONTINUED)*

Recent studies have reported that there are 5,905 people aged under 65 years of age living in residential aged care facilities across Australia.*

We think this number is far too high.

We need more homes like the one Amara lives in so young people who don't belong in residential aged care can move out and into homes that suit their needs.

"Everyone needs time to be by themselves, to have their own space. It is vital for everyone, particularly our clients. Having their own home allows them to do what makes them happy and to live with independence and confidence."

- Nirosha Weerasinghe - Disability Support Worker, Able Australia

We believe we can make a huge difference. With the support of community, we can build more homes and deliver more supports to people with complex disabilities. We already provide homes to

130 clients. Our hope is to provide homes to even more.

There is a lot to do. But as the saying goes, Rome wasn't built in a day.

To begin with, our goal is to raise \$200,000 to build two single-unit homes in Moorabbin in Melbourne's south. These units will provide a much-needed home to someone with a disability.

A place they can indulge in their **hobbies**.

A place they can personalise and make their **own**.

A place they can create **memories** with family and friends.

A place designed and **equipped** to suit their special needs.

A place they can call **Home**.

*Report published by the Australian Government - Department of Health on 30 September 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



From growing the size of our workforce to expanding the number of people we have been able to support, Able has continued to adapt to the changing environment of the disability sector in Australia. As well as changes in the way we operate, it has also been an

important few months for the sector as a whole.

As well as the introduction of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguarding Framework, we have now had the first public sitting for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Able Australia supports both the introduction of the Framework and the Royal Commission.

We will continue to ensure we are compliant with the new Framework and take every opportunity we can to promote and advance the rights of people with disability to live equally, and be free from abuse and neglect.

I'm so proud about what we can share with you in this newsletter. From the work we are doing in the Supported Independent Living space and what we plan to achieve, to the highlights of the Deafblind International World Conference which we hosted in August. There is undoubtedly a lot happening around Able and within the Disability sector at the moment. There is certainly more change, improvement and growth to come.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "KAM MacRae".

ABLE EMPLOYEE HONoured IN VICTORIAN DISABILITY AWARDS

Carla Anderson, Director – Centre of Excellence Deafblind at Able Australia has been inducted into the Lifetime Achievement Honour Roll as part of the 2019 Victorian Disability Award.

Carla has been a part of the Able Australia team for over 15 years. She has developed countless programs and services to ensure those who are deafblind can live rich, independent lives, and feel included and empowered within the broader community.

Carla has always worked to empower members of the deafblind community and challenged them to access information, make informed decisions for themselves and independently participate in community life.

Carla began working with the deafblind community in the USA where she was born and raised. There Carla worked for DCARA – Deaf Counselling Advocacy and Referral Agency. This passion for the deafblind community continued when Carla migrated to Australia. Through the 1980's and 1990's Carla undertook advocacy

work on behalf of the deafblind community and personal development training for those who were deafblind while working for VicDeaf (now known as Expression Australia).

After leaving VicDeaf, Carla joined Able Australia in 2001. At that time, much of the sector had a 'welfare focus' when it came to those with deafblindness.

Carla quickly gained the respect of Able Australia's deafblind community by showing them that they could take control of their lives. Carla has travelled the world to see what other deafblind communities were doing and used this knowledge to inform the services and supports developed by Able Australia.

Able Australia is so proud to see Carla's work with the Deafblind Community being recognised. She has seemingly boundless energy and a deep passion for her work. Carla is an icon of the deafblind community.

Congratulations Carla!

STATE CONNECT



VICTORIA

Able celebrates Deafblind Awareness Week with collaborative events around Melbourne

Deafblind Awareness Week coincides with Helen Keller's birthday (27 June) each year and is a week of celebration, raising awareness and educating the community about deafblindness.

During the week, Able visited

supporters Bostik Australia and Herbert Smith Freehills to spread awareness about deafblindness. Able's Creative Arts Therapist led a session with the teams, challenging them to create a piece of art without their sight or without asking others for assistance. Many of the participants commented on how effective the exercise was in encouraging them to think about what it is like to live with deafblindness.

Able also held a very successful event in conjunction with

Deafblind Victoria and Deafblind Australia. The event was held at Ross House in Melbourne's CBD and had a great turnout.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in our events throughout Deafblind Awareness Week 2019!



TASMANIA

Able Dances in Creative Community Project

The Re-Embody Project is a project organised by Interweave Arts and was part of the Junction Arts Festival in Launceston in September 2019.

In preparation for the event, organisers from Interweave Arts joined Able clients at the Young Adult Program (YAP) centre

once a week over five weeks.

During this time, the clients were encouraged to explore dance in a way that expressed themselves. At the end of the five weeks, the group had their final rehearsal at Prince's Square where the festival was being held.

Saturday night came and the clients danced around the Prince's Square fountain with other Interweave Arts

dance groups. Each group had decorated domes and shapes and together made their way to the grass area to dance. The dance circle grew bigger as more groups joined. The dancing continued free form until it was time to place all the domes together at the end. It was a fantastic opportunity for creative expression and to connect to a diverse range of community groups.



QUEENSLAND

Able Australia hosts the 17th Deafblind International World Conference in Gold Coast, Queensland.

The Deafblind International World Conference seeks to explore the themes of accessibility, communication and technology for those who are deafblind.

As a leading provider of deafblind services in Australia for over 50 years, we were

so proud to host this year's conference in August. Before this time, it had been more than a decade since the World Conference was last hosted in Australia.

Being born partially or totally deaf and blind is an incredibly challenging condition. Many of the accessibility tools that are commonplace today cater to those who are only deaf or blind, not both.

That's why the conference is so important. It's our opportunity

to show the world the incredible things happening within Australia to support those who are deafblind and show the local deafblind community what's happening on the world stage when it comes to accessibility, communication and technology.

At the end of the week, we had over 400 delegates come through the conference, 25 speakers from around the globe and invaluable new knowledge and experience for people living with deafblindness.



ACT

Growth happening in the ACT

From a new lick of paint and collaboration with the Able team in Queensland on rostering and change management, the ACT

team have been making exciting changes in the Wanniasa office.

There has also been a focus on building community and strengthening relationships in the ACT Able community. Each month, families and guardians are invited to connect with each

other at one of the Able houses.

The ACT team is also expanding its workforce with new employees being hired for casual and permanent positions in order to provide more support to our current and onboarding clients.

If you or someone you know is interested in working with Able Australia, please visit www.ableaustralia.org.au/get-involved/current-vacancies or call 1300 225 369.



DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONFERENCE SHOWCASES RESEARCH FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

In August, Able Australia hosted the Deafblind International World Conference in the Gold Coast. The conference was split into three themes - Accessibility, Communication and Technology.

The Accessibility stream provided global insight with experts from around the world speaking in their fields, which included **Art Therapy with Individuals who are Deafblind** presented by Emily Walters of Able Australia and **Mentoring Deafblind Employees** presented by Christopher Woodfill of the Helen Keller National Center in the United States.

The Communication stream focused on research ranging from **'Adapted' Sign Communication** presented by Holly Floyd of the Canadian Deafblind Association to **Enhancing Learning and Cognitive Potential in People with Deafblindness** presented by

Annika Maria Johannessen of Statped Norway and Monique S Verberg of Royal Dutch Kentalis, Netherlands, to **Social-Haptic Communication in Australia** presented by Dennis Adrian Witcombe of Able Australia.

The Technology stream concluded the conference with a number of presentations on both the impact of technology on the lives of deafblind people and new technology that has come into play in recent years.

Wendy Buckley of the Perkins School for the Blind in the USA presented on **Eye Gaze Technology** while Eric van Heuvelen of Bartimeus, Netherlands presented on **Converting Vibrotactile Information in Daily Practice of People with Deafblindness**.

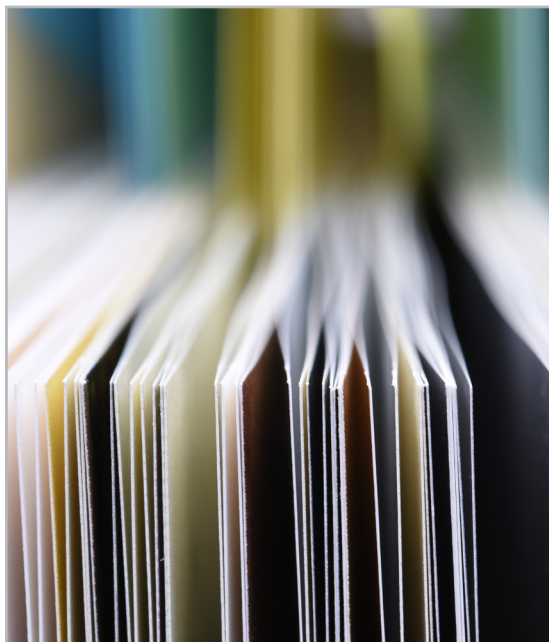
With each day assigned

one of the three themes, delegates were able to really focus on the presentations of the day, engage with the speakers and start meaningful discussions about many of the presentations.

Able Australia is honoured to have been given the opportunity to host the 17th Deafblind International World Conference.

To learn more about the speakers who presented at the 17th Deafblind International World Conference, please visit <https://bit.ly/2LZaKOh>

For access to the presentations mentioned in this article and more, please visit <https://bit.ly/2LWCgMv>



OCTOBER PRICE GUIDE CHANGE IMPACTS HEALTH SUPPORT AREAS

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) releases updates in the Price Guide which determines how much can be charged for different supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

On October 1, the NDIS released a new price guide that makes changes to the pricing of some areas including health supports.

This can affect those who are funded under the NDIS and access health services such as occupational therapy or mental health services.

Please speak with your Support Coordinator, Local Area Coordinator and or the NDIA (ph. 1800 800 110) directly to understand more about these changes and how they may impact you.

You can also access this information online at the NDIS website. You can follow this link:
<https://bit.ly/2MnEyDi>

ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE

A Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has commenced. The Commission is accepting public submissions and has commenced public hearings.

For more information go to: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>

Able Australia as a whole supports the Commission, and will take every opportunity to promote and advance the rights of people with disability to live equally, and be free from abuse and neglect.

At this early stage, we do not know if Able Australia will be required to provide specific evidence to the Commission. We commit to keeping you regularly updated on the Commission.

Able Australia continues to focus on delivering the highest levels of service to everyone we support.

If you have concerns about the quality of service you receive from Able Australia, please discuss this with your local Able contact where appropriate, or provide anonymous feedback via the Able Australia website www.ableaustralia.org.au/feedback.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Commission contact Able CEO Kate MacRae via email at kate.macrae@ableaustralia.org.au.

For information about the Royal Commission, please visit
<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>

You can keep up to date with sector news including updates regarding the Royal Commission by subscribing to our digital newsletter at www.ableaustralia.org.au.

Your donation to Able Australia is welcome at any time

Able Australia appreciates all the support received from the many friends of the organisation. Thanks to them, we are able to deliver otherwise unfunded programs and activities, ensuring we continue to provide high-quality support. These programs enable people to reach their full potential and live the life they choose.

Yes, I would like to enable people to live the life they choose

To make a donation

- Please visit www.ableaustralia.org.au/donate, OR
- Return this form to: "Able Australia Services, Reply Paid 4000, Surrey Hills VIC 3127".

I would like to make a one-off gift of \$_____

By: ☐ Cheque (made out to Able Australia)

OR ☐ Credit card

Card number

Expiry

Name on card _____

Signature _____

My details:

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Email _____

Mobile _____

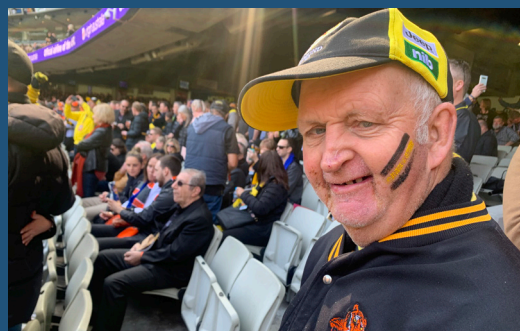
☐ Please send me my receipt via email

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Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. For a copy of Able Australia's Privacy Policy, please visit www.ableaustralia.org.au/privacy-policy

DONATION BRINGS GRAND FINAL DREAMS TO LIFE



Francis is a much loved client at Able Australia. He has lived and breathed the Richmond FC his whole life. Growing up, when his Tigers guernsey was washed, he would sit under it on the line waiting for it to dry.

Throughout the season, Francis has tried to get to as many games as he can. His favourite player is Jack Riewoldt. Every day he stands in front of his fixture, talking about what's happening next, and making sure all that visit the house know how the Tiges are doing.

Like many of our clients here at Able, Francis is a certified footy fanatic.

This year, Francis got to see his Mighty Tigers defeat the Greater Western Sydney Giants in a triumphant win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground thanks to a generous donation of two tickets from a donor.

After a call went out to try find tickets for Francis and a support person to join him at the start of the week with no luck, we were thrilled when the kind donation came in just one day before the big game.

Francis relived the highlights back at home, beaming with excitement. He is already talking about how his beloved Tigers will go next season!

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