

Impact Report

How we're helping to support people with disability



Life-changing experiences at Deafblind Camp

For the first time since 2020 the Able Deafblind Camp was held in Phillip Island. Thirty-three deafblind people from around Australia eagerly anticipated this unique experience to connect with other deafblind people and try a range of activities they wouldn't typically have the opportunity to. For four campers, this was their first deafblind camp and one camper had never met another deafblind person.

Deafblind campers said their favourite activities were dancing with vests which vibrate in time with music (shown in the bottom right image) and trialling a variety of mobility canes, tactile maps and assistive technologies. They also enjoyed archery, flying fox, creative arts therapy, meditation, giant swing, swimming, nature walks and a trip to the local town.

To organise the camp a Camp Planning Committee was put together consisting of six members including two deafblind committee members who helped to ensure all aspects of the camp were fully accessible. This provided the deafblind



committee members with the opportunity to make an impact on the accessibility of the camp, greatly contribute to meetings, learn about meeting processes, make public announcements to the camp group and recognise the contribution they made to the successful running of the camp.

A clear sign of the success and value of the camp was the number of campers asking, "when and where will the next camp be?"

Thank you to the 65 staff and volunteers for helping make this camp happen. The Able Australia Deafblind Camp was kindly funded by philanthropic donations, including the Lionel and Yvonne Spencer Trust.

Accessible new homes built

As a registered NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Provider with over 50 years of expertise in disability, Able works with clients to ensure they are supported throughout their journey to find their ideal SDA home.

We are excited to announce that a hub of newly-built SDA homes in Heidelberg Victoria was recently opened, funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), providing homes for four clients requiring high levels of support. The houses have been designed to incorporate a high level of physical access provision including safe accessway, adjustable benches, accessible bathrooms and assistive technology for opening doors and windows.



In collaboration with the DFFH, Able's Deafblind Services Teams and Deafblind advisor ensured that all aspects of the design of the new home were designed with Deafblind client needs in mind.

Clients and their families were heavily involved in the design process to ensure the house met the clients' needs and choices. Clients got to choose design features like their preferred flooring coverings, and feature walls. Visual requirements included using high contrast colours and textural design features, and kitchens include high-low benches.

Lifeskills and FUN in Supported Independent Living

Our team of passionate and dedicated support workers are committed to supporting clients with disability to achieve their goals and thrive in the comfort of their home.

We provide support and help build lifeskills such as:

- Going to appointments and any follow-ups
- Filling out forms and communicating
- Taking care of the house including shopping, cleaning, cooking and organising
- Using public transport
- Social activities for our clients with disability, like getting out into the community, making friends, doing fun activities such as bowling, going to the movies and exercising.



Leila lives with three other housemates and says, **"I'm independent, I do my own washing, my own clothes, tidy my bedroom myself and independent shopping"**.

Use this QR code to see a video featuring Leila dancing in her Able Supported Independent Living home.



Mural painting project

Our Health and Wellbeing Program for clients with disability focuses on mental health, healthy eating, exercise, relationships and leisure. As part of the focus on mental health, the team, along with a local artist, Melski McVee, painted a mural of a possum surrounded by botanical plants. It's a welcoming entrance for all who visit our Able Australia Lifestyle Choices Day Service in Launceston, Tasmania.

Clients played a key role in choosing the final design and also joined in the fun, painting alongside the artist Mel. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Thank you to Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation for making this possible.

Use this QR code to see a video of the mural project.

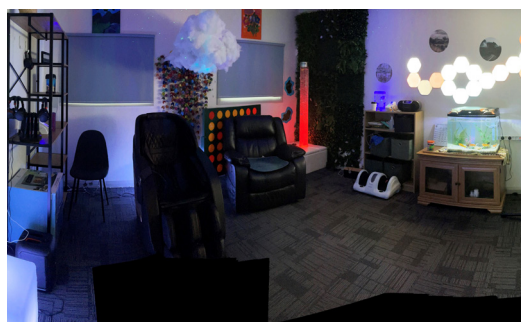


Sensory Room

The new therapeutic multi-sensory room at Able Lifestyle Choices Day Service in Launceston provides a safe environment for clients with cognitive, behavioural and physical disabilities to engage in a range of sensory experiences. It features sensory lighting and lamps, noise cancelling headphones, massage chair, sensory squeeze balls, books, and art equipment.

The sensory room was funded by a grant from the Stronger Communities Program, from the Commonwealth of Australia - Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

Federal Member for Bass, Bridget Archer, visited, meeting with clients and their carers. "It is clear that so much effort and care has been taken into creating a space where participants can engage in a range of sensory experiences," Mrs Archer said. "I also had the opportunity to chat with some wonderful participants, carers and local staff who are passionate about creating a community where everyone feels seen, heard, valued and respected".



Achievements of the Centre of Excellence - Deafblind

Deafblindness is a combination of sight and hearing loss, which impacts a person's ability to communicate, access information and participate equally in society. Deafblindness is much more common than people realise, and as we age, it is likely that more of us will require deafblind-aware services.

People with deafblindness are less likely to experience successful educational outcomes, leading to greater rates of unemployment and poverty. "This is because there is still a lack of understanding of deafblindness, particularly in the education system" says Dr Meredith Prain, National Head of the Centre of Excellence - Deafblind at Able Australia.

The Centre of Excellence - Deafblind aims to make life better for people with deafblindness. This includes communication, access to good quality services, housing, education, employment, technology and health. We achieve this through research, consultancy, training, information and advocacy. We work together with people with deafblindness and their social and support networks, service providers, advocacy groups, universities and Government agencies.

The wide array of key achievements in the last 12 months include:

- Completion of Deafblind Technology project, setting up systems and processes for providing technology services to Victorians with deafblindness
- Completion of Individualised Supported Living training project that helps staff to work with clients to understand their needs and goals
- Publication of paper - exploring methodologies for determining prevalence of deafblindness in children
- Two Communication Guide training programs run to develop knowledge and skills in working with people with deafblindness
- Two Video Interaction Guidance Initial Training Courses delivered to identify and improve on communication strengths
- Ongoing work on development of a World Health Organisation ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) Core Set for deafblindness



Able CEO Lynette McKeown (left) with Dr Meredith Prain, who presented 'improving website accessibility for people with deafblindness' at the Deafblind International World Conference in Canada.



Two people engaging in tactile sign language as a part of Communication Guide Training.

Able Australia at a Glance

126 Clients in
Day
Services



189 Clients in
residential
services in
homes



60 Supported
Independent
Living homes



34 Specialist
Disability
Accommodation
homes



42 Different
languages
spoken by
our staff



94% Able client
and family
satisfaction



8 Research
project
partnerships
- Centre of
Excellence for
Deafblind



123 Organisations
in the CEO
Collaboration



A gift that will last a lifetime

In 1997, Able Australia bought this home in Bonbeach for three of our clients to call home. This was made possible thanks to Beryl and Julia Simmons, who left a generous gift in their Will to Able Australia.

Although Julia and Beryl are sadly no longer with us, their legacy lives on even after 20 years. Their generosity has made a lasting impact on the lives of people living with a disability now and in the future – a gift that keeps on giving.



“It feels like my home. I smile a lot here” said one of the clients.

We are incredibly grateful to the Simmons sisters for their kindness and generosity that has given our clients a home where they can feel comfortable and independent.

To learn more about this Bonbeach home and the clients who live there, please watch the video via this QR code.



Many people like you, who passionately support Able Australia, consider providing a donation or leaving a gift in their Will that funds many of our life-transforming projects.

Leaving a gift to Able Australia in your Will is a very special way of giving a gift that keeps giving. A gift in your Will – no matter how big or small – ensures that Able Australia will continue to support and empower people living with complex disabilities.

For Bequest information, please contact us at 1300 220 602 or email fundraising@ableaustralia.org.au.

Thank you for being a part of creating special opportunities for the people we support.



Please contact our Donor Care Team to let us know what you thought about our Impact Report and tell us what you'd like to hear more about in the future: Phone 1300 220 602 or email fundraising@ableaustralia.org.au.

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