



# afford news

April 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](mailto:b&e@afford.com.au)

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Afford client, Carol partners with Afford's Learning and Development team. Read more on page 3.



# From the CEO



Shortly after our last edition of Afford News was published, the final report for Public Hearing 23 at the Disability Royal Commission was also published. Afford is the focus of case study 23 for past failings.

We support the Royal Commission and the positive change it will bring for people with disability. We also take full responsibility and accountability for our failings.

You will soon read further news about Afford in relation to the death of one of our clients while she was in the care of Afford in 2019. The matter has been brought to the Federal Court by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the sentencing hearing will take place on 28 April 2023 and we accept the ruling of the Federal Court and will be paying the penalty in full.

These matters reflect how Afford was, not how we are now and how we will continue to be in the future.

Everyone working at Afford today is committed to the safeguarding and rights of our clients. We are listening and will continue to listen to the voices of our clients to create real impact and positive change to how we are shaping the Afford of the future.

As we make changes for the better, we will communicate openly with you about those changes. In the coming months we will be setting up a Human Rights Advocate Group at Afford, and we have developed and implemented 140 policies and procedures in the past 12 months to ensure positive change is embedded into what we do and how we do it. Our commitments moving forward are clear and transparent, they are real and meaningful, and they are acted on.

That is the Afford of today.

**Jo Toohey**

Chief Executive Officer



## In depth with Carol Hendry

Carol Hendry is a Afford Supported Independent Living (SIL) client. She recently took part in an Afford Learning and Development Induction video, which stars our clients. In the video, Carol and others share stories and insights about their experiences — an important part of the learning journey for staff as this gives them a chance to connect to Afford's purpose.

Carol loves to cook. Her father was a cook in the army, so it's always been a big part of her life.

When Carol moved into the Afford SIL home she shares in Victoria, Afford lowered the stove, benches and kitchen sink to her height so she could continue to do the thing she loves.

Carol has been an Afford client since 2021. She enjoys going out sightseeing on the Afford buses and recently took a trip to Mornington Peninsula.

When Afford asked Carol if she would consider taking part in the videos, she felt unsure at first.



“Afford made me see that I’m worth what I am. I feel safer in this place than I ever have.”

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“I wasn’t sure if I could do it. I thought I would muck it up. I had a lot on, but then I thought it might be better for me to think of other things, so I did it,” says Carol.

Carol thinks that being supported to talk in the videos has helped her communicate more with others in her everyday life.

“It’s given me more confidence again. I thought I might make mistakes. But when they showed me the video, I didn’t make mistakes. It’s made me feel a lot better about myself.”

Carol says becoming an Afford client has been good for her.

“You get the freedom, you get the love, and you get the respect. Afford made me see that I’m worth what I am. I feel safer in this place than I ever have,” she says.

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



*Trish went from DES client to SLES Employment Coach.*

## From client to coach

When Trish began her journey with Afford, she faced uncertainty.

“Because of my surgery, I had to rethink the kind of work I was able to apply for,” Trish explained.

“The Disability Employment Services (DES) team helped me – they asked what I’d like to do, we updated my resume, I got interview tips, then a job I was interested in opened up at Afford.

“When I finally got the letter saying ‘Welcome to Afford’ I cheered.”

Trish is now an Employment Coach in the School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) service.

“I love it. The staff are great, it feels like I’ve always been part of the team. I like knowing that I’m helping others reach their goals too,” she said

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If you would like more information about Disability Employment Services at Afford call **1800 233 673**. 🐦

## Sweet community participation

The We Love Thornton Festival brings Western Sydney locals together to celebrate what makes their community so special — and this year, clients from an Afford Supported Independent Living (SIL) home in Thornton (Penrith, NSW) made the event sweeter!

Michael, John and Kenneth were tasked with making lolly bags for Festival goers and they were a hit.

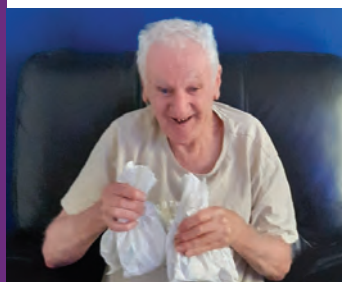
“The Festival team really appreciate the involvement,” Marzi De Santi, on behalf of the event planning team, said.

“The kids, and even the adults, loved the lolly bags!

“It’s an excellent example of the private sector, Government and the community working closely together. We hope to have Afford’s clients more involved in the future.”

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



*Above: Kenneth.*



*Right: Michael and John.*



*Below: Nas with Afford  
Lifestyle Assistant, Tiff.*

# 5 things to know about... **Community Services at Afford**



How do you get involved in your community? It looks different for everyone.

Nas goes to the gym and enjoys having the freedom and flexibility to choose what she might like to do during the rest of the week.

There's no right or wrong way to connect with community. It's all about making sure your activities achieve your goals and make you happy.

## **1 It's your choice**

You choose how you want to spend your time – we're just here to help where we can. For Nas, she knew she wanted to go to the gym, but it was also important for her to have choice. "On Mondays, I access the gym. On Thursdays, I get to do whatever I decide to do, like swimming or I get my nails done. It's up to me," she said.

## **2 Getting involved in the community can help you make friends**

Nas will tell you how much she "likes meeting new people" and our Community Services have helped her with this. She is supported to access one-and-one and group sessions at the gym where she is starting to make new friends.

## **3 You can explore hobbies and go to the big events**

How you access the community is up to you! You can use our services to help you with your hobbies - for Nas, this is going to swimming in the warmer weather. But she also uses Afford to go to the events she likes too, like recently, she was able to go to see Ed Sheeran in concert with her friends.

## **4 You choose who supports you**

When we are with people who we feel safe with and connected to, we are more relaxed and can have more fun. That's why choosing the staff members who support you is so important. Nas has developed strong bonds with the Lifestyle Assistants who work with her, that's why she continues to request their support – and you can do the same. "I've been a client for four years and I've been blessed with Tiff and Eve, they're really beautiful, genuine people," she said.

## **5 You have the right to be you**

Community Services is about helping you to be seen, understood and valued. That is at the heart of all that Afford does, ensuring the voices and choices of clients are at the centre of all that we do. Nas has experienced this, as she explains: "They treat me with a lot of respect and understand my needs."

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If you would like more information about Community Services at Afford visit our website at:

[afford.com.au/community-services](https://afford.com.au/community-services) 



# 5 things to know about...

## Taking charge of your NDIS plan

NDIS stands for National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is how the government provides funding to people with disability to help cover essential costs.

Everyone entitled to this funding has a NDIS plan. Your plan includes information about you, the support you get from family, friends, services and community groups. It also outlines your goals and what funding you have been given to achieve those goals.

It is your right to make decisions and change your mind about your plan and Support Coordinators can help you make the most of your NDIS plan and funding.



### 1 We help to make sure your NDIS care plan is right for you

Each Afford client is unique. This means their support needs are unique too! We know that sometimes clients' needs are complicated and that sometimes they change. It's important that your plan is right for you, so we work with you to make sure you are happy with it. If your family is involved, we can work with them too.

### 2 There are different ways we can support you

Support Coordinators can help clients with things like finding a way through the NDIS process, naming needs and goals or choosing the best services to meet individual needs. They can also help with NDIS plan reviews, getting through challenging times, communicating in different languages or accessible formats.





### 3 Making changes to your plan is okay

It is normal for your wants and needs and goals to change. Making changes to your NDIS plan or changing supports or providers is an okay thing to do. The law says it is your right to do this. Always remember that you are the most important person in your plan! If you want to make changes you can talk to us.

### 4 We are here to help when things get hard

Sometimes life can be hard. This might be because of things happening in the world, like the COVID pandemic. It might be a hard time in your family, or an experience you are having with a support. When things get hard, you can talk to a Support Coordinator about getting better or different supports in your plan because a client's safety and happiness are the most important thing.

### 5 Our goal is to empower you to manage your own plan

To empower someone means giving them the knowledge and skills to do something themselves. We will work with you and help you learn about the NDIS and your plan. There is no rush to manage your own plan. We will go at your pace. We are here to support you all the way!

To learn more about Afford's Support Coordination service, talk to someone you trust or visit: [afford.com.au/support-coordination](https://afford.com.au/support-coordination)

To learn more about using your NDIS plan, visit: [ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan](https://ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan) 🐦

## The taste of Harmony

Harmony Week is an annual, nationwide recognition and celebration of diversity. It brings together Australians from all different backgrounds. It happens once a year.

People get involved by wearing Harmony Week's special colour – orange – and by attending or hosting a Harmony Week event. This year, Harmony Week ran from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 March.

Diversity and inclusion are important to us here at Afford, so we celebrated in lots of ways. Everyone was encouraged to host Harmony Week lunches for our employees and it was wonderful to see the lunches happening across many of our sites. Employees were invited to cook or bring a dish from their cultural background to share.

At Afford's Minchinbury Head Office, corporate and ADE employees came together to enjoy more than 50 different



recipes. The feast from many nations included yum cha siu mai (Chinese chicken dumplings), and burek (Serbian spinach and feta in filo pastry) to European Orthodox Easter sweets, fairy bread and ube cake (Filipino purple yam cake). The ADE team cooked up an “Aussie style Bunnings sausage sanga.”

“Events like this with our team at Minchinbury are a great way for us to understand and connect with the diverse culture represented across the organisation,” says Afford CEO Jo Toohey. 🦋






# Save the date: International Day of Families

On Monday 15 May, it's International Day of Families – a time to celebrate families, which has different meanings for everyone.

Family can include your mum, dad and siblings. Family members can also be people that you aren't related to – people that you feel safe with and close to. International Day of Families is a time to celebrate what these special people mean to you.



Save the date, we'll be sharing more on how you can get involved soon. You also find out more at [un.org](https://un.org) 

## Disability Royal Commission releases final progress report

In March the Disability Royal Commission published its seventh and final Progress Report.

The report says that the Royal Commission has taken submissions from more than 9,500 people. This input has already led to changes to policies and practices that will improve the lives of people with disability.

“People’s stories and ideas for change have already enriched the Royal Commission’s work and they will inform recommendations in the Final Report,” the Honourable Ronald Sackville AO KC, Chair of the Royal Commission said.

Afford supports the Royal Commission process and the positive change it will bring



for people with disability. The organisation has changed and will continue to change how it works so that safeguarding the rights of all our clients remains Afford’s top priority.

You can read more about the Royal Commission and its progress at:

[disability.royalcommission.gov.au](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au) 

## NDIS Code of Conduct


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

- > act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making following 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 and 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/](https://afford.com.au/feedback/)



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