



# afford news

May 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 **brand.engagement@afford.com.au**

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# From the CEO



This month, Afford News includes features that highlight health and wellbeing, and provide helpful information on The Voice to Parliament.

We're sharing some important articles with our readers this month.

In this edition you will read our feature on The Voice to Parliament. We're on our path to Reconciliation at Afford as well, and I will be able to share more information on this in the coming months. We also celebrated the International Day of Families this week and you can read our feature in this edition on the important role families play in the lives of people with disability.

Afford is investing in meaningful change as we continue to shape our Human Rights Advocacy Group – which I referred to last month.

Change is a complex thing, and as you know Afford is making changes. We have reflected very seriously on the findings of the Disability Royal Commission and we are reshaping our organisation accordingly. The Royal Commission's findings about Afford were that we have previously had an aggressive approach to growth and property purchases, which has been prioritised over the safety and quality of services for our clients. That approach is also not sustainable for our organisation. We are well and truly in the process of putting change into action to make sure that Afford is here in the short and long-term and that we continue to be rights-led, and client-focused. All of these factors led to us making the decision that we will no longer provide disability services in Western Australia. This was a difficult decision, one that was not made lightly, but it was made with a focus on quality, safeguarding and service in mind.

We want to make sure we are providing high-quality, fit-for-purpose services that give our clients choice, and we want to deliver that service underpinned by great systems, great teams and great partnerships. This is a focus for Afford moving forward and something we will be investing in over the coming months.

Thank you to the clients and families who are working with our teams through this change.

**Jo Toohey**

Chief Executive Officer



## In depth with... Zara Davis

When Zara Davis came to Afford in June 2021, her goals were to improve her health, increase her community participation and develop life and social skills. Zara has been ticking off her goals since moving into Afford's Mawson Lakes Supported Independent Living (SIL) and attending our Holden Hill Community Services in South Australia.

During our interview, Zara communicated mainly through one-word answers, and her cheeky personality and frequent smiles shone through. With Zara's consent, her key worker Rajbir provided support to share more details about her journey over the past two years.

When Zara first moved into her new home, she struggled with her health and was quite withdrawn. Rajbir explained that Zara has now become much more talkative, social and active.


"She used to live in her own room, and she was not interested when we say: 'Okay, come sit with us.' In one year, we have seen so much difference in Zara.

Now she's really talkative. If she goes out, and someone can talk to her, she can communicate," Rajbir said.

Zara's health has improved since becoming an Afford client. Her doctor is happy with progress which has included an increase in her mobility. Rajbir spoke about changes to Zara's mental health, with her grandparents and parents noticing a "change in her soul".

Zara attends the Holden Hill Community Service three days per week, where she has a busy social calendar. When asked what she enjoys about going to Holden Hill, Zara replied, "we will walk. We do colouring. Cooking."

During a recent National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan review, Zara's support coordination funding model was changed from specialist to standard, as she no longer needs such intensive support. Plus, her core NDIS funding was increased to allow for more community access participation.



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Zara's goals for the future include further improvements in her health, increased community participation, and working more on her mobility. Her progress shows the positive impact of individualised support and meaningful community connections.

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

# A magic weekend

It was a magic weekend of footy and friends for 25 Afford clients who attended the NRL's Magic Round including a Brisbane Broncos' closed training session at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane from Friday 5 to Sunday 7 May, thanks to our partners Heroes With Ability.

"It was such a special weekend, especially for some clients who had never been to an NRL game before. There was even one client who spoke to me about how he experiences social anxiety. He was so proud to be able to go to a busy footy game and had so much fun," Marco Quintao, Director and Co-Founder at Heroes With Ability said.

For more information on the work that Afford and Heroes With Ability do together to enable inclusion in sport, visit [heroeswithability.com](https://heroeswithability.com) 🐾



# Healthy competition

At Afford's Jamisontown Community Centre, fun is fueled by healthy eating. Both clients and employees have been saying that they want to improve their eating habits, so they have started to work towards this together.

They have been doing this through helpful reminders, encouragement and now a reward system which has turned into some friendly competition.

Every afternoon, the group check in with each other and discuss who had a healthy looking morning tea and lunch, and who has been keeping pace with drinking water. Winners are selected and presented with a certificate.

"Since starting to do this, clients have been bringing healthier food and their drink bottles to make sure they can take home the win. They're even displaying their certificates in their rooms at home for everyone to see," Leonie Pearson, Community Services Team Leader said. 🐾





## 5 things to know about...

# **Being a family champion for a person with disability**

Monday 15 May was the United Nations International Day of Families, which got us thinking about the role of family members in the lives of people with disability. It can mean being called on for different things throughout that person's life. Some examples include being a companion, a friend, a carer, a legal guardian, an advocate, a decision maker and an all-round champion for the rights and independence of someone you care about. Here are five things to know about being a family champion for a person with disability.

## 1 People with disability have the same rights as everybody else

People with disability have the same human rights as everybody else. Human rights mean that everyone should be treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Human rights apply to all people everywhere. Australia is a party to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which means ensuring people with disability are treated equally.

## 2 A champion is also an advocate

Advocacy is when you support another person to express their views and wishes and help them stand up for their rights. Some places you might need to remind people that people with disability have the same rights as everybody else are service providers, healthcare professionals, those out and about in the community and sometimes even your family and friends.

## 3 Being a champion means being led by the person you're a champion for

This is especially true if you are not a legal guardian, as the law assumes that everyone has capacity, and can (and should) make decisions for themselves. Your first port of call should be your family member. How do they think or feel about something? What would they like to experience? How can you support them to achieve their goals?

## 4 The best decision-making is supported decision-making

Everyone needs help with decision-making from time to time. When someone needs assistance to make decisions, it's called supported decision-making. This is about putting the person's thoughts and feelings at the centre of decision-making.

## 5 We're here to support you when things get tough

It's not always easy being a champion for a person with disability. Remember that Afford is here for our clients and their families when the going gets tough. Please get in touch with your family member or care recipient's case manager or support worker if you'd like to talk about a challenge you're experiencing.

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Read more about supported decision-making at: [afford.com.au](https://afford.com.au)

Learn more about the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in this Easy Read document by clicking [here](#)

Afford's Human Rights Policy is also available at [afford.com.au](https://afford.com.au) 🐦





# 5 things to know about...

## The Voice to Parliament

There is going to be a referendum about The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice (The Voice to Parliament) between October and December 2023. The Voice will give First Nations people more say in decisions about them and is an important step in the journey to Reconciliation. A referendum is a pretty big deal – the last time there was a referendum in Australia was more than 20 years ago, in 1999. With Reconciliation Week taking place from 27 May to 3 June, it's a good time to learn about The Voice to Parliament, who can take part in the referendum, and how.



## **1 A referendum is a vote by the people about the Australian Constitution**

A referendum is when the government asks the people to vote “yes” or “no” to an important question. The question is usually about a proposed change to Australia’s founding document, the Constitution. The Constitution sets out how Australia is governed. It overrides other laws and can’t be changed by Parliament. It can only be changed through a vote by the people – a referendum.

The referendum about The Voice will ask the Australian people if they want to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia. It will ask if Australians think they should establish a body to provide independent advice to the Parliament and Government about issues that impact them.

## **2 If you vote in elections you must vote in the referendum**

Eligible Australians over the age of 18 must vote in the referendum. If you are enrolled to vote in elections, you are enrolled to vote in the referendum. You do not need to enrol again, though you might need to update your enrolment details. If you are aged over 18 and eligible to vote but not enrolled, you should enrol to vote before the referendum.

## **3 The Voice will give First Nations people more say in decisions about them**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice will be a new independent advisory body made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, chosen by local communities. It will make representations

to the Australian Parliament and Executive Government on matters relating to them. It will be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful and culturally informed.

## **4 The Voice is an idea that was proposed many years ago**

The Voice was officially proposed to the nation five years ago on 26 May 2017. This proposal is known as the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It was put together by over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Delegates from across Australia. It invites the Australian people to walk together to build a better future by establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

## **5 There are plenty of places to learn about The Voice**

You can learn more about The Voice to Parliament so you can make your decision on how you would like to vote at:

- > The Australian Government website at [voice.gov.au](https://voice.gov.au)
- > Reconciliation Australia’s website at [reconciliation.org.au](https://reconciliation.org.au)

You can also read more about Your right to vote, including how to check if you are enrolled to vote, update your enrolment details or enrol to vote at [afford.com.au](https://afford.com.au) 🐣

## The Government's plan to improve the NDIS

On Tuesday 18 April, the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Bill Shorten announced that the Federal Government would be working to improve the NDIS by focusing on six key areas:


- > Increasing the NDIS workforce so there is staff available to better support people with disabilities and their families
- > Moving to long-term planning to empower clients
- > Addressing spiralling costs and ensuring supports provided are reasonable and necessary



- > Reviewing Supported Independent Living (SIL)
- > Targeting the misuse of NDIS funds
- > Ensuring increased community and mainstream supports work together with the NDIS system

A plan is still being developed and it will take time to implement changes, but you have the right to know how this will impact you.

You can keep up-to-date by visiting [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

If you want to speak to someone about the NDIS and getting the most out of your plan, you can find out more about our Support Coordination service and get in contact with the team at [afford.com.au](https://www.afford.com.au) 

## Raise your voice for Reconciliation Week

Reconciliation Week is at the end of this month, occurring from 27 May to 3 June. It is an important time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements.

You can get involved by attending a local or virtual events and sharing resources. Posters are available in a range of languages at [reconciliation.org.au](https://www.reconciliation.org.au)

You can also join in the national call for choirs as the Reconciliation Australia team look to unite singers from across the

country in the song "From Little Things Big Things Grow" by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody.

To find out more visit [reconciliation.org.au](https://www.reconciliation.org.au) 





# Be an Advocate for Human Rights

At Afford we believe that every individual deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are protected from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. We believe that human rights for people with disability should be upheld as they are for people who do not have a disability. We are committed to the principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Afford is establishing a Human Rights Program, and we are calling for employees and clients to join our Human Rights Advocate Group. For our clients, this will



be a paid role. Clients and employees will be paired to work together and promote more understanding about human rights for people with disability, and to make sure that human rights is a part of everything we do at Afford.

If you are a client who is interested in joining, please email [safeguarding@afford.com.au](mailto:safeguarding@afford.com.au)

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is Thursday 25 May. 🐦

## Support on trains boosted by sunflower

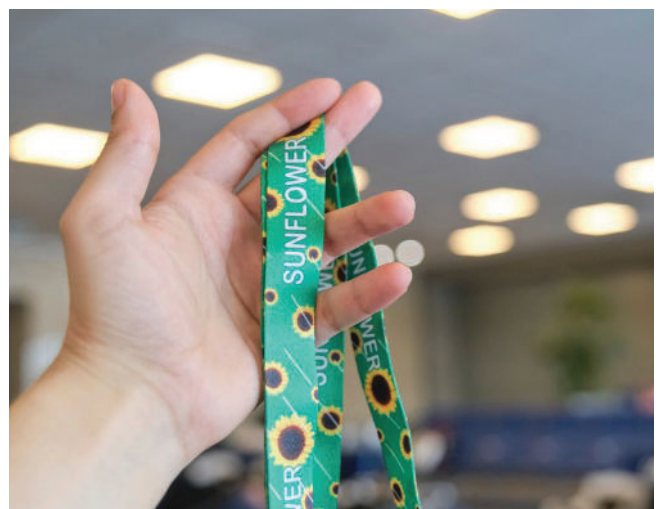
Taking public transport can be challenging for people with disabilities – especially if your disability isn't obvious to other people.

That's why Transport for NSW has developed the "hidden disabilities sunflower" initiative. It gives people with disability the option to wear a sunflower lanyard, which can signal to others that they have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – like autism, dementia, or anxiety – and they may need assistance.

Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink customer service staff are trained to recognise the sunflower and provide extra support to wearers if they need, including:

- > Ensuring they have enough time to get on and off train services
- > Helping them navigate through busy train stations
- > Supporting them during disruptions and travel changes
- > Helping them find quiet spaces as needed

You can find out more and order a free sunflower lanyard by visiting [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) 🐦



## 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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