



afford news

Spring 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.

From the Editor

Hello everyone! You will notice that Afford News is now quarterly (we previously published the magazine monthly). We have made this change so we can give you helpful updates on the seasonal opportunities through our Program of Supports. Our program of supports for Spring 2023 is now available and you can find out more here: afford.com.au/services/disability-community-services/ and on page 4 in this edition.

Spring is a time for flowers blooming, jacarandas, longer days, warmer nights and enjoying the very best the Australian outdoors has to offer. It's a time for picnics, music, bushwalks, sailing and fun in the sun. You can take a look at our new 'In Season' feature in this edition of Afford News to see what's on offer through our Community Hubs and what's happening in your city.

We will soon be launching a Carer Network at Afford and you can share your thoughts on what you want and need if you care for someone living with disability. See our 'Caring Together' feature in this edition. You can also read stories about our Supported Independent Living clients, Jean and Stephen, and Linda Romig from our Australian Disability Enterprise team in Victoria in this edition.

Enjoy the springtime!



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Enjoying great arts and crafts activities at our new Redland Bay Community Hub in Capalaba, Queensland.

From the CEO



September has been a big month with an overarching theme of change. We've seen the Disability Services and Inclusion Bill tabled in Parliament, which will repeal and replace the Disability Services Act from 1986.

I attended the Ceremonial Closing Sitting of the Disability Royal Commission and I was deeply moved by the scale of the five-year Royal Commission process and the bravery of the 1,500 people who came forward to share their stories. I was also hopeful hearing the closing statements of the Commissioners. If you haven't had a chance to read the words of Andy Jackson's poem 'Listen', I highly recommend you do. He wrote it especially for the occasion and you can find it on the Disability Royal Commission's LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook feed. His words say it all, really.

Afford was a case study in the Disability Royal Commission and we acknowledged and supported the findings of the Royal Commission previously. We have also shared across a series of 10 blogs, and in LinkedIn articles, how we have transformed in the last 18 months. We are committed to continue to evolve and to listen to our clients and the voices of all people with disability as we do.

We also announced this month that, as an organisation, we are supporting the vote for Yes for The Voice to Parliament referendum in October. We have outlined our position in a statement published on our website, noting that everyone at Afford and the wider community is free to vote as they choose – we are a democracy. My perspective and that of our Board and leadership team is quite straightforward: it is the right thing to do to vote 'yes'. For far too long there has been inequity, inequality, barriers to opportunity and the need for positive change for First Nations people with disability. And like all Australians, they deserve to have a voice on how that happens.

It is time for change. At Afford, we are here to be part of a positive change for our community now and into the future.

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer



In season: Spring

Spring is a great season to be outdoors, making colourful works of art, and seeing some terrific exhibitions and events across Australia. Find out what's on at Afford and in your city from September to November.

What's on at Afford

Afford's Community Hubs run a 12-week Program of Supports where you can select your goals, track your progress and choose from a selection of great activities. Our programs for Spring run from 25 September to 16 December 2023.

What you can do in New South Wales

You can go bike riding, learn how to feed a horse, learn about gardening essentials and how to return and earn, or you can take a bushwalk from our Jamisontown hub.



What you can do in Queensland

Our new Redland Bay Community Hub in Capalaba opened in July and you can read all about it in Redland News. Since the opening, our clients have been enjoying great arts and crafts activities and so much more. If you are adventurous you can go sailing and if you love music, you can learn how to play the guitar.

There are many more activities that support the achievement of goals and learning important life skills on offer through our Community Services 12-week Program of Supports. Visit our website to find an Afford Community Hub near you: afford.com.au/services/disability-community-services/ ➡

Service Spotlight

Supported Independent Living (SIL) is a NDIS support package that lets you live with other people with disability, or on your own. It can include support for everyday tasks like cooking, cleaning and personal care, to build your independence.

Afford SIL services can also support you to connect with your local community, find new activities, hobbies or social events, and to form new friendships. This support includes connection with Afford's Community Services.

Living at an Afford SIL means you have support as and when you would like to have support, but there is someone there for you all day and all night. You also have transport provided.

On page 8 you can read about Jean and Stephen who share their experience of SIL – including friendship, finding interests that they love, thriving in their independence while they have support.

You can find out more about Supported Independent Living and where we have vacancies for SIL at Afford here: afford.com.au/services/supported-independent-living/



Melbourne


Connection is a showcase of nearly 650 works of art from First Nations artists presented at THE LUME Melbourne: the world's largest digital art gallery.

When: Until 29 October 2023. Visit the venue's website for opening times.

Where: THE LUME Melbourne, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, 5 Convention Centre Place, South Wharf, Melbourne

Tickets: Ticket prices listed here are for single entry and on sale for the next two months. Adult: \$50, Concession: \$45, Student: \$40, Children: \$35. There are accessible tickets available with a free companion ticket.

Find out more:

Visit THE LUME Melbourne website thelumemelbourne.com/ and see our blog for details on accessible tickets and options for how to visit at quieter times. We also have information on how to contact THE LUME Melbourne to make special arrangements. See our blog for details: afford.com.au/blog/whats-on-in-spring-2023/ 

Adelaide

If you love nature, you will love the South Australian Museum's exhibition of the Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year competition.

The exhibition has beautiful photographs of animals, landscapes and sea life in Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea. You can see the photograph by Samuel Markham who was named the overall winner of the competition for 2023. You might also like to see Matty Smith's Aftermath shot (Animals in Nature winner), or the Animals in Nature Finalists – Nathan Watson with 'Hang time', Gary Meredith with 'A Bee-eater Rainbow' (pictured) and Ofer Levy with 'Neighbour's Dispute'.

When: Until 29 October 2023

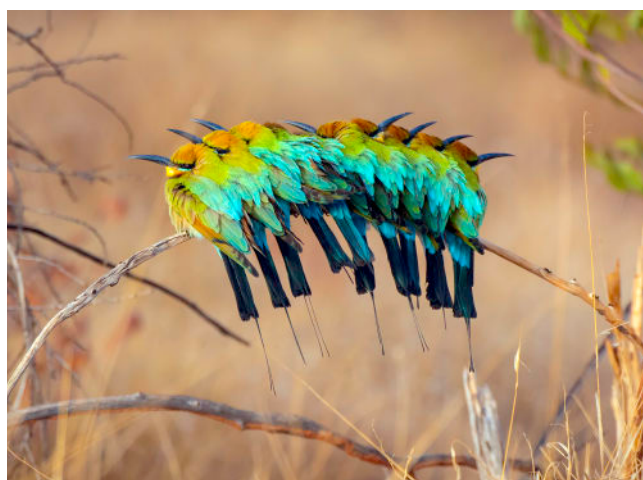
Where: South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide

Tickets: \$9 to \$11

Find out more: Phone 08 8207 7500 or visit the museum's website at samuseum.sa.gov.au/c/npoty

You can also find out more about the Relaxed, Sensory-Friendly Evening at the South Australian Museum on 1 October 2023. See our blog for further information: afford.com.au/blog/whats-on-in-spring-2023/ 

Photography courtesy of SA Museum.



Brisbane

Free and easy to access on Queen Street Mall right outside Wintergarden in the heart of Brisbane, you can visit Bloom! See the enchanting 3D floral installation of huge oversized flowers on show.

When: 9 September to 1 October

Where: Queen Street Mall, Brisbane

Tickets: Free entry

Find out more: Check out the Visit Brisbane website: visit.brisbane.qld.au and read our blog to find more options about accessible travel and a guide to what's on in Brisbane here: afford.com.au/blog/whats-on-in-spring-2023/ 🐦



Sydney

Just opening this September is nguwing nura – Nocturnal Country – completing the Nura Diya Australia experience at Taronga Zoo. You can journey from day to night and see 23 rare species on a 400-metre walk as you enter our new Nocturnal Habitat

to discover some of Australia's night-loving wildlife. Some of the creatures on show include:

- Spinifex Hopping mice
- Fat-tailed Dunnarts
- Ghost Bats
- Chuditch (Western Quoll)
- Rufous Bettong
- Greater Bilby
- Yellow-bellied Glider

When: Open from 22 September 2023, with zoo opening times available on the Taronga Zoo website.

Where: Taronga Zoo, Bradleys Head Road, Mosman.

Tickets: part of your entry to Taronga Zoo. For details on tickets please visit the Taronga Zoo website taronga.org.au where you will also find details on accessibility, an accessibility map and further information on Access Taronga. 🐦



Jean and Stephen's happy home

Jean and Stephen have been sharing their lives in an Afford Supported Independent Living (SIL) house for seven years. Located close to shops, public transport, friends, and a nearby park, their SIL house has become a haven for enjoying friendships, independence, and hobbies.

The couple have found a great balance, cherishing their independence and embracing their passions. "It's really good, living together is awesome, and it's the best thing I've ever had," Jean said.

Their home is more than just a place to live; it's a place where they have made new friends in their community. "It's like a family," Stephen said. Jean also values the friendships they've made: "I've made a couple of friends... very nice, they are."

Jean and Stephen love the ability to take charge of their lives and make their own decisions. They actively engage in household tasks, including cleaning,



“Living together is awesome, and it’s the best thing I’ve ever had.”

ensuring the security of their home, and handling the weekly chore of taking out the bins. Stephen said, “I take the bins out every Monday night.”

Their SIL house is also a safe and supportive environment for indulging in their hobbies. Stephen, a passionate music lover,

boasts an extensive music collection and even DJs at work parties. While Jean finds relaxation in watching television and reading horror magazines after a day’s work.

Gardening has also become a shared passion, with Jean and Stephen caring for their aloe vera plants in the garden. “We’re growing aloe vera plants in the garden,” Jean said.

Read more about Jean and Stephen’s happy SIL home here: afford.com.au/blog/jean-and-stephen ✨



Caring together

Co-designing Afford's carer network

The journey of caring should not be a solitary one. We would like to play a part in making that journey a little smoother for caregivers, by developing a carer network here at Afford.

The benefits of a carer network

- Carers may need access to information and resources. A carer network can serve as a valuable source of information and referrals to relevant services.

- Carer networks can foster lasting friendships and social connections, which can improve your overall well-being.
- Caregivers can learn from one another by sharing coping strategies and techniques for dealing with complex issues.
- A carer network can facilitate respite care arrangements, allowing you to take a break while your loved one is in capable hands.
- Collectively, carers can advocate for better support, services, and policies for caregivers and care recipients.
- A carer network can help prevent burnout by providing a safety net of support.
- Carer networks can offer educational opportunities and training to help caregivers improve skills and knowledge.
- When you have access to a broader range of carer expertise, it has the potential to lead to improved outcomes for the person you support.

Understanding carer needs

This is a new initiative for us, and we have a lot of ideas about what it could look like! But the most important first step is to find out what carers want and need. If you provide unpaid care or support to a relative or friend, we want to hear from you.

Follow this link to provide to provide feedback about what would make your carer experience a little bit easier:

bit.ly/Carer-Feedback ➤



National Carers Week

Millions of reasons to care

National Carers Week will run from Sunday 15 to Saturday 21 October 2023. This year's theme 'Millions of Reasons to Care', aims to broaden the awareness of the 2.65 million Australians caring for their family members and friends.

Carers represent a diverse range of cultures, ages, experiences and responsibilities, but all of them balance of caring responsibilities with other responsibilities like work, study and their physical and mental health.

There are some great ways you can take part in National Carers Week by spreading the word and raising awareness.

Spread the word

Download promotional resources and start spreading the word about National Carers Week! Whether you're a family caregiver,

a professional in the field, or someone interested in supporting caregivers, this page is your one-stop destination for a wealth of information and resources: **carersweek.com.au/resources**

Raise awareness

Invite workmates, friends and family to an event to raise awareness of the diversity of carers and caring roles in Australia. Or you could organise your own morning or afternoon tea, a fundraiser or a workshop. Check out the National Carers Week Calendar to find an event near you or register one of your own: **carersweek.com.au/events**



5 things to know... We're Proud, We've Changed

Afford has undergone a big transformation in the last 18 months. We recently shared on social media and our blog the 10 ways we have changed to make Afford an organisation where client advocacy and voice, human rights, best practice, partnerships, learning and development and continuous improvement are at the heart of everything we do. Find out more about how we have changed.

1 Quality, safety and best practice

Our service promise to our clients is that they will have a great experience with Afford. We work in partnership with our clients to support the achievement of goals. We aim to make anything possible. The foundations we have in place to making goals a reality include solid frameworks, policies, guidelines on practice and procedures to give our clients, families and carers reassurance that all experiences at Afford will be safe, of the highest standard and quality, and informed by best practice.

2 Always learning and continuously improving

Afford has a strategic approach to learning and development based on a



growth mindset. We have invested in a Learning & Development team, a strategy and framework that means we build great talent, knowledge and an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, evaluation and innovation at Afford.

3 Places and partnerships

Afford is investing in creating better spaces for living, community connection and work – for our clients, our employees, and families and carers. We are setting the bar high and working in partnership with industry leaders to achieve this across all our service offerings. changes to our places have been about what they are, how they work, and where they are. We know that just providing a house for people in any old place isn't enough. We want to provide

homes where people feel connected to their community and opportunities.

4 Client advocacy and human rights

We have a team focused on ensuring we work to rights-based practice, safeguarding and our Voice of Customer program. We also have a Human Rights Advocate Group (you can read about them on page 15). Afford now has a structured program of consultation with our clients. We listen and, importantly, we take action on what we hear from our clients.

5 Leadership and expert talent

We have invested in hiring great talent with the qualifications to do a great job at Afford. We have built an expertly skilled and ethical leadership team – and we invest in developing the leadership at Afford. We do this through learning and development, continuous improvement programs and the Gallup Q12 strengths assessment. We know we have needed to change at Afford, and we have. We have taken steps to transform because we are a team of responsible leaders who model transparency, accountability and a purpose-led focus for our organisation. We are working towards a brighter future.

You can follow Afford's We're Proud We've Changed campaign on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #AffordProudlyChanged. You can also visit our blog to read more about the 10 key ways we have changed: afford.com.au/blogs/ 



Left: Amanda Lloyd, Linda Romig and Ros Mather. Below left: Sue Turner, Correne Ludica, Linda Romig

A group of supported employees from an Afford Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) in Victoria has achieved a significant milestone, graduating with a Certificate 1 qualification in Access to Vocational Pathways.

Process Worker, Linda Romig was part of the graduating group. She is an Afford ADE supported employee and this is her first formal qualification.

“When I got asked to take the course, I thought I would give it a try. I’ve never passed anything to receive a certificate before,” Linda said. “I was proud I was able to get through and complete the whole course, and get my certificate.”

Linda was presented with her Certificate 1 qualification at a graduation ceremony held at the Frankston Arts Centre. The event was attended by graduates’ families and friends, and representatives from Afford and BSI Learning Institute. Linda said the highlight was the certificate presentation, but she also enjoyed the other traditional parts of the celebration.

“We had a great graduation. We didn’t know we would have to wear the gowns and the hats. And you’ve got to throw your hat in the air! It was fun to go in the photo booth where we put on little fluffy bunny heads and glasses. But receiving the certificate was the best part of the graduation.”

On the job Linda’s graduation milestone

Meet Linda Romig, an Afford supported employee who recently graduated with a vocational pathways qualification that focuses on improving key skills like reading, writing, speaking, and basic math.

Read more about Linda’s graduation milestone here afford.com.au/blog/supported-employee-education-milestone ➤



In depth with **Afford's** human rights advocates

In our organisation, something new and exciting is happening. We've formed the Afford Human Rights Advocate Group. This group is all about making sure we follow rights-based practices and promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in everything we do at Afford.

The Afford Human Rights Advocate Group is made up of clients who use Afford's services and employees who wanted to be a part of it. They've been trained to do their job, and they work together to support each other and share their ideas.

This group is exciting because it's the first of its kind at Afford. As advocates, their main goal is to make sure everyone in our community understands human rights. This includes the people who use our services, their families, and our employees.



"I hope we can give everyone a voice and create better outcomes to make sure everyone is respected."

– Kellie, Afford Client

They want to make sure that everyone knows what human rights are, why they're important, and how to make sure these rights are respected in our daily choices and decisions.

Read more about our advocates here:
afford.com.au/blog/affords-human-rights-advocates ➤

About Afford

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

Code of Conduct

Afford operates according to the NDIS Code of Conduct. You can also read Afford's Code of Conduct here: afford.com.au/about/publications/




blendcreative.com.au

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/



 3-7 Marieanne Place
Minchinbury NSW 2770

 @affordau

 @affordau

 @australian-foundation-for-disability

 afford.com.au

 1800 233 673

 info@afford.com.au