



afford news

Autumn 2024



The Australian Foundation for Disability acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their deep connections to land, sea, and community.

From the Editor

Welcome to the autumn edition of Afford News, our quarterly magazine for clients, families, and carers. Wherever you are, we hope you're enjoying the beauty and wonder that comes with the change in season.

In this edition of Afford News, we have a great rundown of Easter themed markets, festivals, and community events in or near the cities we provide services in – namely Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney.

We focus on Afford Disability Employment Services (DES) by celebrating two client success stories and talking about what DES is and how it works in our Service spotlight and 5 things to know sections. We learn about one family's experience with Carer Gateway, an Australian Government program that provides free services and support for carers.

Our sparkliest story in this edition is about our participation in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. Together with our friends at Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Northcott we presented a float called OURtopia, and we're so excited to share this inclusive experience with you.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Afford News. Happy reading!



Inside

03 From the CEO

04 In season

What's on in Autumn
Service Spotlight

08 Client story

Gabriel's journey to employment

10 Carer Gateway

One family's story

12 5 things to know about

Assistance with Daily Life (ADL)

14 On the job

Scholarship winner, Roslyn Hughes

15 In depth with

Clients who took part in OURtopia at Mardi Gras

On the cover:

Afford's Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras client Ambassador, Andy Bryson, walks the parade route on Oxford Street with ally and CEO, Jo Toohey.



From the CEO

Earlier this month we partnered with Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Northcott to participate in the 2024 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. It was my privilege to walk as an ally with our clients and employees who identify as LGBTQIA+ and celebrate the advances and continued hope for inclusivity and equality in our community.

I love Mardi Gras. I have reverence for its history and heritage, and what this event represents today. It is an Australian icon sending a message of celebration, love, and hope to world. What's not to love? I've attended many times as a supporter but it was something else to be a participant. What a night!

Captured on the cover of this edition of Afford News is Afford client ambassador, Andy Bryson, walking with me. Andy was among the 80 float participants comprised of clients and employees from all three organisations. Everyone on the night came together with the theme of 'OURtopia' and danced aboard our time machine float. We wanted to inspire the crowd lining Oxford Street in Sydney, and viewers watching the live broadcast across Australia, to imagine a future where there is access and inclusion for everyone.

For us at Afford, it was wonderful to partner with Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Northcott to celebrate our communities and our shared values. A future of accessibility and inclusion is certainly what all three organisations are here to achieve. This edition of Afford News includes more stories that convey this message and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer

In season: autumn

Here in Australia, Easter falls in autumn. This year, Easter will happen between Friday 29 March and Monday 1 April. Friday 29 March is Good Friday. Saturday 30 March is Holy Saturday. Sunday 31 March is Easter Sunday, and Monday 1 April is Easter Monday. Each day has special meaning in the Christian story, and Good Friday and Easter Monday are public holidays.

We think that no matter what your religion, ethnicity, or belief system, you can enjoy some Easter fun! It's a great time to get together with family and friends to enjoy the changing seasons. Here's our pick of the best festivals, markets and fairs celebrating all things Easter in or near Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney.

Adelaide

The Meadows Easter Fair has been held every Easter long weekend since 1997. This year, it will take place on each of the four days of the Easter holiday. There are more than 100 different stalls to visit at the fair, selling all sorts of things, from jams, preserves and chocolates to books and toys to second hand clothes. Some of the stalls are located inside the beautiful Meadows Hall, and some are outside in the carpark. There is also music and entertainment, children's activities, a petting zoo, and an Easter trail to enjoy.

When: 9am-4pm Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April 2024.



Where: 51-53 Mawson Road, Meadows.

Tickets: Entry is free – no tickets are necessary.

Find out more: Check out the Meadows Easter Fair on [Facebook](#) or go to the [website](#).👉

Brisbane

The Bluewater Festival at Shorncliffe Pier is one to see – in part because it provides waterfront views for the official start of the famous Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race! This is Australia's second biggest yacht race, and it starts with a bang (a real one, when a cannon goes off) at 10am on Good Friday.




Bendigo

There's more to Bluewater than beautiful yachts and ocean views – over the festival's two days there will be food trucks, live music, kids' workshops, rides, face painting and glitter tattoos, food and markets, a visit from the Easter Bunny and a beach party and fireworks on the Friday evening.

When: 4-8pm, Thursday 28 March and 9.30am-8pm, Friday 29 March 2024.

Where: Moora Park, Shorncliffe. Parking in the area is limited, but there is some disability parking near the event entry point.

Tickets: No tickets necessary.

Find out more: Visit the Bluewater Festival [website](#). 

Melbourne (Bendigo)

Bendigo is the fourth largest city in the state of Victoria, 150 kilometres northwest of Melbourne. It's a wonderful place to take a day trip to by car or V-Line train at any time of year, including Easter! The Bendigo Easter Festival takes place in beautiful Rosalind Park and its surrounding streets.

Attractions include an Easter egg hunt for more than 80,000 eggs on Good Friday, a carnival, a market, live music and lots of other hands-on activities and performances. As the sun sets on Easter Saturday, cheer on the floats in the O'Brien Electrical & AC Torchlight Procession, which finishes with a fireworks display.

Don't miss the iconic Sherridon Homes Gala Parade on Easter Sunday where you'll experience the excitement of Dai Gum Loong (the world's longest Imperial Dragon) weaving his way through the historic streets of Bendigo.

When: 10am-5pm, Friday 29 to Sunday 31 March 2024.

Where: Rosalind Park, Bendigo – and surrounding streets. Designated accessible parking close to the festival precinct will be available Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in Williamson Street. Additional accessible parking will be available during parade times.

Tickets: Free entry but there is a fee for some rides and experiences, including the Vision Australia Easter Egg hunt.

Find out more: Visit the Bendigo Easter Festival [website](#). ➤

Sydney

The fun goes for 12 amazing days at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, which has been running since 1823. It's famous for 'bringing the country to the city', which means you might get to see cows, sheep, goats, baby chicks, pigs and even alpacas! All the crowd-favourites are returning, like cattle judging, sheep shearing, chicken hatching, pig washing and the much-loved Best in Show Dogs!

This year, the ever-popular Woodchopping and Sawing competition celebrates 125 years. For the first time ever there will be a Women's World Championships Woodchopping and Sawing competition too.

The Sydney Royal Easter Show also includes entertainment, animal experiences and competitions, carnival rides and games, showbags and activities.



Weekdays are quieter than weekends, and quieter locations include:


- A Quiet Room on Showground Road
- The Arts & Crafts Pavilion with places to sit down, and a gallery to wander through
- A grassy open space with picnic tables in front of Paddington Pavilion
- A quiet zone with shaded areas and picnic tables opposite the horse marshalling area on the corner of Hawkesbury Street and New England Avenue
- The Showbag Pavilion is quieter than usual mid-morning and the Woolworths Fresh Food Dome is quieter in the afternoon and evening
- If you forget to bring your noise cancelling headphones, ear plugs are available from the Customer Service Centre on Showground Road or in the Quiet Room

When: Friday 22 March to Tuesday 2 April 2024.



Where: Sydney Showground at Sydney Olympic Park. There are 300+ accessible and mobility carparking spaces in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct. We recommend pre-booking your park via this [online booking page](#).

Tickets: Person with Disability (PWD) Tickets are \$26 until 21 March. From 22 March onwards they're \$28. If you have a Companion Card and/or Vision Impaired + Attendant card, you can get a complimentary ticket for your companion with your PWD Ticket purchase. Carer's tickets are also available with PWD Tickets, to those issues with acceptable identification. PWD Reserve Seat Ticket Packages are available from 19 February via the details below.

Find out more: Visit the Sydney Royal Easter Show [website](#) for more information or to book online. Call **02 9704 1000** or email callcentre@eastershow.com.au with any questions and for ticket bookings. 


Service Spotlight

Afford is one of Australia's most experienced disability service providers offering Assistance with Daily Life (ADL) supports for everyday tasks and personal care.

ADL supports are designed to see you live as independently as possible in your own home and community. These supports can include:

- Personal care such as taking medication, showering, and dressing
- Housework tasks like cleaning, gardening, and cooking
- Social and community activities such as shopping, paying bills, catching up with friends, or going to events

We make sure your experience with Afford is a good one. This means working closely with you and your family or support people to understand your needs and assisted living goals.


You can find out more in our [5 things to know about ADL article on page 12](#). 





Afford DES client Gabriel's journey to employment

Since being supported to find meaningful employment suited to his disability needs, Gabriel has felt motivated, excited, and passionate – not just about going to work, but about what the future might hold.



Nineteen-year-old Gabriel lives with mild intellectual disability and epilepsy. He wanted to work but his disability and medical condition mean that he sometimes needs extra time to process new information and learn new skills, and he felt a bit stuck. His Dad suggested a Disability Employment Services (DES) provider, so Gabriel went online and chose Afford, and is now happily employed at FMG Kitchens in Bankstown.

Gabriel works eight hours a week as a general hand. His job involves cleaning the warehouse and helping with kitchen installs, relocating stock and deliveries. He feels well supported by his manager and team at FMG Kitchens, and by Afford DES.



“If I don’t know how to do something, I ask my coworkers to show me. They are good teachers; they show me how to do things step by step. I get along with my coworkers quite well – they respect me, and I respect them back.”

Every time that Gabriel works, his contact at Afford DES, Aida Kassis, is in touch to see how he is going.

“Aida always says to me if there’s anything that I need or I’m having a problem with, to call her up. I haven’t had any problems, but I know she’s there for me,” says Gabriel.

An Australian Government initiative, the DES program that Afford is registered for is only for people with a permanent disability. We did not secure the tender for DES that supports people with injury and illness too. Our goal is to support people with disability to find jobs that match their skills and interests and enables them to learn and grow.

Gabriel says he feels great about having a job and is looking forward to building



“I feel great. It makes me feel happy, proud, and excited that I found a job that’s suitable for my disability, and that I really like.”



his skill set. He is exploring an apprenticeship so that he can build his career in the kitchen remodelling industry.

“I feel great. It makes me feel happy, proud, and excited that I found a job that’s suitable for my disability, and that I really like.”

To learn more about Gabriel’s experience and DES at Afford, [read our blog](#). ➤



Sonia's Carer Gateway experience

Sonia is a busy Mum of four. Her youngest child is Darcy. Sonia and her three older children are his carers, and since April 2020, they have been receiving support from Carer Gateway.

Since April 2020, Sonia and her three 'Young Carer' children have been receiving support from Carer Gateway, an Australian Government program providing free services and support for carers throughout Australia. Carer Gateway works with a range of organisations to provide services to support carers.

Carer Gateway's support is tailored to an individual carer's needs and worked out through one-on-one assessments. Depending on a carer's circumstances and goals, supports can include in-person and online peer support, tailored support packages, in-person and phone counselling



and self-guided coaching, online skills courses, and emergency respite.

Early on, Sonia took part in Carer Gateway peer support groups in person and online and has been able to make meaningful connections through social gatherings and events. More recently, she has been supported with coaching, skill building and technology support, to help her get back into the workforce.

“Carer Gateway will support as much as they can to make things easier,” says Sonia. “It’s a broad landscape of what they can help with, I have found. I think the best way to navigate Carer Gateway is to go into it with some thought about what you really need to be supported.”

As Sonia’s older children also help with Darcy’s care, they’re acknowledged as Young Carers and are also able to access valuable support services. This support has encompassed guidance from a peer support worker, facilitating access to tutoring and procurement of school essentials and technology, opportunities to attend holiday camps, and aid with school fees through the Young Carer Bursary Program.



“I think the best way to navigate Carer Gateway is to go into it with some thought about what you really need to be supported.”



Happy Family: L-R:
Sonia, Darcy, Jessie,
Jack, and Paddy

“The Carer Gateway people who work with kids know what they’re doing. They come and they interview the kids one by one, sit down with them, work out where they are with their schooling. They can offer tutoring, if they need tutoring, they can offer counselling if they need some like social work or someone to talk to if they’re not coping with their role, plus things like the laptops and technology.”

To learn more about Sonia’s experience with Carer Gateway, [read our blog](#). You can also visit [Carer Gateway](#) for more information. 🐦

5 things to know about...ADL

Assistance with Daily Life (ADL) is a type of support many disability service providers offer to assist with everyday tasks and personal care. Afford is an experienced provider of ADL supports, so here we share 5 useful things to know about ADL.



1 ADL supports are flexible

ADL support helps you do things independently at home and in your community. This includes day-to-day tasks like medication management, bathing, and dressing, as well as household chores including cleaning, gardening, and meal preparation. Plus, ADL support is great for important activities like shopping for groceries and paying bills, or for support with accessing social and activities.

2 Your ADL needs might change

It's natural for your needs to change over time. As an example, you might want a lot of support at first with cooking your favourite meal or managing your household bills. But with practice, you may find you need less support, or just need supervision. That's totally okay, and your provider should be on board with adapting to your changing needs.

3 ADL can be funded through NDIS

ADL supports are often funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Your NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) can help you figure out what you need, by talking to you about your home and living goals or conducting a home and living assessment.

4 There are other ways to fund ADL


Government-approved funding packages like NDIS aren't the only way to access ADL supports. Self-funding allows you to use your own finances for services,



offering flexibility for one-off needs or when government funding falls short. Or, Fee for Service Packages are available for people who are self-funded and would like to access our range of disability services.

5 Afford's approach to ADL supports

An Afford disability support worker can provide one-on-one ADL in the way that suits you best. This could be in your own home, in the community, or in a Supported Independent Living (SIL) house. We make sure your experience with Afford is a good one, by working closely with you and your family or support people to understand your needs and assisted living goals.

To learn more about ADL at Afford, call **1800 233 673** or visit our **website**. You can also go to the **NDIS website** for more information about ADL and the NDIS. 



Afford scholarship recipient Roslyn, with her brother Andrew.

On the job Roslyn takes home Afford scholarship

Motivated to learn Auslan because she realised some of her coworkers were being left out of conversations, Roslyn applied for and was awarded an Afford scholarship. Congratulations, Roslyn!

Roslyn has been a supported employee at Afford since 1991 and began her current position at an Afford ADE in October 2011. Roslyn is a process worker and is really good at her job. In 2022 she won Afford's Employee of the Year Award for her commitment to teamwork, supporting her peers and being conscientious.

Roslyn continues to focus on supporting her peers – as shown by her latest project, to learn Auslan so that she can talk with her coworkers who speak Auslan.

“There are people in my factory who are hearing impaired and can only communicate through sign language. But there are not many people in my factory who can sign,” says Roslyn.

“It's very lonely for them. And I don't think anyone should be missing out on conversation. Everyone has the right to be heard, and everyone has the right to information. It feels like discrimination when people cannot communicate for reasons like this.”

The scholarship will enable Roslyn to complete an Auslan certification at TAFE New South Wales. Roslyn's win was announced at the Afford 2023 Annual Employee Awards. Roslyn attended the event with her brother, Andrew.

“I was really nervous. I really didn't think I was going to get it,” says Roslyn. “Then when they called my name out, I was really shocked. I was actually crying.”

Roslyn will begin her studies later this year. She says she is excited and nervous to begin, but most of all, she is really looking forward to being able to build connections with her hearing-impaired coworkers.

To learn more about Roslyn and her scholarship award, read [our blog](#). ➤

OURtopia sparkles at Sydney Mardi Gras Parade



On Saturday, 2 March, over 200 floats from every corner of the LGBTQIA+ community filled the streets with music and magic for the 46th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

Among them was a spectacular float called 'OURtopia', created by clients and employees from Afford, Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Northcott. Client ambassadors from each organisation played a key role in bringing the three organisations' entry in Mardi Gras to life, contributing to every stage of planning and design.


'OURtopia,' encouraged everyone to imagine a fully inclusive future. Designed to look like a time-machine, complete with the iconic telephone box Tardis from Doctor Who, OURtopia spread a joyous message of equality and belonging.

On the big night, more than 80 clients and employees from our organisations came together to dance along the Parade route under the OURtopia banner. As the team gathered in the pre-parade marshalling area, spirits were running high! We had rain showers. It didn't stop us. We had technical difficulties with our



float truck. It didn't dampen the excitement of the OURtopia group. As our float hit Oxford Street the rain cleared, our lights and music sprang to life, and our confetti cannons began blasting, resulting in roaring cheers from the gathered crowds.

Afford's client ambassador, Andy, said "Everyone was all together, and everything was my favourite. When the confetti flies out and the people scream, that was the best one. I did high fives with people watching and everyone touched my hand. My new best friend now is Jo, the big boss at Afford. She walked with me, and we were happy together all night."

To learn more about OURtopia, read [our blog](#). 

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 our 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 Marianne Place
Minchinbury NSW 2770

 @affordau

 @affordau

 @australian-foundation-for-disability

 afford.com.au

 1800 233 673

 info@afford.com.au