



afford news

January 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

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Roslyn, Employee of the Year Award recipient at Minchinbury ADE. Read our story on page 4 to meet the winners from each of our ADEs.



From the CEO



Welcome to 2023 everyone. I cannot quite believe I'm writing that – when did it become the year 2023? We've got a great year ahead, mind you. I'll be sharing a lot of news with you this year.

The big one for us is that Afford will be going through a strategic review this year. Strategy is exciting and it is very much about people. It's about all our employees, our clients, and our whole community.

Determining the strategy of a purpose-led organisation absolutely needs to focus on community needs. We need to think about what our clients and the community need today, but also, have the vision to imagine what the need and aspiration is for tomorrow and a decade away. At Afford, we are committed to co-designing that with our clients, with families, with carers, with allied health specialists, with assisted technology experts, with policy makers and planners in the housing, employability, recreation, travel, and transport space.

As a part of our strategic review, we will be rediscovering who we are. We want to rediscover and shine a spotlight on all the things we do well and love about Afford, and we then also want to discover all the amazing things we could and should be doing, plus so much more, including;

- > What we stand for, and what we won't stand for. This establishes our position on what change we want to see in the world.
- > Our values. We want these to be so much more than words, we want them to be our guiding behaviours and they must be informed by our people, and of course, our clients.
- > What it means to work here, and the value and experience we bring to our employees.
- > What it means to be our client or our partner, and what we have on offer that is unique, purpose-led, and impactful.
- > What our promise is to our community.

I look forward to sharing how we colour in that future vision for Afford in the year to come. For now – welcome to the New Year!

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer



In depth with Florence Lau

As a client-centered service organisation, we know how important it is to have the right people in place in our teams, especially those that shape the experiences we offer our clients and their families. That's why Afford chose Florence Lau as our Consumer Experience Lead.

Florence's role is a new one at Afford. Its overarching goal is making sure we deliver a quality service that meets, or exceeds, client expectations.

"I'm here to advise on and lead best practice in client experience, based on consumer insights and engagement. I'm here to empower the voices of our clients and families at all levels of our organisation and services programs, bringing the consumer experience and perspective to decision-making."

Florence says deep understanding is key to a more tailored, person-centred, and inclusive client experience.

"We're looking at client feedback at a high level but also focusing on how we can tailor our service to different clients' needs. For example, for our clients with complex needs, how can we make our service more focused on their goals, needs and interests?"

Before joining Afford, Florence's career experience was an even split of large corporations and not-for-profit organisations. But her experience of connecting with people with disability goes right back to her childhood in Hong Kong.

"My mother was a teacher who spent most of her career teaching children with disability. When I was six, I started volunteering to help her. I learned how to communicate with people with different kinds of disability. I enjoy patiently listening to people to understand what they do or don't like."

"I'm here to empower the voices of our clients and families at all levels of our organisation."

Consumer Experience recently played an important role in analysing and sharing the findings from a series of Afford meetings with client families and carers. Read our story on page 5 to find out more. ➤

Afford ADE Employee of the Year Awards

Congratulations to the winners of our 2022 Employee of the Year Awards, recognised for their outstanding contributions to Afford's Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) workplaces. As part of the end of year celebrations at each ADE location, the winners were presented with award certificates and gift vouchers.

The winners are:

- > Roslyn, Minchinbury NSW
- > Mark, Marrickville NSW
- > Dion, Ingleburn NSW
- > Ho-Yi (Joyce), Prestons NSW
- > Carol, Carrum Downs VIC

Afford's Director of Employment, Gordon Griff, said that nominations for this prestigious award are made up of all the employees who received Employee of the Month Awards throughout the year. Supervisors then assess the nominees based on who most consistently represented Afford's ADE workplace values.

“Teamwork, supporting peers, and being conscientious are the values we look for when awarding the Employee of the year. The criteria have nothing to do with how quickly a person works, or their ability to do the job. It's about recognising those people who are giving 100% on the things they can control.”

– Gordon Griff 🏆



Top: Roslyn, Minchinbury ADE. Pictured with Mariska and Melissa.

Bottom: Carol, Carrum Downs ADE. Pictured with Gordon and Ros.



5 things you to know about...

Afford's client family and carer meetings

Between May and October 2022, our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) met with Afford client families, carers, and support people to learn more about our strengths and weaknesses.

The meetings were conversations – open and honest – and took place around Australia. They generated valuable insights about the service we provide to our clients, including information about what Afford is getting right and what we can improve. Here are five things to know about what we learned and what we're doing next.

1 We heard directly from families and carers

“It was wonderful to be able to meet with so many families and carers – I really appreciated them taking the time to meet with us and provide constructive feedback. It was also very pleasing to hear so many good stories about our staff and the work they do.” says Afford’s Chief Executive Officer, Jo Toohey.

2 What we learned we’re doing well

We learned that Afford clients feel very much ‘at home’ in their Supported Independent Living accommodation, which means the goals of this service are being realised. Families also highlighted the sense that Afford feels like an extension of their family, thanks to the strong relationships developed with Lifestyle Assistants and Team Leaders. Of note, is the praise for Afford employees during the most difficult periods of COVID-19 lockdowns.

3 What we learned we could improve

Opportunities for improvement also came to light. Key focus areas centred around how we communicate important information, workforce continuity and staff turnover, the suitability of properties, client health, safety, wellbeing, and capacity building within community services.

4 How we’re responding to the findings

Communication guides for each team, employee training, and improved recruitment procedures have all been rolled out. A new property team is evaluating service locations to assess suitability and improvements. There has been a significant upgrade in policies, procedures, and associated training. A major project is also underway to review and propose a future working model for community services.

5 How we shared the information

The final step was communicating our findings with those who attended the meetings. In collaboration with the ELT, our Consumer Experience team created a summary infographic that shared this information and our action plan for meeting client satisfaction expectations.

We value feedback as part our commitment to continuous improvement. Visit afford.com.au/feedback to find out more. 🐦



5 things to know about...

Supported decision-making

Every person has the right to make their own decisions. But sometimes, decision-making is hard. When someone needs assistance to make decisions, it's called supported decision-making. Everyone needs help to take steps to make their own decisions sometimes, and this includes people with disability.

Support with decision-making can come from family, friends, and

other peers. Support can also come from service providers or other people, such as advocates. Supported decision-making looks different for each person. Here are five useful things to know about supported decision-making.

1 Why supported decision-making is important

Life is full of decisions. Some of the decisions we make can be small, or easy



– like what to have for breakfast, or which TV show to watch. Others can feel big, or hard – like what to do with extra money, or how to respond to a tricky situation. When decision making is hard, it's important to be able to get the help you need. That's where supported decision making comes in.

2 The law says it's your right

The rights of all people to make decisions about their own lives are described in international documents, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD). Legal changes are underway across Australia across Australia to comply with the CRPD. The National Disability Services (NDS) even released a document called '**People with Disability and**

Supported Decision-Making and the NDIS' to help NDIS providers make sure they are acting appropriately.

3 It is okay to make decisions that other people disagree with


Supported decision-making puts the person and their will and preference at the centre of decision making. It is normal for people to feel differently about things. If you are acting within the law, it is okay to make decisions that other people disagree with. That is your right.

4 Substitute decision-makers should uphold your rights

A substitute decision-maker who has been legally appointed (such as a guardian or power of attorney) has a responsibility to centre your rights, and wherever possible, to be led by your will and preferences. If you need to access more support around your rights and interests, **People with Disability Australia** and the **Disability Gateway** are great places to start.

5 How Afford can help with supported decision making

Afford follows a best practice approach that demonstrates respect for people's rights to make decisions about their own lives. Throughout 2023, Afford will also be launching new policies that detail our commitment to human rights, consent, capacity, and decision-making.

Access resources about supported decision-making from Inclusion Australia: inclusionaustralia.org.au 

News



Industry tours for SLES trainees

The Afford School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) program helps to prepare school leavers for the world of work. SLES trainees in NSW recently took part in a range of industry tours. At Nurranginy Reserve in Blacktown, trainees participated in a tree planting activity and learned about the importance of conservation. At Toll Transport in Eastern Creek, trainees saw how packages are transported and sorted for delivery. At Great Western Sydney (GWS) Giants Stadium in Homebush, trainees learned about the retail gift shop, administration, finance, and media. **Explore Afford's employment services:** afford.com.au/finding-a-job 🐦

MP visits Fairfield DES

New South Wales Member for Fairfield, Guy Zangari MP visited our Fairfield Disability Employment Services (DES) site to see how value was being provided to our clients with support from the Community Building Partnership 2019 Program grant. The team demonstrated how the massage chairs and interactive smartboard funded by the grant provides support for jobseekers with disabilities as they apply for roles and prepare for interviews. Business Support Officer, Roger Kennedy, and Joumana Talj, our DES Team Leader at Fairfield welcomed Mr Zangari to Afford. 🐦



Modern Slavery
Statement 2022

Afford's Modern Slavery Statement

Afford's first Modern Slavery Statement has been published, explaining what Afford has done to assess modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chains during the reporting period of 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. This document and the behaviour, processes, and culture it represents at Afford is a statement of our commitment to end modern slavery. **Read Afford's Modern Slavery Statement here** 🐦



Make your plans for Sydney WorldPride

Sydney is about to host the first WorldPride in the Southern Hemisphere, taking place from 17 February to 5 March 2023. Think of Sydney WorldPride 2023 as a 'mega Mardi Gras' - because that's what it is! This exciting celebration is expected to attract 500,000 attendees from across Australia and around the globe.

Access and inclusion

Sydney WorldPride is committed to removing access and inclusion barriers so that full participation by all people is possible. Accessible viewing areas and transfer services, diverse communication formats, companion card support, and affordability programs are just some of the supports in place to ensure the events and festival are shaped around inclusion. Find out more at: sydneyworldpride.com/event-accessibility and mardigras.org.au/accessibility

Glorious highlights

Pop royalty Kylie Minogue is headlining the Live & Proud opening concert at The Domain on 24 February. Areas of the famous Oxford Street LGBTQIA+ district will be closed to traffic to create a fabulous (and free!) Pride Villages from 24 February to 5 March. The beloved Mardi Gras Parade will be returning to its spiritual home on Oxford Street for the first time in three years on 25 February. And finally, Sydney WorldPride will host the largest LGBTQIA+ Human Rights Conference ever to be held in the southern hemisphere from 1 March to 3 March.

Browse the full festival guide at sydneyworldpride.com/festival-guide 🐦

NDIS Code of Conduct


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

- > act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with 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 & 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/



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