



afford news

June 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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Blake has been enjoying maintaining his independence by travel training at our School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) program in Caboolture, read more on page 3.

From the CEO



We are co-designing our future at Afford.

In this edition of Afford News we are talking about our Project Rediscovery (page 7). We wrote to you about this project last year, it is all about centering everything Afford does on purpose and values and getting to the heart of the quality of service we provide for our clients. We have been so fortunate that many of our clients and families have been working with us directly, attending our design workshops and openly providing their insights and perspectives so we can create a better Afford for the future. We are excited to keep working with you all through this transformation.

We are changing with very good reason. Our readers will be aware of the outcome of the Federal Court proceeding last week. Afford accepts the ruling and takes full responsibility in the matter raised by the NDIS Commission and the order for penalty to be paid. Afford's past failings by the previous management team and board in this matter have had a tragic outcome and should be a cautionary tale for other organisations. We respect and accept the court's ruling.

The rights, choices, and safety of people with disability must be the priority for service providers in this sector. It is very encouraging to see these priorities are also front of mind for our Government. The Hon. Amanda Rishworth, Australia's Minister for Social Services, focused on the nation's disability strategy and reaffirming Australia's commitments to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities this week. This was in the same week the Australian Government announced it would build the National Disability Data Asset.

It is heartening to see positive steps being taken to continually improve the future for people with disability.

Jo Toohy

Chief Executive Officer



In depth with Dorothea and Adham

Dorothea's goal was to find long-term employment in the hospitality industry, and to gain motivation and confidence.

She has been working towards these goals with her Employment Coach at Afford's Disability Employment Services (DES) in Liverpool. After practicing in mock interviews and learning about key areas like how to talk to employers and dress for a job interview, Dorothea has recently found employment at El Jannah takeaway store.

"Thank you Afford for supporting me into employment, it has given me confidence in my own ability," Dorothea said.


Adham was motivated to find employment after he became sick and had to spend a significant amount of time recovering at home. He wanted a change in lifestyle, to be part of the community, and to earn a living after 10 years of being unemployed.



"I feel like I'm part of the work family now – I don't feel lonely anymore!"

He now has a job making boxes. He enjoys the repetition and is gaining confidence through it. The Liverpool DES team supported Adham by helping him negotiate his workload and hours to accommodate his health needs. They also assisted with transport for his interview, and provided on-the-job support.

"I feel like I'm part of the work family now – I don't feel lonely anymore!" Adham shared.

To find out more about our employment services, visit afford.com.au 





Making moves

When you visit Afford's Blacktown Community Service, you are likely to see smiling faces, on the move. The clients and staff who attend the program have been working towards trying to exercise more.

What does that look like? Once everyone has arrived for the day, they do a 10-minute Zumba/Dance Off, to get everyone's hearts pumping and excited for the day ahead. After they have completed their scheduled activities for the day, all clients and Afford Lifestyle Assistants then take on an obstacle course, a great way to get the mind and body going.

"We've been getting great feedback from families, and participants are enjoying the fitness program so much that some of them have requested to lead a session. They love working together as a team," Jacinta Antwi-Boasiako, Senior Lifestyle Assistant said.

To find out more about our Community Services, visit afford.com.au

Working towards goals

The transition from school to work can be confronting. But it can also be fun! Just ask the participants from our School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) service in Caboulture, Queensland.

Sidoney recently volunteered at Abbey Museum. She enjoyed creating medieval shields for students on school excursions to decorate. This was one of many placements Sidoney has done through the SLES program. She previously completed work experience at a Butterfly Farm. All of these experiences were set up according to her unique goals and interests.

This tailored approach is taken with all SLES participants, like Blake who has been working on his public transport skills to maintain his independence.

If you want to learn more about our SLES program, visit afford.com.au



Blake



Sidoney



5 things to know about... **NDIA pricing changes to group-based supports**

On 5 May 2023, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) published changes to pricing arrangements.

By 1 January 2024, all group-based social and community participation supports will be delivered under a consistent pricing arrangement.



The key changes under the new arrangements include removing ratio-based pricing and changing to separate line item charges for non-face-to-face supports. Afford is also moving to claim for centre capital costs, and improvements to programs of support.

What does this mean for participants who receive National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding for group-based supports? Let's break it down!

1 Why a new pricing arrangement is happening

This funding is what supports eligible NDIS participants to increase their social inclusion and community access. The NDIA thinks the new pricing arrangement will make group-based supports even better by making supports easier to understand giving clients a clearer understanding of costs.

2 Flexibility for non-face-to-face supports

Non-face-to-face supports include things like goal setting and review, additional communication with stakeholders, and group activity setup. Under the new arrangement, providers and participants have flexibility to agree on non-face-to-face support fees that reflect the individual needs of the participant.

3 Understanding centre capital costs


Centre capital costs is a line item charge that covers things like improvements, repairs, maintenance, and ongoing upkeep of facilities where providers deliver social and community participation supports to clients in a physical building.

4 Improving access to programs of support

Programs of Support encourage providers to offer group activities designed around and based on a participant's goals and aspirations. These programs previously had a maximum length of 12 weeks. This has been increased to 6 months in response to stakeholder feedback.

5 Afford will support our clients through the transition

Afford is updating our service delivery in line with the new pricing arrangements. As required by the NDIA, we will begin the transition from July 2023, completing by 1 January 2024. We will contact our clients directly and work with them to understand how these changes will affect their invoices and service agreements.

You can find out more about pricing changes to group-based supports by calling the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or by visiting the NDIA website here: www.ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-arrangements 

5 things to know about... Project Rediscovery

Afford is transforming. Our path to ‘rediscovering’ a new way forward is well underway, and we’ve been busy consulting our clients, families, other disability services sector leaders, our employees and the community to shape a vision for the future. These five things you need to know are firm landmarks on our map.



1 Strategy and vision

Afford has gathered client and family feedback. We have taken on board all the findings of the Disability Royal Commission. We have been researching and looking at policy and best practice in Australia and around the world to shape our strategy for the future. Our strategy will be our ultimate guide and plan. It will – without question – be centred on our clients.

To date, we have consulted our clients and families across all states in which we operate. We have asked people to tell us what they expect from their disability services provider, what is missing, how

they want to feel as a result of the service they get. We asked for this information through surveys, face-to-face meetings and interviews. We will continue to co-design our strategy with clients and families to shape Afford’s future.

2 Structure and systems

Afford announced recently that we were exiting Western Australia. We have also undertaken a thorough review of how we provide services, what services people will need in the future, and what technology will be needed by people with disability. We are building an Afford for the future, not just for tomorrow. We want to work with partners to



do this. We're still working out our structure and systems for the future, but we do know what our aim is for everything: an excellent client experience.

3 Values, community promise and brand

We are a purpose-led organisation – so our values are vitally important. We will be reviewing our values and brand position. All of this will shape our promise to the community, our sector, our clients and their families and friends, and our employees. Our brand will look different when we're done, and we will have refreshed take on how we communicate and engage with the community.

4 People, culture and learning

The talent shortage in the disability sector is no secret. We all know the impact this is having on services and the people who need our services. At Afford, we know that if you don't have great people who feel valued, supported, developed and engaged – you don't have much. We are investing in our teams and in their learning and development. We are asking our employees how we can make Afford a better place to work, and we are listening. We are also building great leadership and management so that people get to come to work to do what they're good at every day with support and guidance.

5 Governance and policy

Our first priority as an organisation is always to keep people safe. Safeguarding is not a 'nice to have', it is a 'must have' and it requires strong processes and governance. It also needs to be baked into the foundations of an organisation when it comes to providing services to people with disability.

We have already started to recruit Board Directors with lived and actual experience of disability, and we are putting in place a working group on human rights, including paid client advocate members.

Over the past 12 months, Afford has created more than 140 internal policies and new procedures, overseen by a dedicated Quality & Practice team. And we're not done yet. ➤

Working towards Reconciliation

During National Reconciliation Week, Afford announced the appointment of Leith Sterling, Executive Director of Consumer Experience and Safeguarding, and Kym Mafi, Director of Service Delivery – NSW West, as the Co-Chairs of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG).

Their deep personal commitment to Reconciliation, demonstrated through their actions and words, makes them exceptional role models on this journey to develop our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

In their roles as Co-Chairs, Leith and Kym will oversee RWG meetings, ensure accountability for actions within the working group, and keep Afford's RAP development on track.

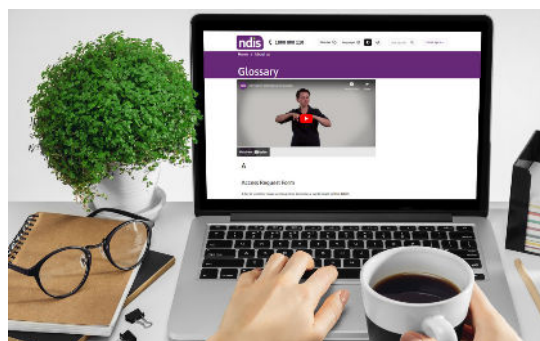
"While we all have a role to play as individuals, institutions and businesses can do more to promote reconciliation, combat



From left to right: Kym Mafi and Leith Sterling

racism, enhance socioeconomic equity, and support First Nations self-determination. Embarking on this RAP journey clearly demonstrates Afford's dedication to reconciliation and a more inclusive future," Leith added.

Kym Mafi expressed her excitement for the next stage of Afford's Reconciliation journey. "This is our chance to continuously develop our commitment to reconciliation. The RAP approach calls for us to set out what we can do differently as an organisation to build better relationships, show respect, create opportunities, and bridge the life expectancy gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," Kym said. 🦋



NDIS glossary

NDIS stands for National Disability Insurance Scheme. The NDIS is the government organisation that gives funding to people with disability. Like many government systems, it has lots of special terms and words that can be a bit hard to understand. That's why the NDIS has created a handy online glossary – an alphabetical list of words and terms, with definitions of what each one means.

There is a page explaining what acronyms stand for, Auslan translations, and Easy Read versions.

You can access the glossary at [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) 🦋



New NDIS policy on supported decision-making


The NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) has recently released a new policy on supported decision-making.

This is an important topic for the NDIS, as people with disability are often asked to make decisions when they apply for and access their NDIS funding. You might be asked to make decisions about your goals, or the kinds of services you want in your NDIS plan.

At Afford, we strongly believe that every person has the right to make their own decisions, and we are really pleased to see that the NDIS thinks this too.

The new NDIS policy has four main principles that will guide how the NDIS supports people with disability to make decisions:

1. All adults have an equal right to make decisions that affect their lives and to have those decisions respected.
2. There must be access to support for people who need help communicating and participating in decisions.
3. Decisions are directed by a person's own will, preferences and rights.
4. Supported decision making must include appropriate and effective safeguards against violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

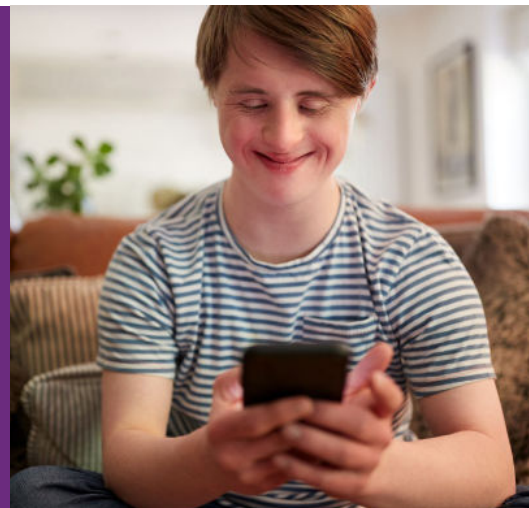
To find out more visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au). You can also read more about supported decision-making in our blog at [afford.com.au](https://www.afford.com.au) 

Learn about supported decision-making


If you would like to learn more about support decision-making, the Council for Intellectual Disability host a monthly peer mentoring group on Zoom to share information, stories and to connect with others.

They meet online on the first Wednesday of every month from 10am to 11am.

Together the group explores supported decision-making, their right to make



decisions, and they learn about how to get support of they need it.

If you are interested in joining, you can find out more here: [cid.org.au/event/peer-mentor-group-2023/](https://www.cid.org.au/event/peer-mentor-group-2023/) 

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/



 3-7 Marianne Place
Minchinbury NSW 2770

 @affordau

 @affordau

 @australian-foundation-for-disability

 afford.com.au

 1800 233 673

 info@afford.com.au