



# afford news

October 2022



The Australian Foundation for Disability acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their 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](mailto:b&e@afford.com.au)

# Inside

## 02 From the CEO

## 03 In depth with...

Olivia Page

## 04 Laurie in the Spotlight

## 05 Five things you need to know about...

Allied Health

## 07 Five things you need to know about...

Supported Independent Living

## 09 News

### On the cover:

Afford ADE employee, Laurie Camilleri.

See full story on page 4.

Photography by Yianni Aspridakis.

## From the CEO



The recent announcement of new leadership at the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is a welcome sign that people with disability are included in decision making and co-design of systems and services. It's not just positive news – it's inspirational!

Inspirational is a word that is used so much it is at risk of losing value. But Kurt Fearnley as the new Chair for the NDIA is an inspired choice. Because he really is inspirational.

This is a person who won three gold medals at the Paralympics and two at the Commonwealth Games. He has won 40 marathons and crawled the Kokoda Track to raise awareness of men's health issues. Kurt has been a tireless advocate for people with disability and it's not surprising that he was one of the founding members of the National Disability Insurance Scheme's Advisory Council. And he's a teacher. With a CV like that, how can you not be inspired?

Also announced is the new CEO of the NDIA, Rebecca Falkingham (former Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety Secretary). Rebecca has worked tirelessly throughout her career to make a positive social impact. So, I would say she's also an inspired choice for leadership and one Australia needs.

There is the symbolic and the actual at this very important moment in time for people with disability. We have now seen the symbolic in these appointments and I look forward to working with both leaders and the NDIA to achieve the actual, and I have written to tell them so.

In other news, our cover story focuses on Laurie Camilleri, one of Afford's Australian Disability Enterprise employees, who shares his view about disability and ageing. Read all about this and more in our latest issue of Afford News and please don't hesitate to provide us with any feedback on this edition via email to [b&e@afford.com.au](mailto:b&e@afford.com.au).

**Jo Toohey**

Chief Executive Officer



## In depth with **Olivia**

Speech pathologist, Olivia Page is a passionate advocate for the role of communication in accessibility. As an Afford Allied Health Team Leader, Olivia builds on this passion to bring together all the clinical disciplines that support our clients to live their best lives.

What do you want to be when you grow up? Olivia had an answer for this question as early as high school. She knew she wanted to be a speech pathologist after realising it was a way to help people by combining her love of science with literacy and communication.

Having now spent nine years as a 'speechie' in the disability space, Olivia said this profession is valuable within the Allied Health and support teams who work together to provide holistic care.

"We have our teams that help people get into the room physically but that's only meaningful if you can communicate with people once you're in that room", she said.

Olivia leads a team of Afford Allied Health clinicians in NSW who all work together with the community to see the big picture for Afford clients, drawing on their expertise that includes psychology, behaviour support, speech pathology and occupational therapy.

▼  
**We should never be a barrier to a client being able to live their best life.**

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For Olivia, one of the most exciting parts of her role is empowering clinicians to support clients and families with complex needs. As a result, her team are continuously upskilling to provide the best possible service. Olivia sees professional development as a clinician's major responsibility because as she says: "we should never be a barrier to a client being able to live their best life".

Read more about Allied Health on page 6 

## Laurie in the Spotlight

The factory floor of Afford's Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) at Minchinbury in Sydney's western suburbs is a lively place. Every day is filled with the noise of forklifts, machines and people hard at work on a range of important jobs. But one sound carries over the rest throughout the working day, and that is the extraordinary baritone voice of Lawrence 'Laurie' Camilleri singing along to the greatest hits playing on the radio.

Laurie is a well-known character at Afford. He is employed at Afford's ADE and shares a Supported Independent Living home with his flatmates. He's always ready with a joke and never shy about stepping into the spotlight to sing. When we asked Laurie what song he sings the most, he said: "I sing every song the most," before breaking into a perfect rendition of Unchained Melody.

In 2020, Laurie celebrated his 25-year service milestone at Afford. When he was presented with his framed certificate of service, Laurie felt some very big feelings.

"I was proud," he said. 'And believe me or not but I cried. And after I cried, they said why did you cry? And I said, this is my first time winning an award.' 🦋



## International Day of Older Persons

Earlier this year, Laurie Camilleri celebrated his 62nd birthday, making him something of a wise elder in the Afford community. He took another turn in the spotlight just this month, featuring as our ambassador for the United Nations International Day of Older Persons in a video story series across the organisation's social media channels.

Talking about what he wants from life and looking to the future, Laurie said he wants to "go to New Zealand by plane", spend more time with his family, and get married to his lovely lady. 🦋



## 5 things you need to know about...

# Allied Health

Afford has an Allied Health team made up of psychologists, behaviour support practitioners, speech pathologists and occupational therapists who work together with the community to make sure people with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential. Afford's Allied Health (NSW) Team Leader, Olivia Page explained this as a collaborative approach where the clinicians look at all the areas of your life to bridge the gap from where you are to where you would like to be.

But what does that really mean? Here are five things Olivia thinks you need to know about Afford's Allied Health service.

## **1 Team work makes the dream work**

Allied Health clinicians work together as a team to support your best life in all areas. A speech pathologist might support you with communication and swallowing. An occupational therapist can assist you to be more independent in daily living activities. Behaviour support practitioners can help you with a positive approach to behaviours of concern, and psychologists can provide support for mental wellbeing and counselling. The Allied Health team at Afford creates a holistic picture and connected approach for clients.

## **2 We empower our client's community**

It's really important for us to share the Allied Health team's knowledge and experience with our clients' network, so we can empower the people who are part of our clients' day-to-day life to feel confident in the support they provide. We look at all the aspects of our clients' life, draw from strengths, and then make sure people have all the support they need to be as independent as possible.

## **3 One size does not fit all – everyone is unique!**

Allied Health supports are tailored to suit people's needs and desires. We work with our clients to understand where they are and where they want to be, then we adapt our supports from there. If clients are going out in the community, we could support with travel training to take the bus

independently. Or, if clients love the idea of being involved in meal preparation, we support with a cooking program. If clients have trouble swallowing, we help with a plan to make mealtimes safer and more enjoyable. Just as important, we don't make assumptions about our clients' competence. We'd rather set the bar high and then adjust, than put a ceiling on what anyone can do.


## **4 Telehealth is also a great option**

Some people prefer telehealth and we get it! It can be overwhelming to have face-to-face involvement in all aspects of life, or there might be a period of time when clients need to stay home.

## **5 Allied Health is for everyone**

You don't have to be an existing Afford client to access our Allied Health services. You can seek out your choice of service provider or specialist and Afford will work alongside them with your consent, in line with your budget allocation and funding category.

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If you would like to find out more about our Allied Health services, visit [afford.com.au/services/allied-health/](https://afford.com.au/services/allied-health/) 

# 5 things you need to know about...

## Supported Independent Living

Supported Independent Living (otherwise known as SIL) is a type of accommodation funding support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The support means clients can live independently, learn new skills and connect with community - and many people choose to live with housemates in a shared accommodation. We have these options available at Afford and Kym Mafi, Director, Service Delivery (NSW West) shares five things people need to know about this avenue for living independently.

### 1 Having your own home is exciting

Living independently is a life experience that everyone looks forward to, and Afford's SIL homes are all about making sure this

exciting life goal is accessible to everyone. Afford SILs provide all the support people need to enjoy a fulfilled, independent life according to their individual choices.

### 2 Your place at your own pace

The experiencing of moving into a SIL home is different for everyone. Afford works with clients to determine what they want to achieve so we can figure out how to achieve this together. Some people can't wait to pack their bags and go, but others might need a few weeks (or even months) to slowly transition to their new house. For each person we make a plan that focusses on setting them up for success.







### **3** Your family and friends are welcome

Sometimes people ask questions like: “Can my mum bring my favourite pasta dish?” Or: “Is my boyfriend allowed to hang out at my house?” We want our residents to know that their home is their space, and they can make their own choices about going out, staying in, or entertaining guests.


### **4** Your social life and hobbies are important

Making a house a home is about more than walls and furniture. We support residents to connect with the local community, have plenty of opportunities for socialising, and discover opportunities to bring interests and hobbies to life.

### **5** You will be supported the way you need

We have dedicated support teams at Afford SIL homes. Our teams take a person-centred approach to support independent living in the way clients want and need, including: health and wellbeing; personal care; life skills like meal preparation; house maintenance and cleaning; shopping; and organising outings.

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If you would like more information about Supported Independent Living at Afford call **1800 233 673**. 



## NDIS APP

Did you know that there is a my NDIS app? The app was launched to improve accessibility, to make self-managing participants' plans easier and to make claims on the go. There have been new features added to the app. You can now make claims faster by saving claims you use a lot as a favourite. You can also view all your NDIS budgets in the app, not just your self-managed budget. There are great instructions on how to download the app for both Apple and Android devices on the NDIS website. Visit: [ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/managing-your-plan/my-ndis-mobile-app](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/managing-your-plan/my-ndis-mobile-app). 🐦



## ADRIEN THE ARTIST

Adrien is new participant in Afford's Chipping Norton community service and has shared his strong interest in art. In September, Adrien visited Mt Annan Botanical Gardens for lunch with his friends and the Afford team, and he brought a sketch book and some water colour paints from home. Adrien sketched out the landscape, making sure he captured every detail, and then started to paint. The result was amazing. 🐦



## NEW NDIS RESOURCE

The NDIS has launched a new guide for understanding social and community participation supports. The guide can help you learn about supports you may be able to access to build your confidence and social skills. It also provides information about different activities you might enjoy that support you to feel and stay connected to your community. Check it out on the NDIS Understanding Supports page: [www.ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/understanding-supports/employment-supports](https://www.ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/understanding-supports/employment-supports) 🐦

## GREAT COMMUNICATION FROM GEORGINA

Afford client, Georgina, has been working with her speech therapist for the last few weeks to implement a new mealtime management plan and communications skills. Georgina and her speech therapist worked

together to create a visual folder. The folder includes details of the programs she participates in weekly, images of the clothes she likes to wear, and visual aides to encourage Georgina to eat slowly and use the utensils. Georgina is really excited to use her folder to communicate effectively with the Afford team. 🦋



## NEW NDIA LEADERSHIP

Last month, Bill Shorten, the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, announced that the new leadership for the National Disability Insurance Agency. Paralympian, television presenter and NSW's Australian of the Year, Kurt Fearnley AO, was named Chair and Rebecca Falkingham – former Secretary of the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer.

This is an important step with Kurt Fearnley representing a first for lived experience to be represented in a leadership role for the NDIA. He was born with sacral agenesis, which prevents the development of certain parts of his lower spine and all of his sacrum. In addition to his sporting achievements – which include being a three-time Paralympic gold medallist, two-time Commonwealth Games gold medallist, the winner of over 40 marathons, crawling the Kokoda track, and being a member of the winning Sydney to Hobart yacht crew in 2012 – he has also been New South Wales' Australian of the Year for 2019, is a corporate keynote speaker and is the author of *Pushing the Limits: Life, Marathons and Kokoda*.

In an interview with the ABC following his appointment as Chair of the NDIA, Kurt Fearnley said: "There's a saying in the disability community: 'Nothing about us without us', identifying that a lack of lived experience represented in the NDIA's leadership to date has not been in line with that ethos. He highlighted that the NDIS is about human rights, saying: "If we have a healthy NDIS that is giving choice and control to people with disabilities lives, that is giving fair and reasonable adjustments to live a good life, I believe that if we nail that then we're living up to the principles that I believe Australia is." 🦋

## 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/](https://afford.com.au/feedback/)



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