



afford news

Summer 2023/24



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

Hands up who loves summer? We do! How can't you love summer in Australia? It's time for Santa to visit, it's festive season, it's beach season and of course, it's holiday season. Plus, it's time for a new year and fresh beginnings.

In this edition of Afford News, we have a great rundown of what's on in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria for summer as well as what programs of support Afford has on offer through our Community Services.

We also highlight that this season is a great time to try out living independently with a stay in respite accommodation. Or to try out taking a break or using short-term accommodation services while your family or support network are on holiday.

We think you'll really enjoy reading about our Stars Onstage event that took place in the lead up to the International Day of People with Disability. Speaking of IDPwD, meet one of the campaign's Ambassadors in Australia: Giancarlo de Vera.

It's a great edition filled with summer reading, so we hope you enjoy this edition of Afford News.



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Stars Onstage performer, Afford supported employee, Caitlin.

From the CEO



Welcome to the Summer edition of Afford News and our last edition for 2023.

It has been a big year for the disability sector and one that has highlighted the need for positive change, rights-led policymaking, economic and social development, and innovation when it comes to human-centred services.

The year was capped off with the National Disability Services' Executive Leadership Conference, held in Melbourne, where NDS launched their State of the Disability Sector Report 2023. The event provided senior leaders across the disability sector to hear first-hand from people like Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and Lisa Paul AO PSM about the NDIS Review. Afford welcomes both NDS' perspectives on the disability sector and the opportunities outlined in the NDIS Review.

We are looking forward to taking big steps so that we are part of the important changes happening in Australia in 2024.

We share the stories of people like Giancarlo de Vera because they are advocating for exactly the kind of meaningful change we are looking to make at Afford. Giancarlo is one of Australia's Ambassadors for the International Day of People with Disability. You can read all about them in our 'In depth with...' feature for this edition. We also share stories about our clients: the goals they are setting and achieving. Our International Day of People with Disability events were about celebrating those goals for clients who love to engage with sport at Heroes With Ability's events, and to perform at our Stars Onstage event. You can read all about Stars Onstage on page 8.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Afford News, the festive season and the summer months.

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer



In season: summer

Summer is a time for the great outdoors and time with family and friends. Take a look at what's on in your city.

Sydney

The Chinese Garden of Friendship is a peaceful garden located in between Darling Square and Darling Quarter. Here, nature and culture blend together beautifully. Walk along pathways decorated with intricate pavilions, peaceful ponds (with koi fish!), and lush plants and flowers. Just take care on the paths, as some of them are uneven, and can be a bit slippery!

Sit under the shade of willow trees, enjoy the sight and sound of gently flowing water and admire the many Chinese sculptures in

Service Spotlight

Short Term Accommodation (STA) is one of the home and living supports the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) might fund for participants. Sometimes STA is also called 'respite'.

STA or respite is accommodation away from your usual home. It gives people with disability the opportunity to try living independently before deciding to move into Supported Independent Living (SIL) on a full-time basis.

You might also need supports and somewhere to stay while your family or primary support person is away on holiday, or you may like to stay in STA to take a break from living at home with family.

You can find out more about STA and what options you have when it comes to respite in our 5 Things to Know article on page 12. ➤



the garden. If you're there at the right time you can even help to feed the fish – meet the Interpretation Officers at 11.30am every day by the Lenient Jade Pavilion. You can also eat in the heritage-listed teahouse, which serves dumplings and Chinese tea.

When: Open daily from 10am-5pm, except for Christmas Day and Good Friday. Koi fish feeding happens daily (when the garden is open) at 11am.

Where: Pier Street, on the corner of Harbour St, Darling Harbour. Koi fish feeding is at the Lenient Jade Pavilion.

Tickets: Adults \$12, concession card holders and children \$8.

Find out more: Check out the Chinese Garden page on the Darling Harbour website: darlingharbour.com/precincts/chinese-garden or call (02) 9240 8888 for more information. ➤





Melbourne

Explore Melbourne's famous river, the Yarra, with a waterbike adventure right in the heart of the city! Waterbikes Australia run inclusive tour adventures for people of all ages and abilities. The waterbikes are low-impact and easy to operate. Customised experiences for people with disability can be designed. For some participants, a tandem bike is the way to go. A support person sits at the front and steers. You'll both need to pedal though.

When: Monday-Saturday 11am-7pm;
Sunday 10am-7pm.

Where: Boathouse Drive, Melbourne. The tour starts near the rowing sheds next to Princes Bridge. You can get there via a ramped path or stairs from St Kilda Road.

Tickets: \$90-\$180 minutes. Waterbikes Australia is a registered NDIS provider.

Find out more: Check out: whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/things-to-do/waterbikes-australia or call 1300 343 462 for more information. 

Brisbane

EquusTerra is a horse centre in Rocklea that offers riding, personal development, learning and hippotherapy.



Therapeutic horseback riding is a form of physical therapy for people with disability. You can also interact with horses, learning how to groom and work with them on the ground. Engaging in these activities encourages a strong bond between people and animals. Creating an environment of trust and support facilitates healing and growth. Interaction and connection with horses is especially suited to those with sensory and anxiety disorders.

When: Bookings only.

Where: 40 Medway Street, Rocklea.

Tickets: Lessons range from \$80-\$120. EquusTerra is NDIS registered.

Find out more: Check out the EquusTerra website: equusterra.com.au or call 0402 961 428 for more information. 



Adelaide

The Hahndorf Academy is part art gallery, part retail shop, part museum and part art class. It is the second most visited gallery in South Australia. Located in a beautiful heritage building on the Main Street of Hahndorf, it's only 30 minutes southeast of Adelaide, in the Adelaide Hills.

The exhibitions in the art gallery change regularly. Over the summer months, you can check out The Dog Exhibition, a group exhibition about dogs (on from 17 December 2023 to 28 January 2024).

In the museum, you can explore artefacts and stories about the First Nations Peramangk people, German settlers and Hahndorf village life in the early nineteenth century. The Academy also runs regular creative workshops and events. Check the website for information about workshops and classes – you might be able to try jewellery making, painting, weaving, knitting and more. They even have a yoga class.

When: Open 10am-5pm every day except Christmas Day.

Where: 68 Main Street, Hahndorf .

Tickets: Free entry.

Find out more: Check out The Hahndorf Academy's website: hahndorfacademy.org.au or call (08) 8388 7250 for more information. 

What's on for summer at Afford

Afford's 12-week program of supports for Summer kicks off on 2 January 2024 and runs through to 22 March 2024. There are some great activities on offer for a variety of interests.

New South Wales

For summer, our Community Services clients can enjoy activities like swimming, going to the beach and park, travel skills, sewing and cooking, fitness in the park and a bouncing great time at Flip Out! if you attend the Canley Vale Community Hub.

Queensland

For summer, our Ipswich Community Hub has a great assortment of activities including disco parties, animal encounters, sailing and nature walks. 



Stars take to the stage to celebrate IDPwD

Monday 27 November was a special day at Afford. Clients, employees, family members, and friends came together for Stars Onstage.

Stars Onstage is part of Afford's International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) celebrations for this year. IDPwD was on Sunday 3 December. It's all about promoting community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability. So, celebrating the diversity of our clients' interests, talents, aspirations and joy at Stars Onstage seemed like the perfect fit.

Caitlin was one of the stars onstage (and is also on the cover of this edition of Afford News). A supported employee at one of Afford's Sydney sites, Caitlin sang Whitney Houston's 'Queen of the Night'.

"I got on the stage and then oh my god, it felt really good, and I was confident in my pink dress. My favourite thing was singing and dancing on the stage, and all of my family watching the video on their phones – even my godparents said my performance was amazing," says Caitlin.

The event was held at Doltone House Western Sydney. Talented singers, dancers, musicians, and magicians all shone in



the spotlight. There was a real feeling of excitement, nerves and pride – both on and off stage – as performers came and went.

There was enjoyment at Afford sites around the country too, with online watch parties taking place for people who couldn't make it to the event in Sydney. This proved very popular, with Afford employees tuning in, and plenty of family



members too! Auslan interpreters were onstage throughout the show.

“I really liked the talent show, it was awesome,” says Giancarlo, an Afford Community Services client who danced to Beyonce’s ‘Single Ladies’. “I wasn’t nervous because I am very good. I just did it wonderful. I think it was perfect. Next year I am going to dance again, I am already practicing it.”

Read more about Stars Onstage, watch event highlights, and learn about International Day of People with Disability at this Afford blog: afford.com.au/blog/afford-celebrates-idpwd-with-stars-onstage/ 



Daniel is a rising star

Daniel is an Afford community services client and a performer. Recently, Daniel’s natural talent and acting experience made him the perfect choice as star of the introduction to an Afford staff training video.

The video is about the My Life, My Future program, which is all about working supporting Afford clients to become as

independent as possible. It is being viewed (and enjoyed!) by Afford staff members as they get ready to work in the program.

To make the video, Daniel worked with our Learning and Development team.

Daniel says working with Afford in this way was a thrill that aligns with his goals.

“Working with Afford is definitely up my alley. I said to my parents when I was five years old, I wanted to be a rock star, behind



the screen or in front of the screen. Now I'm getting back into acting, this kind of stuff is an absolute thrill to do," says Daniel.

Meeting his goals is a big focus for Daniel, who accesses community services through our one-to-one support and group-based programs.

"I've been with Afford for about 10 years now, starting after I left school in 2013. Everyone I meet is absolutely lovely to be with."

Daniel already has quite a bit of acting experience. His acting credit list includes Bus Stop Films, NDIS training videos, and extra spots in feature films. You can even watch one of the films he worked on, Ellie & Abbie, on Netflix!

In the future, Daniel hopes to do more work in the entertainment industry. But he's not limiting himself to performing – he can also see himself directing, teaching, and inspiring others.

"I'd love to work in my own film company with a lot of my friends who are gifted, where we teach the bright minds of the next few years. I'd like to be like Hugh Jackman a bit, he's doing Broadway, still does some film acting, and he's also a director," says Daniel.

"Another dream job would be to work as a mascot at a theme park like Movie World."



"I've been with Afford for about 10 years now, starting after I left school in 2013. Everyone I meet is absolutely lovely to be with."

To read more of Daniel's story, visit: afford.com.au/blog/community-services-client-star-on-rise/ 



5 things to know about... Respite

Respite is a short time away from your usual home, or to have access to support people when your normal carers aren't available. Respite is one of the home and living supports Afford offers, and we're improving the way that we do it.

Respite can last for up to 14 days, or even longer if your NDIS plan has this funding included. It is sometimes called Short Term Accommodation (STA). It's often funded when your usual carers and supports aren't available, or so that you can try new things. It can also be used to support you and your carers to take a short break.

We're making lots of positive changes to the way we do things at Afford. One of the ways we have improved is how we offer respite accommodation. We're moving away from a one-size-fits-all response to a tailored service that suits an individual client's wants and needs. We're also upgrading many of our homes so that they are nicer, safer and more enjoyable places to spend time in.

Here are five useful things to know about respite at Afford.

1 We can create a respite experience just for you

We understand that everyone has unique wants and needs, and that there is no one-size-fits-all respite solution. We can recommend a respite accommodation experience that's just right for you.

That might mean having a support person come to your home – including overnight stay. You can also stay at a hotel or Airbnb and have a support person with you from check in time, through the night, and until check out of the hotel service the next morning.

Anything that is not supported overnight can be funded through in-home support or community services funding with different rates for morning, evening and sleepover. For sleepover rates, there is a one-off rate and an active night rate. You can ask about how this works with daily activities.

2 Respite is also called Short Term Accommodation

The NDIS calls respite Short Term Accommodation (STA). It is one of the home and living supports the NDIS might fund for participants. It is funding for support and accommodation for a short time away from your usual home.

It covers the cost of your care in another place for up to 14 days at a time, but you can also extend this time if you want to self-fund. However, as we've outlined above, it can be for longer. You might have a short stay with other people, or by yourself. It's often funded when your usual carers aren't available, or for you to try new things.

3 Our respite accommodation is flexible

Respite accommodation with Afford can include:

- Personal supports available day and night, seven days a week
- Accessible, inclusive home environments
- Comfortable, furnished, self-contained places to stay
- You can also ask for support in your own home if you would prefer

- All meals included
- Activities like games, sports, and social activities and events in the community with group support funding
- Options to suit individual needs and preferences

4 NDIS support is available

Respite or STA is one of the home and living supports the NDIS might fund for participants. If you are eligible for respite funding, it will include funding for accommodation in a group residence for a short period of time – typically up to 14 days. It will also include support for self-care, food, and activities.

5 We're upgrading many of our physical locations

Part of Afford's planned improvements involve upgrading the places where we host people on respite stays. We have respite homes in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. The changes are about making sure they're safe, modern, inclusive and fun to spend time in. The upgrades will happen over the next few years. We can't wait to show you what we've got in the works for you!

Want to know more about respite accommodation at Afford? You can talk to your support coordinator or local area coordinator if you would like to learn more. [👉](#)



Meagan of Collingwood poses after winning the 2023 Ann Rulton Award during the 2023 VFL and VFLW Awards at Crown Palladium on September 18, 2023 in Melbourne, Australia. (Photo by Graham Denholm/AFL Photos via Getty Images)

Meagan won the award for her work as a volunteer with the Collingwood Magpies football team, where her sister, Katie, is Vice Captain.

Meagan stepped into a formal volunteer role in 2023. Now she's in charge of all the property and gets to training sessions an hour and a half early to set up.

"I do water bottles, do the balls, and get all the stuff out for training. I like different things about it, mostly that I get to know people. And I like supporting my sister," says Meagan.

Meagan received her award at a gala event held at the Crown Palladium in September 2023. Getting the award was a surprise for Meagan, who walked the red carpet, posed for photos, and went on stage to receive her award.

Meagan fits in her volunteering around her work commitments as a supported employee at an Afford ADE. Meagan works as a process worker. She has been doing this for about 10 years. In fact, she just got recognised for 10 years of service, so you could say she is an all-round winner.

Congratulations Meagan, we're so proud of you!

On the job

Meagan takes home football volunteering award

Meagan is a supported employee at Afford Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE), and a massive footy fan. Earlier this year she won the Victorian Women's Football League (VWFL) Volunteer of the Year Award.

To read more about Meagan's award-winning experience as a volunteer for the VWFL, visit: afford.com.au/blog/collingwood-magpies-vflw-award-winner-is-our-very-own-meagan-lee/ 



In depth with IDPwD Ambassador Giancarlo de Vera

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is celebrated on 3 December every year. This year's line-up of Australian Ambassadors included social justice advocate, Giancarlo de Vera (they/ he). Giancarlo is Senior Manager, Policy at People with Disability Australia.

Giancarlo's advocacy for disability, multiculturalism, racial justice, LGBTIQ+ affairs and cultural diversity is extensive.

Their lived experience of psychosocial disability and the barriers in the mental health system in Australia for culturally and racially marginalised people motivated Giancarlo to make a difference, which is why they set about becoming a lawyer. They say their grandmother was their inspiration – she was one of the first women in Asia to be admitted to law school in the 1940s.

Giancarlo said they became an Ambassador for IDPwD because: "I wanted to be the role model that I never had." They want others to



"My big vision is for my job as a disability advocate is to be redundant." – Giancarlo de Vera

feel like they're not alone – there are other LGBTIQ+ people with disability from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds out there.

"My big vision is for my job as a disability advocate is to be redundant," Giancarlo said. "But that means every person with disability in Australia has the same and equal chances and outcomes as those without disability: with all mainstream systems being fully inclusive, and we all get the support that we need to thrive. But that will take a long time, but I can only hope it will happen sooner!"

Read more about Giancarlo de Vera on the Afford blog here: afford.com.au/blogs/ 

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/



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