



# enable

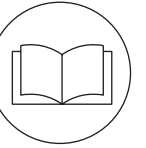
Winter 2021

The Achieve Foundation • AchievAble Enterprises • Travel  
Jenny • Persistence pays off • A great place to work



**achieve**  
australia





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Welcome

# CEO welcome



Welcome to the winter edition of Enable magazine. The season has brought challenges and triumphs, particularly associated with COVID, and I am proud to share how the Achieve community has come together to navigate these.

While the continuing pandemic has dominated life for most of us, it is not the only topic in this edition of Enable magazine. Enjoy the wonderful stories from pre-lockdown days featuring people we support. We share highlights from the 90th birthday party of our longtime client Beris. I was there and it was so much fun. There is also the inspiring story of Allan, who knocked on doors for 18 months in search of a job. Allan never gave up and we are so glad he didn't as today he is a highly valued member of The Sewing Basket team in Kincumber. And we catch up with another favourite of The Sewing Basket, Jenny, who makes such a difference to our team in West Ryde.

**Another high point since our last issue is Achieve's inclusion on the 2021 Australian Financial Review Best Places to Work List. Ranked in the Top 10 of the Government, Education and Not-for-profit category, we were the only disability organisation included on the list. We are also an Excellence Awardee for the Employer of Choice (Public Sector and NFP) category in the 2021 Australian HR Awards. The final winners will be revealed on 3 September 2021. We are grateful for this recognition of the work of our teams as they continue to support our clients to live full and happy lives.**

I also commend a feature introducing The Achieve Foundation. Chair Doug Reid and Kirsty Nowlan, who heads

the foundation team, talk about their mission to harness philanthropy, research and innovation to realise true social inclusion for people with disability.

However, we cannot escape COVID. We report on how our families helped us tell media about the impact of the Federal Government's failed promise to provide COVID vaccinations for people with disability. And how this media coverage led to amazing generosity from a Sydney GP to vaccinate a large number of clients in a way that was most comfortable for them. We are all still marvelling at how smoothly everything ran.

With the ups come the downs. We stepped up our COVID safety protocols including requiring frontline staff to undergo regular testing. In late July, just days after our vaccination triumph, a frontline worker returned a COVID positive result, and a well-developed plan was put into immediate action. The staff member had spent limited time at work, and, at the time of writing, multiple tests have shown that all impacted clients and other staff are negative for COVID.

I am so proud of all our clients and staff for being remarkable in their cooperation and resilience to help us all stay COVID safe. Truly a couple of good news stories.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine.

Jo-Anne Hewitt,  
CEO, Achieve Australia





# The Achieve Foundation, taking social inclusion to a new level



Today, people with disability confront attitudes, expectations and infrastructure that make it harder to take their place as members of our community. Imagine a world in which we took those barriers down. We have.

Bringing social inclusion to life in everyday service delivery for our clients is Achieve Australia's passion and purpose, but how can this work be amplified to influence lasting change in the broader Australian society?

This question led to the creation of The Achieve Foundation to foster research and innovation in areas that support greater inclusion for people with disability.

## Using research and evidence to elevate social inclusion on the national agenda.

In this edition of Enable, we meet two of the key people at The Achieve Foundation – Board Chair, Mr Doug Reid, and Executive Director, Dr Kirsty Nowlan to learn how they are driving the foundation's agenda forward.

"The Australian community and governments want to increase the inclusion of people with disability but the plan to make this happen is challenging," Mr Reid said.

"We want to contribute in three ways: building a philanthropic community around disability and inclusion; identifying new models of housing and supports for people with complex needs; and changing community attitudes towards people with cognitive disability," he said.

We commissioned Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to look closely at philanthropy's contribution to disability outcomes.

The research found that philanthropy for disability is generally small, fragmented and often relies on donors having a personal connection to someone with a disability," Dr Nowlan said.

Mr Reid added: "I am struck by the fact that many of the things I take for granted – getting a job or meeting friends for coffee – are not easy or sometimes impossible for people with disability. I'm delighted to be part of an organisation that wants to change that."

Mr Reid and Dr Nowlan said public discussion about NDIS funding is also a challenge.

"We have a role to help philanthropists understand that while \$22 billion to fund the NDIS sounds like people with disability are well supported, this money is for daily support and not research and innovation to remove the barriers to inclusion in community, employment, arts and sport," Dr Nowlan said. "It is early days, but we are in discussions with global experts on changing attitudes and with local academics and industry leaders on inclusive housing," Mr Reid said.

Achieve families will continue to hear updates about how the work of The Achieve Foundation is progressing.

"There will be a lot of news to share over the next couple of years," Dr Nowlan said.



### The Achieve Foundation's area of focus

The Achieve Foundation will take part in, and or fund, research and innovation projects focusing on housing and changing community attitudes.

### Housing for people with complex needs

“Research will include what supports make a difference to the inclusion of people with disability in broader society as well as their quality of life,” Dr Nowlan explained. “The Achieve Foundation also aims to build a body of evidence that describes best practice housing for people with complex needs.”



### Community attitudes toward people with cognitive disabilities

“We know that community attitudes to people with cognitive disabilities remain a major barrier to inclusion. What we don't yet know is how to change those attitudes at scale. We're stepping in to fill that gap,” said Dr Nowlan.

### Follow the work of The Achieve Foundation

Visit The Achieve Foundation website for updates [theachievethefoundation.org.au](http://theachievethefoundation.org.au)



Doug Reid

### The team behind the foundation

The Achieve Foundation Chair, Mr Doug Reid, and Executive Director Strategic Engagement, Dr Kirsty Nowlan, come from very different professional backgrounds but they share a common belief in the power of evidence-based change.

Mr Reid's decades of business experience includes technology start-ups and harnessing data analytics to find solutions to business and social challenges. He is also well versed in community work after many years as an active member of Rotary including as a past president of his local Rotary club.

Dr Nowlan's career has focused on building evidence-based approaches to systemic change that improve the lives of vulnerable people experiencing disadvantage or discrimination. She has experience working both in international development



Dr Kirsty Nowlan

and Australia. Most recently, as an Executive Director at The Benevolent Society she established two national initiatives focused on ageism and child wellbeing. Dr Nowlan holds a doctorate in sociology.

The Achieve Foundation is bolstered by the expertise of board members, Patricia O'Brien, Professor Emerita, Sydney Medical School, Faculty of Medicine and Health and Mr Richard Dinham, whose successful business career spans the building and design sector. As many readers know, Mr Dinham is Chair of the Achieve Australia Board and Mr Reid and Emeritus Professor O'Brien are board members.

“Having Achieve Australia as a key partner to the foundation as well as Inclusive Housing Australia provides us with valuable insight into the challenges and possibilities research and innovation can deliver to people with disability including future generations,” Mr Reid said.





# People power

Action from Achieve's community led to the creation of our first vaccination hub for clients

On a chilly July 24 morning, a well-orchestrated plan to vaccinate 120 of our clients got underway.

GP Dr Jamal Rifi and his nursing team, supported by Achieve nurses and operations staff, spent the morning administering the Pfizer vaccine to clients living in homes in North Ryde. At around midday, Dr Rifi and his team moved to Araluen where three vaccination stations had been set up so clients from other accommodation services could travel

to Epping to receive their first Pfizer jabs. Another 100 people comprising clients, supported employees and some more staff received their first jabs about two weeks later. Plans were also put in place to repeat the process, so all 220 people received their second jab at the right time based on medical advice and thus full vaccination..

In the days leading up to opening Achieve's own vaccination hub, chats were held with clients to prepare them, and we informed families and

carers. Supplies of personal protection equipment and other COVID safe measures were put in place, Rosters were carefully devised so friendly faces would be on hand when clients received their jabs, and transport was organised to ensure only two clients at a time travelled together to maintain social distancing.

The offer from Dr Rifi to provide his time and supply of vaccines was a direct result of the Achieve Australia community banding together to talk to media about the impact of the government's failure to deliver on its promise to vaccinate people with disability.

In mid-July, CEO Jo-Anne Hewitt spoke to media about how Australia could not "learn to live with COVID" until people with disability were fully vaccinated. Gabrielle Goodenough and Carmen Martin helped people understand the human cost for families. They shared how their brother Louie, 53, and their close-knit family had struggled with separation as their weekly catch ups stopped with every lock down.

"Louie's home is at Llandilo with Achieve but is also with us. When Louie is coming to my place or to Carmen's we say, 'Louie is coming home', not he is coming for a visit. Everyone misses being with him and he finds it hard to understand why he can't be with us," Mrs Goodenough said.

"Because of COVID, Louie missed his first family Christmas and Easter in his life," she said.

The same sense of loss is being felt by clients and their families across all Achieve service areas.

Operations Executive Daniel Kyriacou said Achieve would keep going until all our clients who can receive the COVID vaccination had done so but even then, it will not be the end of our advocacy road.

"We want to see all people with disability in Australia protected against COVID so they can experience full lives once again," he said.

He pointed to UK data released in July by the University of Oxford and other researchers showing people with learning

disabilities were eight times more likely to die from COVID than the general population. Researchers said the data shows risk rate can be higher for people managing certain conditions including Cerebral Palsy and Down Syndrome. For example, COVID patients with Down Syndrome have a 36 times higher risk of dying from the infection than the general population.

Achieve Australia made it mandatory for all staff to be vaccinated and backed this with a special campaign to encourage staff to get their jabs. Mr Kyriacou said Achieve had also maintained COVID safety protocols that went beyond those recommended for the sector and it was now time for the NDIA to start doing its bit to keep people with disability safe.

"Even with the best processes, people with disability are vulnerable to the virus. I am responsible for 300 people in our residential service and more in other services. The question I need to answer every night so I can sleep is, 'have we done everything we possibly can to protect people?'" I can answer 'yes'.

"If I was responsible for some 420,000 people in the NDIS, I would still be asking myself the same question but at this time, I can't think of a single action that would enable the NDIA to answer, 'yes' to that question," Mr Kyriacou said.

"The focus has been on people with disability who live in residential care. What about the people with disability who live at home who may need support to get vaccinated or whose family may need that support? The Federal Government should say to the NDIA, your critical focus is on supporting everyone on the NDIS to get access the COVID vaccine," Daniel said.

"If I was the head of the NDIA, my number one priority during this phase would be ensuring my agency checked in with every NDIS participant to ask about their vaccination plan and to find out if they need funding support or assistance to register themselves, understand all the information and then receive the vaccine," he said.



Dr Jamal Rifi and his nursing team at the Araluen hub



# 220 2021 mass vaccination journey for Achieve clients

## February

Federal Government announces vaccinations will be arranged for priority groups, which include Achieve clients and staff.

## March

Achieve, family and carers support clients to register to their first COVID jabs.

## May

Disability support workers told they can register to receive their vaccinations.

Achieve successfully gets Summer Hill staff included in vaccination rollout for frontline health workers.

Achieve CEO Jo-Anne Hewitt and the parents of a Summer Hill client to talk to the ABC about the need for clients to receive jabs at home. The media attention results in vaccinations for Summer Hill residents at home.

Disability Royal Commission holds one-day hearing about the vaccine roll out. Commissioners hear only four per cent of people in disability residential accommodation have received the COVID vaccine.

Ms Hewitt and other disability service CEOs meet with NDIS Minister Linda Reynolds in Canberra to talk about the need for urgent action on COVID vaccinations for people with disability.

## June

Federal Government announces vaccination hubs will be set up for people with disability. Some hubs

open in NSW including Newcastle and North Parramatta but are not suitable for Achieve clients.

## July

Achieve launches #IGiveAShot – a staff campaign to encourage rapid compliance with our mandatory policy for staff vaccinations.

University of Oxford releases research showing people living with cognitive and intellectual disability are from eight to 36 times more likely to die from COVID if they contract the virus.

Gabrielle Goodenough and Carmen Martin, the sisters of our client Louie from Llandilo, join Achieve CEO Jo-Anne Hewitt in talking to media. They explain how the failure to vaccinate people with disability is cutting them off from loved ones and putting their lives at risk.

Dr Jamal Rifi responds to the media reports by offering to visit Achieve with his nursing team to vaccinate more than 200 of our clients. We accept his kind offer.

Vaccination stations are set up at Norton Road in Ryde and our Araluen site in Epping to vaccinate clients in comfort and with the support staff they know nearby. 120 clients receive a first jab and 30 staff.

NSW Premier and Chief Health Officer describe COVID as a national emergency and call on the Federal Government to do more to stop the virus.

## August

The Araluen vax hub is set up again for another 100 people – a mix of clients, staff and six parents.

We secured medical advice that the second jabs will take place six weeks after each client received their first jab.

Arrangements are also made to fully vaccinate our clients in the Northern Rivers.

# Managing a COVID exposure at Achieve

Due to the Delta outbreak, Achieve Australia tightened COVID safety protocols, including requiring all frontline staff to undergo twice weekly COVID testing.

In late July, our increased testing revealed COVID positive results impacting two houses. The houses were declared exposure sites – not infection sites – and Achieve responded by immediately activating a pre-developed plan.

**“Our clients and families have had much to deal with complying with the strict lock down rules of government, which for many has meant not seeing one another for months. In managing the exposure, the physical wellbeing of our clients was paramount, but so was their emotional wellbeing and the further impact for our families,” Operations Executive, Daniel Kyriacou, said.**

Daniel Kyriacou contacted the relevant family members, carers, and guardians within an hour of Achieve learning the news and outlined our plan going forward. Regular contact was maintained with families and included a Zoom meeting with our CEO Jo-Anne Hewitt.

A rapid testing unit from NSW Health tested all impacted clients and staff. Initial results were negative. Staff who had worked in the houses prior to the test results isolated at home. All staff impacted were fully supported by Achieve.

Rosters were devised to replace the staff isolating. The nurses and support staff who nominated themselves for these shifts were familiar with our clients and their care plans and were able to put them at ease. As part of the hard lockdown, staff wore added safety gear and followed more stringent safety measures and a specialist crew performed deep cleaning at each house every couple of days.

“Games, activities and favourite foods were dropped at the front door of each house during this period and contact with families was maintained using technology,” Daniel said.

“Our staff have managed well keeping clients engaged and calm even when strangers entered the homes to perform the necessary deep cleans. Where we could, we took residents for a walk, one at a time, in designated spaces supported by a single staff member. Every precaution was taken,” he said.

Testing of clients and staff continued at the recommended intervals of 7 days and 14 days with then two more rounds of testing conducted. All results were negative enabling us to lift the houses out of hard lockdown by 9 August.

“I am also really thankful to our clients who were incredible in the way they responded to all the changes and helped us keep them safe and I am grateful to our families for their support during this challenging time,” Daniel said.



# Beris Collins' Big Day



It was all smiles at the Asquith Golf Club in March when Beris Collins celebrated her 90th birthday. A client for more than 60 years, Beris' parents were among the first founders of Mt Own, a home for people with disability in the 1960s. The home went on to become Hornsby Challenge and Achieve Australia in the years to follow.

This legacy meant that Beris' birthday was attended by many of her Achieve family and friends who celebrated at a special lunch just for her. And there was a lot of excitement leading up to the big day.

**“I was excited for quite a few weeks before and loved getting dressed up in my best party clothes and special hat,” recalls Beris. “I was thrilled to see all the decorations, especially the balloons, and my friends on the day.”**

Senior Achieve staff and friends all attended the lunch where everyone wrote a message for Beris in a keepsake book. Linda Rose Archer supports Beris at home where she receives 24/7 daily living services. She says the day was a memorable one for Beris and the team.

“Beris was really happy to see all her friends at lunch. We even had a surprise visit from an old staff member who Beris was very close to and she became quite emotional as she hadn't seen him for some time,” Linda explained. “She loved everyone singing ‘Happy Birthday’ to her, joined in the singing herself and posed for many photographs.”

Not only does Beris love a great party, but she also enjoys staying connected to her community. She is highly regarded and valued by her long-time

housemates, neighbours and church group. The Hornsby local has many friends in the area who know her well and enjoy catching up for regular chats each day.

Jacqueline Goody was a Service Coordinator in the Hornsby area at Achieve Australia at the time of the party. She is now a Service Coordinator, Drop-in Support.

“Everyone knows and loves Beris in the local area. She loves to have everyone around her, so her birthday was really special,” Jacqueline said. “Even at the age of 90 she is still very energetic and has a spring in her step!”

It is this spring in her step that sees Beris maintain an active lifestyle with the support of her carers. On a regular basis, she catches up with friends for coffee or lunch, goes shopping, and enjoys beading, arts and craft.

“I like living with my friends and seeing my staff come every day to help me,” Beris said. “And I love to help with chores around the house and spend time sitting in the sun, writing in my books and doing beadwork.”

Until her next birthday party comes around, keeping busy, connected, and active seem to be a good approach to a long and happy life for Beris. Again, a very happy birthday from everyone at Achieve Beris, and our best wishes for a wonderful year ahead.



*Pictured clockwise opposite page: Beris Collins, Achieve CEO Jo Anne Hewitt and Beris, Beris and two of her life long friends*





Not too long ago, Allan Kemsley's job search was met with endless knock backs and closed doors. Allan, a Wantanobbi local from the NSW Central Coast, had been applying for jobs for 18 months without any success until he stumbled upon The Sewing Basket.

## Persistence pays off

"It was hard getting knocked back all the time and not going through to the next stage," says Allan. "I was looking for work in Newcastle, Sydney, Gosford and all around. Then, The Sewing Basket just popped up out of nowhere!"

To get through such a challenging time, Allan says he kept working on his health, going for walks, eating healthy and going to the gym. Allan's determination and will to keep trying to find a job eventually paid off. After working with employment agency Matchworks on the Central Coast, he secured a job at the new location for The Sewing Basket at Kincumber, which opened a new shop and warehouse in the region in November, 2020.

**When Allan first visited the Kincumber shop for his interview, he knew right away it was a good fit. "I felt comfortable here, I don't know why I just did," says Allan. "Other places I worked I would sometimes get yelled at if I asked a question, but here I can ask things without being worried about that."**

Finding and maintaining stable employment can be more difficult for people with disability due to several barriers in place. These can include a lack of knowledge and understanding among the community about people

with disability as well as unsupportive workplace environments.

The new shop and warehouse on the Central Coast services a growing customer base for The Sewing Basket outside of Sydney, while offering people with disability employment and training opportunities.

The Sewing Basket's Warehouse Supervisor, Lea Retford, says that Allan has now settled right into his new role.

"Allan has his routine now and enjoys his time working here. He thinks ahead and is an eagle eye at picking up flaws in the fabrics so that we can check them," explains Lea. "We know people all have different capabilities so we try to find out what a person can do and then, if they can do anything more, we support them to give new things a try."

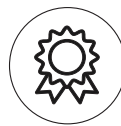
Each Wednesday and Thursday, Allan works alongside the team on site to fold, measure and sort through hundreds of donations received from the community. If they weren't donated to The Sewing Basket, many of the fabrics and materials would be sent to landfill. This sustainable and affordable shopping experience sees the social enterprise's loyal customers returning time and time again to search through the ever-changing collection.

Once the fabrics have been measured and tagged, they are delivered to shops across Sydney and are also available in the Central Coast location. Not only is Allan's new job providing a welcoming and supportive environment, but he also has the chance to learn skills, connect with other people and take part in ongoing training.

"Working here gives me something to look forward to each week. I never knew how to do things like measuring fabrics, tagging or sorting, so I like that," says Allan. "When I got this job, everything went up from there."







# A great place to work

In April, Achieve Australia announced that it was included on the 2021 AFR BOSS Best Places to Work List. Ranked in the top 10 of the Government, Education and Non-for-profit category.

“We couldn’t be happier to receive this public recognition,” says Jo-Anne Hewitt, Achieve Australia CEO. “Every one of our people works incredibly hard toward creating a workplace which supports both their own sense of personal and professional fulfilment and that of our clients.”

practices and programs. This year’s list was drawn from nearly 700 organisations that were invited to make submissions.

Achieve Australia’s approach and practice to develop leadership, culture and engagement to support the organisation and its clients into the future are just some areas that its efforts have been recognised.

“As the only disability organisation included on the list we are especially proud. However, our feelings go beyond that to hope that this is the beginning of a broader trend of recognition of our sector and the essential contribution we make to our community,” says Jo-Anne.

“These kinds of achievements don’t happen by accident,” says Lorraine Salloum, People, Performance and Culture Executive at Achieve. “In the last 18 months, we’ve focused on

organisation design, culture, leadership and engagement and we’re really pleased to be recognised for our work.”

Both the survey and written submission are assessed against the Inventium’s Workplace of the Future Framework, which is based on Harvard and Stanford University research that demonstrates ten key factors necessary, critical to employees feeling motivated and engaged at work.

“We are thrilled to work in conjunction with The Australian Financial Review to recognise many organisations who are leading the way with innovative practices that drive key elements such as flexibility, wellbeing and equality,” says Dr Amantha Imber, Founder of Inventium.

For more information, visit [afrbestplacestowork.com](http://afrbestplacestowork.com)

## What our people say

### Sha-Rin-Low, Social Educator

“I love that Achieve Australia is an organisation that offers a large range of services. This has given me the opportunity to work in different environments, get more skilled and acquire diverse work experience. This well-rounded experience puts me in a good position to advance in my career.”



### Kellie Preston, Registered Nurse, Summer Hill House

“The workplace culture at Achieve Australia is positive and motivating. Staff always have the client’s best interests at heart and work together to ensure clients have the best quality of life possible.”



### Jotika Prakash, Social Educator

“The best thing about working at Achieve is that I get to make a difference in the lives of people who I take care of. Achieve Australia has broadened my education by providing in-house training that I have utilised daily on the job, and I have upskilled my technical knowledge.”



### Arceli De Guzman, Assistant in Nursing, Summer Hill House

“Achieve Australia implements a professional development program, arranging training and courses to expand my skill set and advance my knowledge. Learning also exposes me to new experiences, challenges me and builds my enthusiasm to continuously provide the best and utmost care for our clients.”



Published by The Australian Financial Review and Boss Magazine, the prestigious annual list spans organisations in Australia and New Zealand. It is awarded following rigorous assessment by leading behavioural science consultancy, Inventium, including both a staff survey and written submission detailing information about workplace policies,

**“The very best workplaces consciously create cultures, policies, structures and environments that enable people to do their very best work. And in today’s rapidly changing world, that includes fostering agility, creativity and resilience in their workforce in the face of unprecedented challenges,”** Lorraine went on to say.





# Jenny. Always smiling back at you

If you shop at The Sewing Basket, there is a chance you may see the familiar face of Jenny McCullum smiling back at you from a brochure or a sign. Jenny has worked at The Sewing Basket since 2014 and has been a client of Achieve Australia for more than 20 years. She loves getting involved regularly in team photo shoots and even recently featured on TV as part of the Studio 10 breakfast show visit.



*Jenny is a keen knitter who enjoys working at The Sewing Basket.*

This isn't Jenny's only employee starring role, as she has several jobs, all that make her smile.

Working at the Newington and West Ryde shops each week, Jenny says she really enjoys her job. "I feel good when I come to work," says Jenny. "I love talking to all my friends and looking after the customers."

**An expert in the wool department in store, Jenny also is a keen knitter. "It takes a long time to knit blankets, but I love it. It's relaxing and you can do it in front of the TV with a cup of tea."**

AchievAble Enterprises' Operations Manager, Leanne Larche, who has known Jenny over the breadth of her career, says that Jenny brings a lot to the team. "Jenny has a bright and bubbly personality. She is positive and has a willingness to learn and try new things," she says. "Jenny is social and loves interacting with the customers."

Since doing travel training with support staff at Achieve, Jenny now takes the bus and train to work independently, giving her more confidence in the community. The Royal Botanic Gardens has also been Jenny's regular place of work for more than 20 years due to an arrangement with AchievAble Enterprises. This means that supported employees can work on site at various companies.

At the Gardens, Jenny has worked across many areas. More recently this has been with the Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens where she assists with mailouts, member packs and other administration duties. This also benefits the organisation and their staff who can meet and interact with a diverse range of people and learn more about supporting more people with disability at work.

"Working off site is great as it gives people more experience working in

different environments, provides an opportunity to learn something new and to meet new people," says Leanne.

The Australian Network on Disability reports that people with disability often have lower rates of absenteeism and employee turnover, which all help to create cost effective businesses. Employees working in inclusive workplaces are also likely to be more engaged, motivated and productive, and have been shown to stay with businesses for longer. A win for everyone.

Today, Jenny is continuing to build her workplace skills at The Sewing Basket and is learning to use the

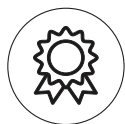


cash register to serve customers. It not only provides a chance to learn a new skill, but also an opportunity to connect with people who share similar passions and interests.

"The best thing is getting to know everyone because it always comes from the heart. It's really special for me to get to know people a bit more," says Jenny. "Especially the staff like Leanne, Zoe and Marie. They are very good at their job and what they do."

When Jenny isn't busy working or knitting, she enjoys colouring art, shopping and sailing with her family in Brooklyn. Not only an asset to any employer, Jenny brightens up the day of everyone she meets. Be sure to say hello if you are in store and need some help with your next knitting project.





# Leanne's dream job

After moving on from the corporate sector in 2010, AchievAble Enterprises' Operations Manager, Leanne Larche, landed her dream job. She did not know it then but supporting people with disability at work was set to become a true passion in her life.

"I fell into the disability sector when I got a job as the Factory Manager at our previous Marrickville packaging site," recalls Leanne. "But I always knew in my heart that I wanted to do something to give back and to help others."

It is this passion that has seen Leanne lead the employment team for more than a decade and help many people with disability find fulfilling roles at work. More than 50 supported employees work at AchievAble Enterprises, which relocated to a new site in Newington in 2018. On site, a professional team of staff work alongside supported employees to provide training and build workplace skills. The team help people to travel independently to work, make new friends and become part of a welcoming community.

The social enterprise also benefits many local and international brands who come from far and wide to engage the services of Leanne's team. Product packing, liquid filling, labelling and wrapping are just some areas that the team specialises in. Businesses are attracted by an opportunity to give back to the community and provide more opportunities for people who may find it difficult to secure employment.

**"When our business customers come to visit us here on site, they are blown away to see what we do here and how we operate," says Leanne. "Customers love the welcome they get from the people we support, and the chance to see how the work touches people's lives and makes a real difference."**

Local businesses have become regular customers of AchievAble who return time and time again. "Our partnership with AchievAble Enterprises over several years has proved to be a great benefit to our business. They provide a stable, quality and reliable service at a competitive price," says Director of Snowy Mountains Cookies, Nolen Oayda.



**"... I always knew in my heart that I wanted to do something to give back and to help others."**

Forming strong bonds and relationships are a big part of the role for Leanne who also works closely with Achieve Australia's families and carers. Estelle Burge is a family member of supported employee Vicki. After reading about the team's recent recognition in Enable magazine, she celebrated the 2020 Team of the Year Award received from Achieve Australia.

"Congratulations to you and your team and clients you support. A well-deserved award. It all comes down to leadership and you have shown those strengths necessary for this workplace to achieve their goals and provided a happy, safe workplace

for the clients. I thank you always for your support of Vicki and myself," noted Estelle to Leanne.

For Leanne, her main priority is ensuring the people we support have jobs to come to, and that there is ongoing and meaningful work available for everyone. "I'm passionate about AchievAble being successful because if we don't have a good business then we don't have jobs for our supported employees. It's all connected," she explains. "Everything we do is important to our business customers and our supported employees."





# Shepherd's pie

## Serves 4

This winter warmer has 3 1/2 serves of vegetables and only takes 20 minutes to prepare.

## Ingredients

- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 celery stalk, finely diced
- 1 tsp fresh rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 500g lamb or beef mince
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 tbsp worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 cups Massel beef stock
- 800g cream delight potatoes, peeled, chopped
- 1/2 cup milk
- 50g butter

## Method

1. Heat oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, carrot and celery. Cook, stirring, for 10 minutes or until softened. Add rosemary. Cook for 1 minute or until fragrant. Increase heat to high. Add mince. Cook, stirring with a wooden spoon to break up mince, for 6 to 8 minutes or until browned.
2. Add flour. Cook, stirring for 2 minutes. Add worcestershire sauce and paste. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add stock. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 25 to 30 minutes or until thickened. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Meanwhile, place potato in a large saucepan. Cover with cold water. Bring to the boil over high heat. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes or until tender. Drain. Return to pan over low heat. Add milk and 25g butter. Mash until smooth.
4. Preheat oven to 200C/180C fan-forced. Spoon mince mixture into an 8 cup-capacity baking dish. Top with mash, using a fork to spread out over mince mixture. Dot with remaining 25g butter. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden. Serve.

For more easy recipes, visit [taste.com.au](http://taste.com.au)



Michael Parker with his painting, 'Dino Art' and right, one of Michael's T-shirt designs.

## Michael Parker

Michael takes part in the art group day program at Achieve's Seven Hills hub. Art has always been a huge part of his life, and he enjoys exploring different mediums. His life long interest in art and the creative process is both meaningful and therapeutic.

Expressing his creative side brings out how he might be feeling. This leads him to create and perfect his art by practising with different mediums to achieve the perfect result.

His most recent project has been having fun creating a t-shirt design for the new Achieve Australia choir, The High Notes.





Travel

# Blue horizons

By Julie Jones, Have Wheelchair Will Travel and Travel Without Limits



Accessible pathway at Wentworth Falls Lake





The Blue Mountains is a mere 90-minute drive from Sydney and yet it feels like a world away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Day trippers and those looking for a weekend escape will enjoy being immersed in the untouched beauty, crisp clean air and vast mountain ranges brimming with wildlife.

Although the region is popular with bushwalkers and adventure seekers, there is a long list of accessible activities on offer, with some of our favourites listed.

the Jamison Valley while offering uninterrupted views of Katoomba Falls and Mount Solitary.

While the Three Sisters may be the most famous location in the Blue Mountains, Govetts Leap at Blackheath also offers a stunning lookout and an accessible walk. The Fairfax Heritage Walking Track takes around 30-45 minutes depending on your speed and winds through nature via a sealed path.

The Blue Mountain's Cultural Centre is ideal for a rainy day, or to escape



Accessible pathway at Wentworth Falls Lake



Govett's Leap lookout, Blackheath

**The Three Sisters is one of the most photographed attractions in the Blue Mountains and there is no better place to view it from than Echo Point. The lookout has ramp access and there is accessible parking and a Changing Places bathroom nearby.**

Scenic World is an attraction not to be missed, and with two of the three experiences wheelchair accessible, it is fun for everyone. On the Cableway, wheelchair users ride up front which is the best position for appreciating the stunning views of the Jamison Valley. At the base visitors can enjoy the wonders of the rainforest while taking a walk along the accessible boardwalk. For a different view, take the Skyway which floats across

the winter chill. This beautiful accessible space plays host to changing exhibitions and the kids will love the interactive 'Into the Blue' exhibition which explores the unique area. There is a small admission fee to the gallery and the Into the Blue Exhibition.

Although much of the attention in the area is focused on the natural wonders, it is worth taking a look at Katoomba Street Art Walk. It displays world standard street art from all aerosol disciplines. International, national and local artists are given the opportunity to paint murals in Berverly Place in Katoomba. Driving through provides the easiest access for wheelchair users due to uneven pathways.

While a day trip to the Blue Mountains is popular, an overnight or weekend stay allows for more exploration. Accessible accommodation is available in all budget ranges, from youth hostels to five-star luxury.

The Fairmont Hotel is a favourite with families and is set on expansive grounds with lush gardens and mountain views. Everything is under one roof at this resort with restaurants, spa facilities and indoor and outdoor pools. Kids will be entertained in the indoor play centres, which include a mirror maze and the bowling alley. Accessible rooms are located on the ground floor of the property with garden views.

The Blue Mountains has no shortage of options when it comes to dining and after enjoying the scenery and a bit of exercise, there are plenty of reasons to indulge. In winter, there is nothing better than warming up by one of the cosy log fires you will find in the dining rooms of restaurants and cafes. In summer, dining alfresco is the perfect way to take advantage of the beautiful scenery.

Café 92 Conservation Hut offers food to compliment the gorgeous views and is a short drive from the accessible Wentworth Falls lookout. Stop in for scones and a hot chocolate or a hearty cooked breakfast or lunch. Any time of the day you are sure to leave happy and ready to tackle more sightseeing.

**Entering the Gingerbread House at Katoomba feels like a mini-Willy Wonka moment with colourful sweet treats lining the shelves. Hearty soup, delicious toasties and cakes are all on the menu. Located in an old church, the café is wheelchair accessible with parking at the rear and accessible bathrooms.**

Lilianfels offers a high tea in an elegant setting which is perfect for a special treat or a celebratory occasion. For fine dining, Darley's Restaurant at Lilianfels is the pick with an innovative menu using the best of local produce.

On a warm day, a picnic is a wonderful way of embracing the natural surroundings in the Blue Mountains. Grab a hearty pie from Bakehouse on Wentworth, either the Blackheath or Glenbrook outlets are wheelchair accessible, or Mountain High Pies at Wentworth Falls. For gourmet picnic fare stop by the Carrington Cellars and Deli. Located in the old Katoomba Power Station the store is brimming with regional cheeses, sweet treats and wines. Wentworth Falls Lake is a pretty spot for a picnic and has a playground and accessible pathways.

For more accessible travel tips, visit [travelwithoutlimits.com.au](http://travelwithoutlimits.com.au)





# Out & about

## Beef Week

Beef Week 2021 was quite a different event to previous years, but many of the favourite activities were still on offer.

The clients attending My Life Casino were able to enter the busking competition, with a solid effort on Tuesday morning. A video of this performance was widely shared on social media, and was very popular. We didn't take home the major prize despite the widespread support for our performers, the overall quality of the busking was quite high.

Friday saw Breakfast with the Butchers, a real Beef Week staple. A number of our clients attended and enjoyed the sausage sizzle, steak and flavoured milks on offer. It was a pleasing sight to see such a "normal" activity return despite our COVID restrictions and rules.

Saturday is peak day at Beef Week, with the cattle showing competition, auction and street fair. This is something that is incredibly popular with the people we support (and the community in general) with a number of clients attending these activities.



Saturday did have mixed feelings for us, as we usually have the Street Parade in the afternoon but it was one of the victims of COVID and couldn't run this year. The only upside of this was that the Street fair ran all day so we were not as rushed through the day.

See all the fun from Casino Beef Week 2021 at [casinobeefweek.com.au](http://casinobeefweek.com.au)



## Reconciliation Week

Reconciliation is more than just a word. Reconciliation is about taking action and we all have a role to play to collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

This year, clients and staff proudly supported Reconciliation Week by lending their voices in a moving message to recognise the traditional lands of our sites and sharing the video on social media.



The team and support staff at the Brisbane venue



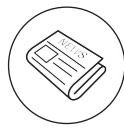
## The Lachlan Tigers are back!

In June, The Lachlan Tigers competed in the National Disability Championship for tenpin bowling, in Brisbane receiving a total of 21 medals across the competition. In the trios, The Tigers placed first, second and third. A wonderful result and congratulations to the team for a great achievement. Champion bowler, Scott Mitchell, pictured at left, came second in the nation in the Masters Competition.

# Coming up

- 24 August-5 September Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games
- 5 September Father's Day
- 9 September R U OK? Day
- 16 September Global Talks
- 17-18 September Nepean Disability Expo





# Stay up to date on the latest from the NDIS

## NDIS participants encouraged to share views on home and living policy

The NDIA has released a new consultation paper focused on supporting NDIS participants to have more control over how and where they live. As part of the NDIA's continued work on its Home and Living Policy, the Agency has released a paper, 'An Ordinary Life at Home', to inform the way participants are supported to pursue their home and living goals.

## COVID-19 vaccination eligibility extended to all NDIS participants and carers over 16

All National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants aged 16 years and over and carers aged 16 years and over of NDIS participants of any age are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine from Tuesday, 8 June.

## Emily channels success into welcome gift for animals at Zoos SA

Unlike many teenagers, Emily West thoroughly enjoyed her high school years. She attended a mainstream school, where she felt welcome and included. But life after school was different.



Emily, pictured above, who lives with a significant intellectual disability, severe anxiety, Tourette's Syndrome and autistic behaviours, struggled to find work. But today, thanks to her NDIS support, Emily owns and operates a thriving micro enterprise called ShredEm, which collects, shreds and recycles unwanted paper for local businesses and residents who want their confidential paperwork safely destroyed.

## More vaccination options for people with disability

The Australian Government is establishing dedicated vaccination hubs in key locations to provide additional safe and accessible locations for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants in Phase 1 to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. NDIS disability workers and primary carers of people with disability will also be able to access the hubs.

## Pricing changes 2021-22

The National Disability Insurance Agency will soon release updated price limits that will go into effect on 1 July 2021. As in previous years, the NDIA will update the NDIS Disability Support Worker Cost Model when the Fair Work Commission annual wage review decision for 2021-22 is released later in June. This year the NDIS Disability Support Worker Cost Model will also include the Australian Taxation Office's increase to the super guarantee percentage.

## Pathways built through connection at the heart of NDIS support

Rurally, regionally or remotely, the NDIS is committed to connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Highlighted during National Reconciliation Week, where the country comes together to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, the NDIS' proactive approach to breaking down barriers in communities across the country continues to strengthen these relationships.

With culturally appropriate pathways into the Scheme more crucial than ever after the Coronavirus pandemic impacted the NDIS' ability to visit remote communities over the past 12 months, great strides are again being made. In person Community Access Clinics have returned, and with Remote Community Connectors (RCC) in place in many remote communities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be eligible for the Scheme, a resumption of face-to-face contact is again changing lives.



[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) 1800 800 110

For the latest advice on COVID-19, visit [ndis.gov.au/coronavirus](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus)



Remote Community Connectors team members

Image source: [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)





## Take a look at some of the latest news and highlights in disability



Image sources: Disability Support Guide, SBS News, ABC News

ABC News, 21 June

1

### Reality TV shows Big Brother, The Voice and The Amazing Race helping to 'crush' stigma around disability

Skye-Blue Henderson, who does not identify as having a disability, said she had one defiant reason for appearing on The Amazing Race Australia. When she was asked why she was applying, she was very direct with producers. Ms Henderson said unfortunately most people make assumptions based on what people look like. "As they judge and make up their minds based on the thought process: 'I can't think of how I would do that with one hand so she can't" — it is that stigma that really pushed me.

ABC News, 2 June

2

### Virtual learning helping students living with a disability learn vital skills and gain confidence

Tymekka Locke would love to be a barista when she leaves school, but like many of her classmates at the Mackay District Special School, she is not sure where to start. But a virtual learning program, helping teach vital skills from the safety of a classroom, might just be the answer. Over the past six months, students have been using headsets and screens to learn pedestrian safety skills, how to withdraw money from an ATM and the art of making different coffees.

ABC News, 30 May

3

### People with disability find greater access to Australian beaches with the help of national program

For years, Kate Thomas had been dreaming about going in the ocean on her visits to Sydney. Born with spinal muscular atrophy type 2, a genetic condition that causes muscle weakness, Kate assumed her wheelchair would mean the beach would remain impossible. One of the country's most iconic spots, Bondi, has taken up the call. With the assistance of Beach Access Australia, it launched its own disability access program in 2020, run by the Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club (BSBLSC) in partnership with Waverly Council.

Disability Support Guide, 21 May

4

### NDIS independent assessments largely opposed by disability community

People with disability have warned independent assessments are making it harder to access publicly funded support as part of a review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) proposed independent assessment program. The Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS heard evidence from a range of ACT's disability community last week, the majority of which oppose the reforms as they've been proposed.

Studio 10, 28 March

5

### Studio 10 visits The Sewing Basket

The Sewing Basket were thrilled to welcome the Studio 10 crew to our Newington shop recently. Presenter Daniel Doody stocked up his bag full of fabric and materials and chatted to the team about what makes The Sewing Basket a great place to shop, volunteer and work. Jenny McCallum and Liza Hanna, who both work at The Sewing Basket and receive training and support from Achieve Australia, said that it's the people who make the shops a great place to work.



# Find the home and lifestyle you want.

We are excited to share our current accessible disability accommodation vacancies in Sydney and invite you to discover what options are currently available with Achieve Australia and Independent Housing Australia (IHA).

Achieve are Supported Independent Living (SIL) specialists and we are partnering with IHA who provide Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA). Together we are exploring new housing opportunities. If you'd like to know more, please get in touch.



For information on SDA please contact Mark Lawler  
[info@inclusivehousing.com.au](mailto:info@inclusivehousing.com.au) or 1800 442 732.

For information on SIL please contact Jeremy Edwards  
[jedwards@achieveaustralia.org.au](mailto:jedwards@achieveaustralia.org.au) or 0420 984 214.

