

# Lifestyle Matters

## Lifestyle Matters

Spring 2011 Edition

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*Spring Into Life*



Lifestyle Solutions  
supporting people

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*Welcome* to the Spring edition of Lifestyle Matters, our organisational quarterly newsletter for people we support, their families, support workers, people who support us, and our many friends in the community.

The 30th of August 2011, marked an enormous milestone for Lifestyle Solutions in Australia. It was on this day ten years ago that our organisation was born. We became incorporated as an organisation in 2001, then, exactly one year later commenced providing support to people with disability with the opening of our Warabrook Group Home in Newcastle, NSW.

This service opened to support five wonderful people and now, ten years on, we are proud to say that those same five people have remained with us throughout our decade-long journey.

During this time we have expanded the provision of our services beyond disabilities and we now provide a range of support services to children, young people and adults across Australia and more recently into the Asia Pacific region. It has been a wonderful journey with many highlights and extraordinary achievements from the people we support and our staff of which we can all be extremely proud.

Every person who has been involved in the creation and development of Lifestyle Solutions has the right to be proud of their personal and our organisational achievements. We thank you for the part that you have played, and will continue to play, in the growth of our organisation and in providing support that makes such an important difference in the lives of people in our community.

Above all, we remember that it is the people we support who have given us the opportunity to share in their lives, their hopes and their dreams. It is these amazing people who have enabled us to build an organisation that has made a real and valued difference to so many individuals, families and communities across the country.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of Lifestyle Matters and the inspiring stories we are able to share with you.

*David Hogg*  
Managing Director

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# Celebrating Our Ten Year Journey

Lifestyle Solutions was founded in Newcastle to 2002 with a vision to provide person centred, flexible and responsive support services to people with disability. The organisation has since expanded the provision of support beyond disabilities and now provides a range of support services to children, young people and adults across Australia.

## August 2001

- \* Lifestyle Solutions (Aust.) Ltd was incorporated and began the groundwork to establish support services for people with disability.

## August 2002

- \* We celebrated the official opening of our first group home in Warabrook New South Wales, welcoming five people into their new home.

## 2003 to 2004

- \* Newcastle Accommodation Support services were established and Lifestyle Solutions' Transition to Work programs commenced in Newcastle.

## July 2005

- \* The total number of staff employed at Lifestyle Solutions reached 100 and Accommodation Support services commenced in Sydney.

## 2006

- \* Lifestyle Solutions become a provider of Attendant Care.

## 2007

- \* Lifestyle Solutions commenced running Camps for Youth as part of our Youth Education and Recreation programs.
- \* Support services commenced in Queensland.

## 2008

- \* Lifestyle Solutions received Office of Children's Guardian Foster Care Accreditation and launched our Community Justice Program.

## 2009

- \* Support services in the Northern Territory commenced and Lifestyle Solutions were awarded AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 Accreditation.

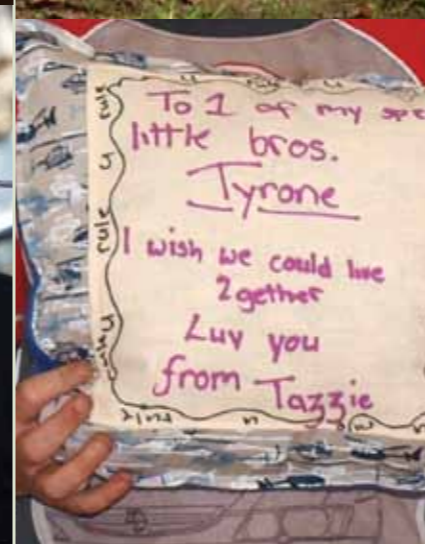
## 2010

- \* Lifestyle Solutions headed west to Western Australia to establish Disability Support Services and commenced Supported Shared Accommodation services in Victoria.
- \* By 2010, Lifestyle Solutions was providing support services to children, young people and adults in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

## August 2011

- \* Lifestyle Solutions celebrated the milestone of ten years since our organisation was incorporated.
- \* Staff numbers in Australia have now reached 1,500 and we are supporting more than 800 individuals across Australia.
- \* Lifestyle Solutions has now commenced community development projects in China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

*Happy Anniversary!*



# Camp to Belong 2011

During the month of September our Queensland team had the privilege of reuniting forty-eight siblings at Lifestyle Solutions' Camp to Belong 2011.

The camp was held at Thunderbird Park, Tamborine Mountain, Queensland and gave the siblings, who all live in separate Out of Home Care placements, the opportunity to spend five days of quality time together at no cost to their families.

During the week they participated in a huge variety of outdoor adventures, sporting pursuits, life planning exercises and social activities all designed to promote positive family contact.

A highlight of the week was a visit from Lifestyle Solutions ambassador and Melbourne Tigers recruit Patty Mills.

Patty was the guest of honour at the Giant Birthday Party where siblings exchanged birthday presents and celebrated a lifetime of missed birthdays. Patty was kept busy helping the kids unwrap presents, posing for plenty of photographs, signing autographs and happily reliving some great career moments with his young fans!

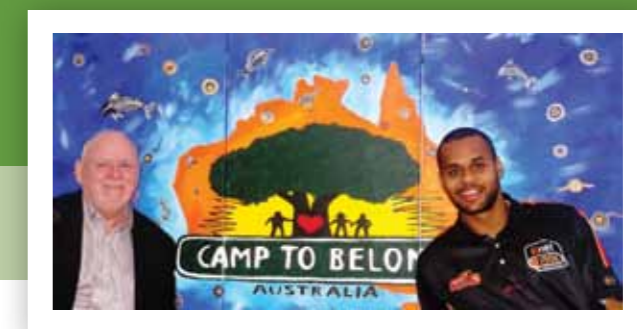
Our campers also spent time making pillows for their siblings, inscribed with a special note from the heart. Some of the beautiful messages written included:

- ... Don't forget to smile  
- I'm always thinking of you
- ... I love you so much and miss you loads
- ... 4 ever and a day  
- love you forever
- ... You're the best sister in the world

There were hundreds of photos taken, which the young people used to make memory albums of the time spent with their sibling.

A camp like this can only happen with the dedication and support of a great team of people. Our thanks goes to our camp co-ordinators, team leaders, cooks and the sixteen TAFE student volunteers who assisted the team leaders with their groups. They were supported by our Queensland management team and together they were able to reunite these siblings in a positive, safe and nurturing environment that yielded some truly amazing results.

Above all we thank the incredible siblings we were able to reunite for allowing us to share in their lives and these special moments.



## Sensory Solutions

Siahn is an energetic, fun-loving and cheeky eleven year old girl who we have been supporting since February 2011. She has had some difficult times in her short life, including a set of complex behaviours and an extremely rare condition, which has made it difficult for her to develop social abilities.

Over the past seven months, Lifestyle Solutions support workers have played an active role in keeping Siahn engaged in the community. Siahn goes on small household shopping trips, including the always anticipated icecream treat at the end as a reward. She enjoys going to the park, particularly swinging, which she loves and has also developed her swimming abilities with regular visits to the pool.

Siahn celebrated her eleventh birthday in May with her family and support workers. Following the party, Siahn's family wrote to the staff expressing their gratitude for all the effort that was made and emphasised how special it made her feel.

Siahn's support workers are involving her in various activities to assist in the development of her senses such as a recent outing to get up close and personal with animals. Through part of the funding agreement with the Disabilities Service Commission, Lifestyle Solutions have developed a sensory room for Siahn in her house.

The house is now also equipped with an inside and outside zoned stereo system. This allows Siahn's support workers to use music as a focus support strategy and redirection technique.



## A Moment with Bernie

My name is Bernard, but people call me Bernie. I live in the beautiful Mid North Coast of New South Wales. I have a great life and amazing people in my life. I am the youngest of five children; two brothers, Peter and Curtis, and two sisters, Elizabeth and Catherine. My family and friends are very important to me.

There are a few things in my life that I am really passionate about: being independent, having a strong Christian faith and raising money for people and families living with leukaemia and blood cancers. Each year I shave my head to fundraise in the 'shave for a cure' event. I raised over \$700 this year. Check out the hair cut I sported for the month of March! Lucky there is only a week or two between a good and a bad haircut!

In addition to contributing back to my local community, I am a member of a drama group which puts on a major production each year. I also drum in an African drumming group not far from my home. You could say I have a creative flair. My most exciting achievement this year has been learning to cook, MasterChef style. I have compiled a book of my favourite recipes. It's not only about the flavours; it's also about how to present a great dish. I like to call it 'plating up'. My mother Pat and father Clem absolutely enjoy my culinary delights each Tuesday night when I cook my latest dinner creation.

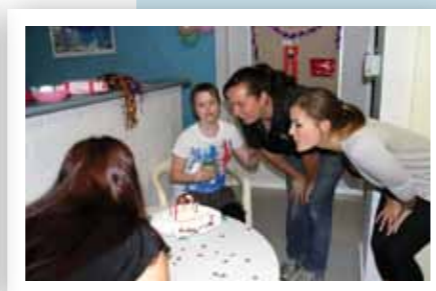
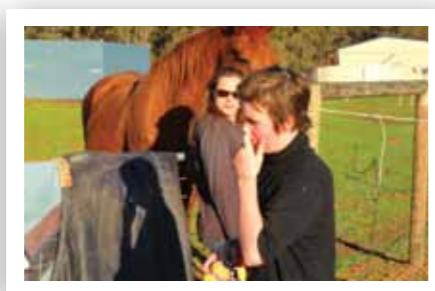
One of my friends asked me a few days ago what I was going to set my sights on next year. I might have to put some more thought into that. But at the end of the day, as long as I am making my own decisions, doing the things that I love and giving back to my community, it will certainly be a year to look forward to.

Bernie is well known around Lifestyle Solutions for his magnificent cooking skills and healthy meal choices and has recently compiled a fantastic Favourite Recipe Book, containing lots of his favourite recipes. His Fruit Slice recipe is delicious!

### Bernie's Fruit Slice

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup mixed fruit
- 1 egg
- 125g margarine

1. Turn oven on to medium heat (180 degrees).
2. Mix all dry ingredients in bowl.
3. Melt margarine and pour over mixture, stir.
4. Beat egg and pour over mixture, stir.
5. Press into greased lamington tin.
6. Bake in medium oven 35 minutes or until golden.
7. Enjoy with friends!



## Lifestyle's Bay Boy Does us All Proud

### Port Stephens Day Program

*I am sitting here at Lifestyle Solutions, Port Stephens interviewing our latest big achiever Keiran Corry.*

*So Keiran, tell us where you have been for the last three weeks?*

In Athens, Greece but before that I was in Rhodes for the host town program.

*What did you do in Athens?*

Competitive swimming at the Special Olympics World Summer Games.

*Tell us of your achievements.*

I competed in the 200m Individual Medley where I received the bronze medal, the 100m Backstroke where I was just touched out for the gold medal, the 400m Freestyle where I brought home another silver medal and in the 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay - Australia received the silver. Altogether three silver medals and one bronze.

*Tell me how often do you train and when did you start?*

Before leaving for the trip I was swimming in eleven sessions a week (1½-2 hours each session). I started swimming at about three years old, competitively at about six.

*What do you enjoy about swimming?*

Staying fit, meeting new people and seeing the world.

*What was the best part of the Games?*

Experiencing Greek culture and witnessing dodgy Greek driving.

*What was the most difficult?*

Waiting around for buses and a change of accommodation to something far less than five star.

*What have you been enjoying about your time at Lifestyle Solutions so far?*

Being helped to be prepared for the workforce with a group of people that have experienced the same issues that I have. Meeting new friends.

*Would you like to thank anyone before we go?*

The people who support me know who they are.

*Thanks for your time Keiran. Lifestyle Solutions is very proud of your achievements.*



**Special Olympics**  
WORLD SUMMER GAMES  
ATHENS 2011



## A Passion for Music

### Community Justice Program (CJP) Music and Mindfulness Program

This year we have developed the Music and Mindfulness Program that uses a range of musical styles and mindfulness techniques to assist individuals to become more aware of their own emotional state.

Many of the individuals in the Lifestyle Solutions CJP are from very dysfunctional families where domestic violence and neglect are a way of life. The people attending this program may have no understanding of emotional regulation nor do they recognise emotions such as anger. The Music and Mindfulness Program provides a safe vehicle for individuals to experience, recognise and control these emotions.

During the year a young man with an intellectual disability and acute mental health issues was referred to our program. He had experienced several placement breakdowns and custodial sentences for violent crimes. His initial placement required three staff per shift to support him due to the high risk of assault. He has now been with Lifestyle Solutions for three years and is an active participant in our Music and Mindfulness Program. He has had no further incarcerations, has been reunited with his father, he accesses the community independently and is attending TAFE courses that interest him.

To the delight of this young man, who has a passion for rap music, the music group has just cut their first CD!



*Superb Achievement Keiran!*

# Living Life My Way Summit

Recently, 500 people gathered at ACER Arena in Sydney NSW for the Living Life My Way Summit. It was an exciting opportunity for people with a disability, their families and support workers to share their views on how we can achieve person centred approaches.

The NSW Government has recently announced that they are moving away from a one-size-fits-all service approach to a system where people with disability have more control over their lives and futures.

Lifestyle Solutions has long been committed to ensuring that the people we support, their families and support workers are placed at the centre of any decision making that relates to their support needs. Our person centred approach means that our focus is less about traditional program-based models and more about being creative and flexible in how we provide support to an individual. The ultimate goal is to ensure they have maximum control and enjoyment in their lives.



Naomi McCorkell, Operations Manager for our NSW Self Managed and Individual Support Arrangements, represented Lifestyle Solutions at the summit and spoke about our journey to a more person centred approach:

"It started with a conversation between Lifestyle Solutions and a family member who approached the organisation. They had a vision for their loved one, and that vision didn't resemble a traditional model of support like a group home and a day program. Their vision was more about their loved one living a normal, ordinary good life surrounded by family and friends."

In her presentation, Naomi explained the importance of community organisations challenging their current way of thinking, and to move towards a complete shift in power and control.

"People with disability need to hold valued roles and drive their own support. We need less 'structured' routines imposed by 'service types' and more examples of the 'everydayness' and 'ordinariness' that forms a good percentage of what we do in our days."

"...Lifestyle Solutions has made a full commitment to encourage, empower and support people to live their own lives their own way. To have as much autonomy, power and control over their support as they decide. By starting small and moving onto something bigger, their support becomes their way; their life."

"When faced with a challenge the answer should never have to be NO, it is always HOW can we find a way to make it happen?"

For more information on the Living Life My Way Summit, visit [www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/events](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/events)



## Growing employment options for people with disability

At Wallsend Community Nursery they are growing so much more than plants. The Nursery has become an employment haven for people with disability or mental illness, and participation in the program is blossoming.

The Nursery forms part of Lifestyle Solutions Work Assist Program, established to address the significant gap in employment options for people in the community who often find it challenging to gain and maintain long-term employment. Sadly there is still a general lack of understanding and a stigma associated with mental illness and disability which means people are often overlooked by would-be employers.

There are currently around 880,000 people in Australia receiving a Disability Support Pension (DSP) which costs the government more than \$13.4 billion dollars annually. In Newcastle alone there are more than 26,000 people in receipt of a DSP.

But at Wallsend Community Nursery an employment revolution has begun. "We are creating employment opportunities for people with disability in an environment where they feel included, valued and supported," said Lifestyle Solutions Social Enterprise General Manager Tony Still.

"We currently employ over thirty people with disability in Newcastle at our four Enterprise Services which include the Nursery, The Butterfly Effect Café located within the nursery grounds, Community Mowing Solutions and Community Garden Maintenance."

Interest and participation in the program has far exceeded expectations and according to Tony the number of employees should exceed 150 in 2012. "The success of the program in Newcastle has motivated us to think nationally. We have now created a model that we can apply to a range of business types and we are pursuing some really exciting opportunities."

And the figures certainly stack up. For every person on a Disability Support Pension working a fifteen hour week, the government saves \$167 a fortnight. For every thirty hour week this saving more than doubles to \$430. Next year Lifestyle Solutions hopes to employ 150 people in ten Enterprise Services which will equate to a government saving of more than \$1.6million.

But far more important than the financial equation is the impact the program is having on the quality of life of the participants we support. "We have developed a Mood Monitoring Tool to help us measure the impact that secure, sustainable and supportive employment makes on an individual's general wellbeing and quality of life, and the results are truly inspiring," said Tony. "What we are really doing is breaking down social barriers and facilitating genuine social inclusion and the benefits of this extend to the whole community."

Lifestyle Solutions recently celebrated the official opening of the Work Assist Program at Wallsend Community Nursery on the 19th October 2011. Newcastle Lord Mayor, Councillor John Tate, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet and members of the community joined to celebrate the beginning of what might well become an employment revolution.



# Camp To Belong Golf Day 2011

On a slightly overcast Friday in October, Lifestyle Solutions ran its Annual Camp to Belong Charity Golf Day at Belmont Golf course in Newcastle. The event was proudly sponsored by Kelly Trotter Motor Group and Newcastle Toyota who came on board again this year to support our great cause.

Our eager golfers turned up at 7am to be greeted with a warm smile, bacon and egg roll and a hot drink before tackling the fairways. Everyone got in the spirit of the day and the players bravely tackled the obstacles placed at various holes on the course.

There were sponsors for all eighteen holes, gift bags for players, Lifestyle shirts, raffle prizes, prizes for nearest the pin, winning team, longest drive, a car display on the course and lots of fun activities for the players throughout the day. Staff members Melody LaGloria, Karina Pizzigrilli and Melinda Middleton assisted with the selling of raffle tickets and encouraged the players to dig deep for a good cause.

Our Managing Director David spoke over lunch, where he shared some inspiring stories about the great work that we do to support people across Australia. Fundraising and Events Manager, Brooke Cross, spruiked our auction and raffle, prompting players to up their bids and purchase tickets for a great selection of prizes. Brooke was also caught doing a happy dance after the event was over, thanking the weather man upstairs for holding off the rain for our golfers.

Positive feedback has been steadily coming in from sponsors and participants and we are pleased to announce the event was a huge success with over \$20,000 raised on the day!

Thank you to all the players from local businesses that supported our day and to our staff members for choosing to pay and participate to support Camp to Belong. We would like to extend a special thank you to the businesses and community members who sponsored a hole and donated prizes for the winners and in particular to our major sponsors for the event, Newcastle Toyota and Kelly Trotter Motor Group. Your generosity is appreciated.

We are already looking forward to next year's event!



# Holiday Fun at Bundy House

School holidays are always a fun time for the people we support in the Bundy House up in Queensland. Support staff are always coming up with exciting and new activities and places to see for the people we support to visit.

Recently, the team chose to spend the day at the Snakes Down Under Reptile Park where they were excited to learn about Australian reptiles, including different types of snakes, lizards, turtles and frogs.

Some of those more daring chose to hold a snake and our bravest team member even held a baby crocodile! Everyone was very impressed with his courage and bravery. Such an exciting day, we hope to head off on another adventure soon.



# Garden Makeover

Recently, our Port Macquarie Day Program received a wonderful donation from the garden crew at Bunnings Warehouse. As well as donating their skills, we received a great selection of plants, garden ornaments and soil.

After a hard day's work the entire the team enjoyed sitting back and admiring the new Lifestyle Community Garden. We are now looking forward to seeing the garden bloom and produce lots of delicious herbs and vegetables to add to the dinner table.

Big thanks to Bunnings for their continuing support, we are always very grateful.



# "Every Australian Counts"

## NDIS Revolutionising Disability Services

As we prepare for the journey that lies ahead we are excited by the news that the Government is considering the adoption of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and we will begin laying the foundation for its introduction.

### It has been:

- FORTY YEARS since Australia endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons;
- THIRTY SIX YEARS since Australia endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons;
- TWENTY SEVEN YEARS since the Richmond Report, which called for people with disability to be deinstitutionalised;
- NINETEEN YEARS since the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act; and
- THREE YEARS since Australia endorsed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Despite Australia's continued acknowledgements of the rights of people with disabilities which spans four decades, people with disability throughout the country continue to be one of the most marginalised minority groups. The lack of basic human rights and discrimination towards people with disability largely goes unnoticed.

People who are born with or later acquire disability continue to struggle to access adequate support, equipment, home and vehicle modifications, personal care and community access, respite, accommodation support, domestic assistance, transport assistance, specialist employment services and emergency/crisis support.

The Shut Out Report (2009) provided some insight into the experience of people with disability, their families and carers in Australia. More than 750 submissions were received by the report from individuals and from organisations in an attempt to break down the walls of silence and have their stories told. Previously "shut in", many people with disability now find themselves "shut out" and although people with disability may now be more 'present' in our community, too few are actually part of it. The institutions that once housed them may be closed, but the inequity remains.

The Productivity Commission has accepted that the disability system in Australia is not meeting the needs of people with disability, their families and carers, or indeed the needs of the nation and has recommended a complete overhaul. The opening words of the draft report say it all: *"the disability support system overall is inequitable, underfunded, fragmented and inefficient and gives people with a disability little choice."*

Following the release of the Productivity Commission's final report into the matter earlier this year, the Australian Government announced in August that they too share the vision for a NDIS and will immediately begin laying the foundations for its introduction.

The NDIS is important for all Australians, not just people with disability and we look forward to the coming months as we begin to see the first changes starting to develop.

### Why is it so important?

The NDIS is an opportunity to revolutionise disability services as we know it. Here are ten fast facts about why it is so important:

1. **The current system is in crisis.** If you or someone you love is born with disability, or acquires one later in life, you run the risk of falling through a huge hole in Australia's safety net.
2. People with disability and their families and carers want to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of the nation, but **there are many barriers within the current system that prevent their full inclusion.**
3. Lack of support and services means families are primarily responsible for meeting the needs of their family member with disability. **Many families are struggling with high levels of physical, emotional and financial stress.**
4. **The current system is inequitable.** People receive different levels of support depending on how, when and where their disability was acquired.



5. The number of people with a disability is increasing and the number of people who are willing and able to provide unpaid care is falling. This means that the **cost to government is expected to increase dramatically in the future.**
6. A National Disability Insurance Scheme would **provide people with disability and their families and carers with the regular care and support they need.** Similar to Medicare, it would provide a secure and consistent pool of funds for disability support and services.
7. **It is fair, efficient and effective.** It would focus on early intervention and delivering support that produces the best long term outcomes. It will maximise opportunities for independence, participation and productivity.
8. **It will be individualised and person centred.** Support will be based on the choices of the person with disability and their family.
9. **The scheme will reframe support as an investment rather than charity.** Timely interventions, appropriate support and equipment, training and development would become investment in individual capacity, not welfare. The scheme will therefore bring about more positive results for people with disability as well as being fiscally responsible.
10. **All Australians will benefit from the scheme** because disability can affect anyone, anytime. We will all benefit from a more inclusive, diverse community.

**Want more information and stories about the NDIS?**

Visit [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au)



NDIS | revolutionising disability services





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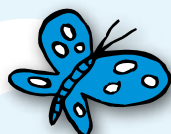
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supporting people