



Growing memories at home

On a recent visit to their local Kingsgrove Bunnings Warehouse in search of a raised garden bed, our customers in Penshurst NSW were introduced to Bunnings' Event Coordinator, Krissy.

Krissy jumped at the chance to help our customers and offered to donate the plants, soil and mulch needed for the project. She also organised a team to help construct the raised garden bed completely free of charge.

“For many of our wonderful customers, the opportunity to connect with their community empowers them to pursue their interests and enjoy important social interactions,” said Lifestyle Solutions Coordinator, Lia Leiatatimu.

“When our customers approached us with their idea about a raised garden, we encouraged them to turn their idea into a goal. With the help and support of the generous local Bunnings team, they were able to achieve this goal,” said Lia.

Armed with gloves, spades and watering

Continued



With help from their friends at Bunnings, our customers in Penshurst, created their dream raised garden.

cans, Krissy, together with Bill and Shahara from Bunnings' Mascot Warehouse, arrived at the house in Penshurst ready to get to work.

Along with our enthusiastic and eager customers, the team built a clever and practical raised garden bed and finished off the project by teaching our customers how to care for their new garden and plants.

"After they'd finished putting the garden together, they told me how happy and proud they were of what they'd achieved and that, to me, was priceless," said Lia.

Lifestyle Solutions would like to send a huge thank you to Bunnings Warehouse and their staff for generously donating the garden bed and showing their support for our customers.



The team enjoyed learning how to care for their new garden.

A message from the CEO

It's been a busy start to the year, especially for our teams in Tasmania.

Over the last 18 months Lifestyle Solutions has been working through a process of looking at the way our teams work and deliver services.

Our new approach focusses on better connection and collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for our customers. This process is our journey to Better Service.

We have implemented better systems, policies and procedures, better models of service and support, better communication and better service delivery. We've also worked out ways to better utilise the specialist skills within our teams.

This has been a huge task and we're excited to

announce that Tasmania is now ready to deliver services under this new approach.

We will now be focussing on rolling out this new way of working across the nation.

There won't be any change to customers' current service arrangements or to their workers as a result of the change.

Our teams in Tasmania have been involved in workshops, training, and reviewing how they best work with each other. These teams will be able to make more local decisions and will be better supported by state-based resources.

You can expect to see more responsive, efficient and flexible services that continue to meet the needs and support the goals of our customers.

As always, we appreciate your support.

Regards

Andrew Hyland



We take our responsibilities to our customers and their communities seriously. If you need information, assistance or wish to provide feedback, please phone 1800 634 748. Your feedback will be received with utmost confidentiality and respect.



NDIS Updates

New South Wales

We continue to work with customers accessing our Community Justice Program (CJP) services and support their transition to the NDIS service delivery.

The team in New South Wales is focussed on introducing new specialist disability support models, with highly trained nursing support, in the Newcastle and Central West regions.

A new NDIS Supported Independent Living (SIL) home is now available in Cowra to support our customers.

In Stockton and Morisset, we're also working on transitioning customers from large residential facilities into our care and providing them with Support Coordination.

Leaving care transitional placements are a focus in Bathurst and Orange, assisting young people in Out Of Home Care to transition to our disability supports.

Queensland

Following on from last year's NDIS rollout across South East Queensland, we've seen an increase in requests for supports including Support Coordination, Short-term Accommodation and Supported Independent Living (SIL).

The team has launched an exciting new social group that's

accessible for customers through their NDIS plan. The group meets weekly to enjoy a range of community activities and is centred around the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas.

Western Australia

Since early January 2019, we've seen a significant increase in the number of our customers in the Pilbara region transitioning from WA NDIS to the national NDIS.

Ensuring our customers experience a seamless transition will continue to be a strong focus for our team in the Pilbara over the next 12 months.

Western Australia will commence a statewide Quality Evaluation in April 2019 for all disability services.

Northern Territory

As a result of greater choice and control, we've seen an increase of customers in the Northern Territory choosing Lifestyle Solutions to provide their disability support.

Our Australian Disability Enterprise in Alice Springs, Bindi Enterprises, is exploring new ways that NDIS funding can be used to support our customers such as, 'Bindi in the Bush,' a program that assists people to return to Country.

Tasmania

With the NDIS to be fully rolled out from July 2019, we're excited to be enhancing our customers' experience through the implementation of the Better Service model in Tasmania.

Our team is currently focussing on the continued growth of our business and customers in Support Coordination and Supported Independent Living (SIL).

Victoria

In January 2019, we launched a new centre-based support service for children and young people at Ballarat Specialist School.

Funded by the NDIS, the service is designed to support the individual needs of children and runs a fun, outcomes-focused program.

This program provides a great opportunity to connect with the regional community in Ballarat which is a continued goal for our teams.

In the coming months, we'll be launching a community-based accessible and inclusive sensory space in Moonee Ponds, in partnership with Allied Health and clinical professionals. Keep an eye on this space.

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Foster fathers share their journey



Patrick and David are the lucky foster fathers of three beautiful girls.

Sydney-siders Patrick and David have been fostering with Lifestyle Solutions for four years.

When the couple first met 10 years ago they'd initially planned to make the move to Melbourne, but since becoming foster fathers they wouldn't have life any other way.

"When David and I decided we wanted to start a family together, we thought what better way to give back to the community than to take in children that were in desperate need of a loving and caring home."

"When our girls came along, we had to replan our lives but we wouldn't change a thing," said Patrick.

Patrick and David began their fostering journey by providing short-term care to two children until they were restored to extended members of their birth families.

"We heard about Lifestyle Solutions through close friends of ours who have been fostering four children with the organisation for over ten years," said Patrick.

Feeling more confident as carers, they then began fostering two-month old, Olivia*, in a long-term placement.

"Olivia had two older sisters who we'd occasionally meet when having contact with her birth family. There came a time when her two older sisters were also in need of care, so David and I made

the decision to reunite the siblings and foster all three," said Patrick.

It was a decision that transformed Patrick and David's lives and they're now starting the process of applying for guardianship of their three girls aged four, five and seven.

"Like any family, there have been challenging times, but fostering has been so incredibly rewarding and we've learnt so much about ourselves in the process," said Patrick.

For Patrick and David, knowing that they have ongoing support from Lifestyle Solutions has made their fostering journey easier.

"We've had really good support from Lifestyle Solutions and it's just helpful to have someone to reach out to if we ever need assistance with anything," said Patrick.

Having an open line of communication with the birth families was also very important to Patrick and David who wanted the girls' family to know that they're always welcome in the children's lives.

"The birth families know that we love their children as if they were our own and that our home is their home," said Patrick.

"To be successful as Foster Carers, it's important to be in it for the right reasons. It's been an interesting journey for us but we're so happy we made the leap," said Patrick.

*name changed for privacy purposes.

Sharon reveals rewards of fostering children

Sharon and her husband Steve knew they had to do something to contribute to helping kids who were in need.



Foster Carer, Sharon, and her family have welcomed foster children for more than ten years.

Fostering children was always on the radar for the couple and they planned to become foster carers once their own three children were older and had left the family home.

Sharon's career as a childcare teacher added to her passion for helping kids and she was committed to making a real difference in the lives of foster children.

"I was heartbroken to hear stories of children not being cared for. I had the capacity to help and I wanted to make sure these kids had all the necessary things in life — without the struggles," said Sharon.

Originally a Foster Carer with Family and Community Services (FACS), Sharon transitioned to be a carer with Lifestyle Solutions and has been fostering children for over ten years.

"I feel extremely lucky to be fostering through Lifestyle Solutions. Our Case Worker is really supportive, easy to get along with and quick to respond."

"When one of our children needed help with counselling, our Case Worker was brilliant and quickly found services available for us," said Sharon.

Sharon initially fostered children in need of respite care and short-term emergency care but chose to foster children in need of long-term care.

Sharon now fosters four boys aged two, seven, 11 and 13 — three of whom have a disability.

"I chose to foster children who required long-term care as I felt I was able to provide more stability for our family and a greater sense of belonging."

"We're lucky to not have faced many challenges. At times it's hard but we manage our time very efficiently to make all of the kid's appointments and overall we've had a really good run," said Sharon.

Building strong relationships with the birth families of children in her care was a priority for Sharon who believes there's always room for carers to strengthen their relationships with birth families.

“We worked really hard and put a lot of time into building strong connections with our children’s birth families.”

“We’re now one big family and the benefits for the kids are amazing. We share birthdays together, Christmas, weekends, and the kids have sleepovers at their birth grandparents’ houses.”

“My foster children know where they come from and I think that we face far less issues because of that,” said Sharon.

For Sharon and Steve, they can’t imagine life without having become carers.

“They fill our house with fun, laughter, love and entertainment. We love them and they love us.”

Sharon is now making it her mission to get the word out about how fulfilling fostering a child can be.

“You don’t need to take on four children, just fostering one child will get them into a safe, supportive and loving home.”

“These kids just need a helping hand. Fostering a teen might only mean a few years of your life but for the child it makes the difference of a lifetime,” said Sharon.



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Rodney’s amazing transformation

Confronted with the likelihood of hospitalisation and faced with multiple health problems, Tweed Heads local, Rodney, needed to drastically change his lifestyle.

With the encouragement of Lifestyle Solutions Support Worker, Marlene Williams, Rodney began his long road to recovery. Six years on, he’s shed an incredible 157 kilos.

“When I first started supporting Rodney, he was told by doctors that he would be hospitalised indefinitely if he didn’t change his lifestyle,” said Marlene.

With this knowledge, and her go-getting attitude, Marlene started to help Rodney on his road to a brighter and healthier future.

Rodney underwent two major operations on his leg which helped increase his mobility and he and Marlene began a regular and consistent exercise regime.

“Rodney has gone from being house-bound and very unhappy within himself to a bubbly, bright man who relates well to everyone he meets,” said Marlene.

Marlene and Rodney’s daily routine now includes a 1.5 km walk from home to a community outdoor exercise gym where they complete a workout routine. They then cook breakfast together, complete daily chores and Rodney’s personal hygiene regime.

“Rodney no longer needs a walker, his diabetes is in remission, he’s regaining his independence and is a much happier person,” said Marlene.

Rodney and his family are extremely pleased with his progress and his new lease on life.

Rodney has become an inspiration for many Tweed Heads locals who, seeing him out walking every day, have now set their own weight loss goals.



Walking has really helped Rodney regain his health and independence.

Making a difference to lives

Jodie Pavett had been a nurse for many years and the disability sector was a field she had a keen interest in exploring further.

So when the position of Nurse Manager at Lifestyle Solutions' Specialist Disability Supported Accommodation Service in Woy Woy became available Jodie jumped at the opportunity.

"I love my job. I really enjoy making a difference in our customers' lives. Being able to see them progress and know that I'm a part of their development feels amazing," said Jodie.

The service, run by a team of nurses with specialist disability training, provides very high levels of support to people with significant functional impairment and complex needs whilst also creating a harmonious environment for our customers.

"For our customers to live to the best of their ability, we require highly trained nurses to address their unique needs and provide the appropriate level of care. I currently manage 25 employees who all receive ongoing training and support that's focussed on each of our customers' specific care needs," said Jodie.

A Registered Nurse and Assistant in Nursing are on duty 24/7. An Enrolled Nurse, Facilitator and Nurse Manager are available as required.

"By utilising the nursing skill set of our staff, we can provide a holistic model of specialist care on a daily basis to our residents resulting in optimal levels of

Jodie Pavett and the team in Woy Woy help our customers to live a great quality of life.

engagement, health and quality of life. Our care model includes therapy programs, building life skills, community involvement, healthcare and nutrition," said Jodie.

"Whilst the primary service comprises of two purpose-built homes that are fully wheelchair accessible and able to provide support for up to ten people; we can also provide all other mainstream NDIS services and are open to setting up new ones for interested customers and families."

"We also offer an Intensive Support Model for behavioural and forensically complex customers, formerly known as CJP."

"Community involvement is also really important to the development of the people in our care and the friendships they form help to build their socialisation and conversational skills. We run lots of events on the property to celebrate significant dates throughout the year and invite community members to attend."

"The local Woy Woy Peninsula Community Garden has made their facilities more accessible so that our residents can attend their working bees and spend time in the garden which is fantastic," said Jodie.

As a way of giving back to the community, the service also runs a greyhound fostering program with a local animal rescue organisation and sponsor the Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club's nippers program for children with a disability.

"We're able to provide our customers with assistance to live a great quality of life and it feels like a blessing to come to work each day," said Jodie.



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everyone is equal

For more information on how we can help you, or someone in your care, contact us.

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