

= Possibilities



MAY 2021 | EDITION 11

## Celebration and surprises for Clare's 80th birthday



**As the oldest person in our care, Clare holds a special place in many of our hearts. When she turned 80 recently, we ensured she had a day to remember.**

Knowing her well, the team at her Woy Woy Specialist Care Facility, Mattgrass, drew up a list of all the things Clare loves and enjoys. Nurcin Sert, Senior Registered Nurse Facilitator, said the plan was to have as many of those things as possible come together on the day for Clare to enjoy.

“Clare loves glamour, nice clothes and accessories, so we wanted to give her a chance to dress up and feel special. We went with a Great Gatsby theme as we felt it was ‘very Clare’. When Clare tried on her flapper dress and saw herself in the mirror, she loved it so much she wanted to start wearing it immediately. Our other customers also had fun picking special outfits and dressing up — as did all of the team.”

Clare is also known to have a deep love of animals and enjoys collecting plush toys.

continued page 2



## OUR FEATURE STORY



Clare shares a laugh with Clinical Nurse Specialist, Jodie Pavett.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

While the team made sure she got several plush animals as gifts, they wanted to take it a step further. After a lavish lunch and the unwrapping of presents, Clare was given her special surprise.

“We really wanted Clare’s 80th birthday to be magical for her, so we booked a petting zoo,” said Nurcin. “The look on her face when we walked with her to where they had secretly set up was fantastic. You could see the surprise and joy in her eyes. She loved holding and cuddling the small animals like the rabbit and guinea pig.”

The day had the feeling of an extended family celebration for a beloved matriarch. As well as Clare’s housemates and people we support from the adjoining Specialist Care Facility, friends, family and several members of Lifestyle Solutions’ Executive Leadership Team attended to personally wish Clare a happy 80th birthday.

Andrew Hyland, Lifestyle Solutions’ CEO, presented Clare with several gifts including a plush toy dog, on behalf of the organisation.

“Clare is a remarkable woman and she deserves to be recognised,” said Andrew. “We’re privileged to be the organisation that supports Clare and celebrate this milestone with her. We all enjoyed spending time with Clare and getting to know her better. It was wonderful to see her have such a special time surrounded and supported by people who care deeply about her.”

Andrew also paid tribute to the team who made Clare’s day so special.

“The passion and commitment shown by our frontline workers here today is outstanding. They really went above and beyond to make this a memorable day for Clare, and we were happy



to support them. Many came in on their day off to help set up and to celebrate with Clare. I think that says a lot about our frontline teams and the culture of our organisation.”

After an afternoon of meeting and patting animals, Clare, a renowned sweet tooth, returned to find a dessert bar stocked with beautifully presented treats and, of course, a birthday cake befitting a much loved, respected and popular lady turning 80.



**Top**  
The Great Gatsby theme is very Clare.

**Middle**  
Assistant in Nursing, Martin Vuk, on the barbeque.

**Bottom**  
Gail and Clare enjoying the special day.



## Possibilities

EDITION 11 MAY 2021

### Contents

Celebration and surprises for Clare's 80th birthday	1-3
Introducing our new Child and Family Services Executive, Petra Green	4
Lifestyle Solutions welcomes new Executive General Manager, Disability Services	5
With support and therapy Michael is learning to walk	6-7
Bringing the joys of travel to Life Choices Day Program	8-9
Foster Carers Nikki and Garry	10
Gavin's Support Workers an unbeatable sister act	11
CEO Message	12

# Introducing Our New Child And Family Services Executive, Petra Green



Above Petra is proud of the work her team does for children and young people.

**We're excited to announce that Petra Green is the new Executive General Manager, Child and Family Services at Lifestyle Solutions.**

Petra has been an instrumental part of Lifestyle Solutions' Child and Family Services team for over 12 years. She initially joined Lifestyle Solutions as a Service Coordinator for Residential Services in Central Queensland before taking on the Queensland Area Manager role and later, the role of Area Manager for both Queensland and Northern Territory.

"What I enjoy most about working at Lifestyle Solutions is being part of the journey to achieving tangible outcomes for the children and young people we support," said Petra.

"It's also the people. The great people I work alongside are what keeps me here. I really enjoy being part of a bigger team that work together to achieve common goals for the organisation."

Over the past 12 years, Petra has worked extremely hard to shape the team into what it is today, and we're confident that she will continue to grow and excel in her new position as Executive General Manager, Child and Family Services.

Petra's priority in her new position is to facilitate shared leadership and shared decision making for the Child and Family Services team to enable them to continue to deliver service excellence and practice across all areas of the organisation. She strives to ensure the team have the necessary resources and support they need to be proud of the work they do in the sector.

**"I really enjoy being part of a bigger team that work together to achieve common goals for the organisation."**



**Above** Robyn is passionate about achieving better outcomes for people living with disability.

# Lifestyle Solutions welcomes new Executive General Manager, Disability Services



Lifestyle Solutions has appointed Robyn Hunter as the new Executive General Manager, Disability Services.

Robyn brings with her a decade of experience in the not for profit sector leading change to operating and service models, culture programs and digital transformation.

Prior to joining, Robyn was CEO of Mind Australia and Multiple Sclerosis Limited and has also held senior executive roles with Medibank Private and Australian Hospital Care.

“I strongly believe that through collaboration and a partnership mindset, we can achieve better outcomes for people living with disability,” said Robyn.

Involved with the NDIS since its inception, Robyn champions for better outcomes for people with disability, their families and friends.

Robyn is passionate about engaging with the families and carers of the people we support and she is making this a real focus of her role.

“I have extensive experience in leading cultural change to support the values and behaviours of an organisation and to make sure this is reflected in the way we provide services.”

“I believe that by focussing on improving the experience of our people in their work, that this translates directly into a better customer experience,” said Robyn.

Robyn’s ethos strongly aligns with our values and promise and it’s what drew her to this new role.

“I’m really excited for this opportunity. I feel that all of the goals that Lifestyle Solutions is working towards are what I’ve spent my career trying to achieve as well.”



Above Tania and Marina gently encourage Michael to walk around the patio.



“It’s one of his  
greatest joys, you can  
see it on his face.”

## OUR STORIES

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# With support and therapy Michael is learning to walk

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On his first pass along the patio, Michael's left foot hangs by his side. It's been several days since his last walk and his muscles need to get their memory back.

As they walk beside him, Support Worker, Tania, and Assistant in Nursing, Marina, gently encourage Michael to bring his foot down. Michael closes his eyes and concentrates. With each short lap of the concrete, and as he gets his rhythm, he puts more weight on his left side.

Tania, who has worked extensively with Michael since joining Lifestyle Solutions last year, says the entire team at Michael's specialist accommodation in Woy Woy are dedicated to helping him walk more often.

"It's one of his greatest joys, you can see it on his face, but he doesn't get to do it often as it puts such a strain on him. I give his legs a massage to loosen them up beforehand but it's still uncomfortable and a challenge for him at the start. Slowly though, combined with his other therapy, we'll help him walk more and more until hopefully Michael can enjoy a walk every day."

After half a dozen laps of the patio, Michael is using both feet to move along and getting faster each time. Marina tells Michael if he goes any faster, he will be running. Michael vocalises approvingly, and a satisfied grin breaks across his face.

The next few laps are joyous as Michael treads confidently, though you can tell he is tiring. At the end of the session, Tania and Michael rest together on the patio and hold hands.

"We often sit here and hold hands and look at the garden. Michael's a very affectionate guy and like everyone enjoys connection and personal attention. The people we support think of us as family, so it's important after we do something like his walk that we also make time just to sit and rest and be together. It's what family do."

**Right**  
Combined with other therapy, Michael's goal is to be able to enjoy a walk everyday.



## OUR STORIES

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# Bringing the joys of travel to Life Choices Day Program

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With travel bans and community activities limited, the team at our Life Choices Day Program in Alice Springs decided to bring Bali to the red centre.

With a bit of imagination and open minds, the team incorporated a four-day getaway experience for program participants.

Samantha Henry, Community Support Worker with Life Choices said, “The idea arose in one of our weekly meetings with the people we support where we get together to discuss upcoming activities for our monthly calendar.”

“Obviously, we can’t travel at the moment, so we thought why not create a getaway experience from here?” said Samantha.

Day Program participants were given a list of destinations before they decided they’d take a ‘trip’ to Bali.

**“Everyone had such an amazing time and we can’t wait for more getaway experiences in the future.”**

The team leapt into action to plan the getaway experience which began with a ‘flight’ from Alice Springs to Bali.

Everyone was given an allocated airline ticket, served ‘airline style’ meals by flight attendants and treated to inflight entertainment.

Inflight meals included sticky rice and mango, and mi goreng prepared perfectly by the team’s Head Chef, Cecillia.

After arriving in Bali, the travellers checked into their resort. The team, who had been inspired by La Plancha Beach, incorporated it’s bright colours into the main resort area, decorating it with large bean bags and colourful lights.

The next day they attended their resort’s Zumba class led by their very own Zumba instructor, Chloe, and followed it up with a cooking class.

“Our participants were really excited to learn how to make Nasi Goreng so we created a cooking class and a safari experience before everyone headed home for the day,” said Samantha.

On the third day of the Bali experience, the team enjoyed smoothie bowls with lots of fruit, as well as a sarong class.

Life Choices Day Program participant, Sandra, said “I had such an amazing time and especially loved the gluten free smoothies.”







**Bottom, left**  
Randall, Willie and Derona enjoy a tropical mocktail.

**Top, right**  
Sandra poses in her Bali sarong.

**Bottom, right**  
Samantha and Chloe as the flight attendants for the day.



“Fleur from Support Coordination brought sarongs in and we did a class with the participants on all the different and fun ways you can wear a sarong,” said Samantha. On the last day the team and program participants spent the morning at the local aquatic centre before boarding a ‘flight’ back to Alice Springs.

“Everyone had such an amazing time and we can’t wait for more getaway experiences in the future.” “We’ve got New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Japan on the list of ideas for our next travel experience,” said Samantha.

## OUR STORIES

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# Foster Carers Nikki and Garry

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**Nikki and Garry became kinship carers for their niece when she was eleven years old. With their niece now 23 and living on campus at university, and their two grown-up children no longer living at home, the couple felt their nest was especially empty.**

“I’d stopped working due to personal reasons, but I still wanted to keep busy and make a difference in the community,” said Nikki. “We had friends who’d recently become carers and I knew how rewarding it could be from our experience with kinship care. We decided to take the leap and become Foster Carers with Lifestyle Solutions.”

The couple has been fostering with Lifestyle Solutions for almost three years and during that time they’ve provided short-term, long-term, emergency and respite care.

“We initially provided short-term care for a sibling group of two who were then restored to kinship care with a grandparent.”

“We’re fortunate to have kept a great relationship with the siblings and still provide respite care for them on some weekends and overnights. It’s been great to keep in touch,” said Nikki.

Whilst working on transitioning the sibling group back to their birth family, Nikki and Garry put their hands up for emergency care and welcomed 18-month-old, Darcy\*.

“We were driving home from a holiday when we got the call about Darcy needing emergency care and knew we had to help. He arrived at our place that evening just as we reached home.”

When Darcy first came to their home, he was reluctant to make eye contact and was very distant.

“It took a while to build Darcy’s trust and confidence but he’s now doing great. He’s attending the local day care, is starting to talk and play, and is just so enjoyable to be around.”

Darcy is now two years old. Nikki and Garry also provide long-term care for Darcy’s six-month-old sister who they started caring for as a newborn.

A proud Aboriginal woman of the Kamilaroi people, Nikki feels it’s important to make sure



**Above**  
Nikki and Garry enjoy the ‘spice’ that fostering brings to their lives.

that the cultural connection is strong within placement.

“I’ve just started working closely with some Aboriginal elders in the community to get the kids involved and connected with their people so they can learn their stories.”

When asked what she would tell others considering becoming Foster Carers, Nikki says it’s hard work but very rewarding.

“It makes me feel very fulfilled. It’s tiring, but there are a lot more positives than negatives.”

“The children’s birth families are often very involved and have been through a lot, so I think it’s really important to build a relationship and have open communication with them.”

“Fostering is not black and white, but if you can deal with some spice in your life and have time to give it’s definitely worth it,” said Nikki.

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**“We’re fortunate to have kept a great relationship with the siblings and still provide respite care for them on some weekends.”**

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*\*Names changed for privacy reasons.*

## OUR STORIES

# Gavin's Support Workers an unbeatable sister act

When Gavin's weekend Support Worker, Mary, told him she was relocating, he was a little anxious about who would replace her. Gavin liked and trusted Mary, and they had developed a strong bond.



**Above**  
Having support has meant Gavin can live more independently.

Trust is important to Gavin. His Multiple Sclerosis, which mostly affects his lower body, means he needs someone to help him get in and out of bed every day.

That person needs to be reliable, capable and understanding. They need to be able to help transfer Gavin from his bed to his walker in a way that is safe and ensures he maintains his dignity. He really hoped for someone just like his primary Support Worker, Lisa.

"Lisa is wonderful. She helps me Monday to Friday, not just to get in and out of bed but around the house and with things like housework and shopping. I trust her and we get on well. I really like her as a person and I also look forward to our conversations each day. She is great to talk to and we discuss all kinds of interesting topics."

Gavin values the independence having support has opened for him. He's still highly mobile. He can move about his house in his walker for long periods, takes his scooter to the local shops, regularly travels into Melbourne city centre, and enjoys the occasional international cruise.

All of this relies on having support to get in and out of bed. It's something very simple but incredibly important.

What Gavin didn't know was that Lisa's sister, Matalena, had recently joined as a Lifestyle Solutions team member after seeing how much her sister enjoyed her role. With timing and proximity on their side, Matalena was assigned as Gavin's secondary Support Worker.

"It was really exciting to find out Matalena would also be supporting me," said Gavin.

"She is just as lovely as her sister. She is very caring and great to talk to. I am very happy."

Lisa and Matalena are also very happy. They both think highly of Gavin.

"Gavin is a lovely, friendly person. I really enjoy supporting him and I love our conversations during the day. He feels like part of our family," said Lisa.

"Gavin trusts and respects us. He never takes us for granted. He always helps us with the tasks we do. The three of us are a team, but more than that. It's really nice," said Matalena.

**Right**  
Sisters, Lisa and Matalena team up to maintain Gavin's daily support.



## CEO MESSAGE

# Making plans

As we head towards winter I'm feeling positive about plans for the future, and I hope that you are too.

**The last year has been extraordinary. We've been through a lot together.**

One thing that has really stood out during the pandemic is your fantastic commitment to keeping safe and keeping each other safe.

The delays in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout have been disappointing and frustrating. You've probably seen the voices speaking up to governments about making this happen faster for people with disability. We all hope that there will be good news about this soon.

Keep up your COVID-safe practices so that you all stay well and our communities continue to be COVID-free.

I'm now making plans to travel more often to our services around Australia. I enjoy these opportunities to talk with people we support, their families and other significant people in their lives, as well as with our staff and people in the broader community.

I'm always keen to learn more about what's important to you. It helps me, our Board, Executive Leadership and other teams to improve the services we provide to you.



Above  
Andrew Hyland, CEO

If you'd like to share your thoughts with me, you can write to me at [ceooffice@lifestylesolutions.org.au](mailto:ceooffice@lifestylesolutions.org.au).

Please remember that there are many other ways to give your feedback as well. They're listed on our website here: [www.lifestylesolutions.org.au/contact-us/how-to-provide-feedback-and-or-complaints-to-lifestyle-solutions](http://www.lifestylesolutions.org.au/contact-us/how-to-provide-feedback-and-or-complaints-to-lifestyle-solutions).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew'.

Regards,

**Andrew Hyland**  
**CEO**



**Lifestyle  
Solutions**  
everyone is equal

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

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