



Directors

Tony Negri OAM (Chairman)
Peter Fischer
Sally Harrop
Andrea Heffernan
Peter Phillips
Paul Hardy-Smith
David Wansbrough
Paul Williams

Executive Team

Gail Foster
Chief Executive Officer
Nicole Williams
Manager Client Support
Lisa Wilson
Manager Human Resources

FROM THE CEO ...

It is the end of the year once again; the activity has been frenetic over the last few weeks as everyone prepares for Christmas parties and the end of the year celebrations. I have attended a number of the Christmas parties in the houses and must congratulate the staff on the effort they have put in to make it a wonderful day for the clients and their families. The decorations were all beautiful and the range of food superb in every case. These are the added extras that 'focus' staff do so well.

We have recently completed Stage 1 of our next audit against the Disability Standards. To say we did well would be understating how exceptional the results were. The auditor commented that we had some of the best processes she had ever seen. I need to thank all of the staff for the work they do to keep us on track with our certification but I must single out the work of Annette Siphthorpe – Quality Coordinator. The amount of work that Annette has put in over the last few years to make sure we are meeting the criteria required is far in excess of the hours she is paid for. On behalf of all at 'focus' Annette thankyou, enjoy your well deserved holiday over Christmas.

Since our last newsletter a Federal election has been run and won by the Coalition Government.

In relation to the NDIS the coalition had supported the scheme while they were in opposition and they continue to move forward with the scheme since taking government.

Senator Mitch Fifield, the Assistant Minister for Social Services has confirmed that the new government will continue to support the NDIS. In a speech shortly after accepting his portfolio Senator Fifield said; "The Coalition is committed to the full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and this will be a priority as minister."

For regular information on the NDIS go to their website at www.ndis.gov.au the website is updated with all the latest information.

I am pleased to report that Cassandra Quinlan – Family Liaison Officer has returned to work after a very long period of ill health. After Christmas Cassandra will begin a series of meetings with families to explain more about the NDIS. Keep an eye out for her invitations.



AROUND THE HOUSES



On behalf of the Board, Staff and Clients of 'focus', I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Gail Foster
Chief Executive Officer



BALCOMBE DRIVE

BABBA

Everyone from Balcombe went off to see Babba at the Frankston RSL.

After getting spruced up everyone set off in the bus. First stop was Oppy house in Frankston to pick up Fiona, Bruce had invited her to come along.

Next stop was Fratellies in Frankston for dinner. Everyone enjoyed their meal, Marcus enjoyed a beer and Chris enjoyed a chardonnay.

After dinner everyone headed to The RSL to see Babba. It was a fabulous night Catherine, Marion and Julia danced and had a fantastic night. Bruce and Fiona did not leave the dance floor the whole time, they danced and sang and had a fabulous night.

Marcus didn't dance as Hip Hop is more his scene, but he said he enjoyed the night. Chris danced a few times, but had to stop to check the football scores every now and then.

Babba were fabulous singing all the hits of Abba. Everyone had a photo taken with them after they had finished. After dropping Fiona home it was time to head back to Balcombe house, it was midnight and everyone was tired and went off to bed.



AROUND THE HOUSES

BALCOMBE

"BRUCE AND FIONA'S HORSE AND CARRIAGE RIDE"

Bruce and Fiona left from the Frankston train station on a journey to the city for the day.

There were a lot of events on in the city that we could watch as we walked by. The Colour run and Protests just to name a couple. Bruce and Fiona seemed very excited waiting outside the main foyer of the flashy casino.

Fiona and Bruce had to wait for their carriage to get through the city but soon we heard the click, clack of the horse's hooves on the concrete and there it was!!!!

They had a long ride through the city sites and the gardens.

It was amazing Bruce stated as he watched the Art Centre sitting next to Fiona, arm in arm. What big smiles and such enjoyment, it was their carriage and their ride through the city.

Bruce enjoyed patting the horse and getting some photos then choosing a venue for some chocolate cheese cake. Then a long train ride home to top off a fantastic day.



★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

Catherine and Marion celebrated their birthdays in October. They had a joint celebration at The Tanti Hotel.

Bruce went out for a lovely lunch for his Birthday. Bruce was joined by his parents, Fiona from Oppy House and all his house mates from Balcombe. A yummy Chinese banquet was ordered and every one enjoyed the great food. Bruce had a lovely cake and everyone sang happy birthday.



AROUND THE HOUSES



BONDI

Renee is an Auntie again! Miliana weighed in at 7lbs 7ounces. Renee went to visit her while she was still in hospital; Renee couldn't stop telling staff how excited she was to be an Auntie again and exclaimed that Millie had a good head of hair!!

A couple of weeks later baby Miliana came to Bondi for a visit. Renee was very excited to give Millie her present which her sister Becky loved, saying how cute it was.

Renee has also been away on a cruise with Dad and Pat; we are saving that for the next newsletter as we have over 500 photos to sort out! We are also working on a book Renee will have forever.

Megan has been attending scrapbooking most Sundays for the last couple of months. She has made friends with some of the ladies there and has done some beautiful pages for her scrapbook.

On November 24th, Cade and Bruce (staff) drove down to Phillip Island for the day, to the V8 Supercar races. They were trackside for 8 hours, and neither yawned once! Cade had so much fun!, he spent most of the day with his mouth wide open with excitement! It is very rewarding supporting Cade and the others to live the life they want!

Ali had had a trip up to Marnoo to see his sister Robyn and her husband. They have purchased the



General Store up there and are embarking on a new adventure. Amber supported him on the trip and he really enjoyed it.

David had some of his family visit from Swan Hill, Sarah and Deb came down; he was delighted. Vince has been down a couple of times too. They all travel such a long way to visit him often; he loves it and really appreciates it.



AROUND THE HOUSES

DAVID

David has really enjoyed his many visitors from interstate recently, his aunt Carol and Uncle Vince and Cousin Nick visited from Mildura.

Angie and John also visited from Adelaide. John surprised Angie with a ticket to Melbourne to attend the Melbourne cup. They spent some quality hours with David talking about old times when they all lived together in Adelaide and the good times they had.

David's daughter, Sarah visits regularly and is sitting her year 11 exams at Swan Hill, Sarah dreams of becoming a vet when she finishes school.

David has been enjoying his weekly sessions of Hydrotherapy at Casey Race in Cranbourne; he is increasing his amount of laps regularly and arrives home very hungry and tired.



BUNGOWER

Stephen enjoyed his birthday celebration at Bungower with his Dad Des. He had a great night and enjoyed his cake, the sparklers and most of all his presents.

Phillip went on a train ride on the Mornington Railway. He loved talking to the conductor on the trip and purchased some souvenirs for his family. He also celebrated a birthday recently with an awesome ride on a Harley. Phil said it was the best day ever; he thought he looked pretty cool in his sunnies.



AROUND THE HOUSES



HARTIGAN

At the beginning of spring folk at Hartigan Court turned their attention to the outdoors, preparing their lovely yard for lots of warmer weather fun.

The vegie patch was prepared for planting, the outdoor setting cleaned, & it was agreed the aviary was in need of a renovation rescue!

With 'The Block' nowhere in site, many hands went to work including Lily who was volunteering at Hartigan. Lily skillfully directed the 'army', using her many talents to ensure a terrific job was done.

First Michelle & Robert led the charge on the weeding. Jeanette accompanied staff to purchase some new wire, to keep the 'squatters' out. The birds had been sharing their home with some uninvited mice!

Julie chose a new bird house, feeder & toys. They were purchased & installed.

Everyone was very pleased with their work. Grant is enjoying watching the budgies, from the garden swing, as they make the most



of their renovated aviary exploring the ground, new toys & flitting in & out of their new house.

After all that work it was decided that the BBQ needed to be dirtied again so Julie chose to be chef on the night and did an excellent job cooking.

On another afternpoon, Julie invited Sandra to afternoon tea and they both cooked later



AROUND THE HOUSES



deciding who was the best baker; sampling their efforts on the newly cleaned outdoor furniture.

Robert went for a trip to the Independent living centre with Grant and tried many items for comfort. He was especially taken with the walk in bath.

Jeanette celebrated her 60th birthday with family and friends at the Tanti Hotel in Mornington.

Finally Hartigan clients and families enjoyed an end of year Christmas lunch at Steeples in Mornington. All agreed new refurbishment is lovely and food delicious.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE & HAVE FUN!!!



ASH FLAT

MATES DAY ON THE BAY



The sea was angry that day my friends... Waves rose to 1.5 meters (that may not sound like a lot, but it felt like a lot, especially for two of the support workers...)

Fish were difficult to catch, but Ben used all the knowledge he has gained from years of fishing with his dad to pull in a couple of beautiful specimens.

The first was undersize and went back into the water, but the second was a bigger fish, which was barbecued back at Red Hill later that day. It was gladly shared and enjoyed by those brave souls who went out into the rough sea on 'Mates Day 2013.'



"Mates Day on the Bay" is Australia's biggest fishing day for people with disabilities.

First held in 1999, it came from an idea by Rex Hunt to take his good mate, Eric Atkinson, out fishing for a day.

It has now grown into an annual event which sees around 90 boat owners dedicate their time, boat and fishing gear to take about 200 people with disabilities, together with their support staff, for a mornings fishing on Port Phillip Bay and a free barbecue lunch afterwards.

This year two mini-buses full of excited people from 'focus' made their way down to Patterson River, for an early start.



OLSEN HOUSE

MELISSA'S GREEN THUMB



OLSEN HOUSE

MELISSA'S GREEN THUMB

Last year Melissa made her very own herb garden here at Olsen House.

She loved every step in the process from purchasing materials, to putting in the potting mix, planting the seeds and watering her garden each night.

Melissa likes to help staff pick her herbs to wash and put in the evening meal.

This year, Melissa went out and chose some lovely bright coloured flowers to plant. She weeded her planters, topped up the potting mix (in between posing for photos with her gloves and spade) and sprinkled in her seeds.

Each night, she goes out and waters her planters. We shall wait patiently for the lovely colours to grow.



OPPY HOUSE

OPPY CHRISTMAS PARTY



What a perfect day for the long awaited Oppy House Christmas party. Food galore, family, friends (and a friendly dog) with carols playing in the background gave it a truly festive feel - what a great day enjoyed by all the ladies and their guests.

Ho Ho Ho



AROUND THE HOUSES

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OAK HOUSE



LISA CHOOSING A MEAL



JENNY THE FIRE-CHIEF DURING RECENT EVACUATION TO HASTINGS



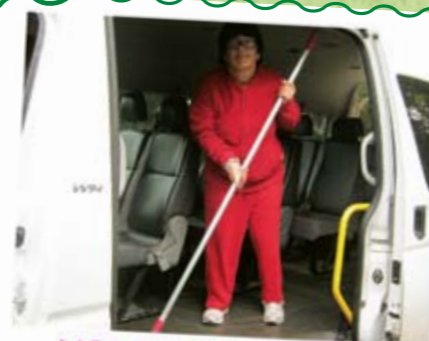
BRUCE CHECKING OUT THE TYABB JOYFLIGHTS



REGULAR CLIENT MEETING



LOCAL VISITORS TO OAK BAAAAA-B-Q RECENTLY



LISA BUSY SWEEPING THE BUS AFTER A BBQ

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AROUND THE HOUSES

RYMER HOUSE

RYMER'S GARDEN GURUS

The gentlemen of Rymer took one look at the backyard and deemed that it needed some tender loving care. So, over the past few weeks they decided which sections they would take care of and discussed what they wanted to plant.

With regular maintenance (and several trips to Bunnings), Rymer house now has; a green and lush lawn, a terra cotta birdbath, mixed lettuce and herbs, roses, geraniums, huge tomatoes, zucchini plants and wild silverbeet. Rex is very proud of his rose bushes, tomatoes, parsley and coriander.. We're finding a new tomato on his plants most days and Rex can often be found out in the garden, making sure to water everything in the afternoons, and ensuring that it all keeps growing and flourishing.

Rex planted several seeds in his mini greenhouse and looked after them daily until they were big enough for him to move into larger pots – starting the process all over a g a i n

with more seeds, so that Rymer will never run out of yummy vegetables and herbs for meals. Having already eaten the first batch of lettuces from Geoff's salad bowl, the new seedlings are coming along nicely- Geoff has proven to be quite the green thumb.



Michael waters his dill, fennel, mint and rosemary plants regularly – the dill has been the perfect



accompaniment when fish is on the menu. We've yet to figure out what to do with the fennel.

Jon decided he wanted to take care of flowers, adding some much needed colour to the front porch. Having started with seedlings, Jon has had to transplant his blooms into larger pots once they became too big for their original

containers. A bird feeder is next on the agenda, with several rosella's and cockatoos being spotted having a bathe in the bath.



QUEEN TRIBUTE SHOW

It was a "Bicycle Race" between the Oppy and Olsen ladies who were "Under Pressure" to get frocked up and head down to the Frankston RSL to dance the night away at the QUEEN TRIBUTE SHOW.

The Ladies were under the "Killer Queen's promise that "We are the Champions" and "We Will Rock You" for an amazing night of songs, dancing and wigs – the evening did not disappoint!

Jane stood front and center to "Rock it" hard like no one ever has before, and remained entranced until the last chord faded into the night.

Dixie exclaimed "I Want to Break Free" busting out her very own special brand of dance moves, which impressed many around her.

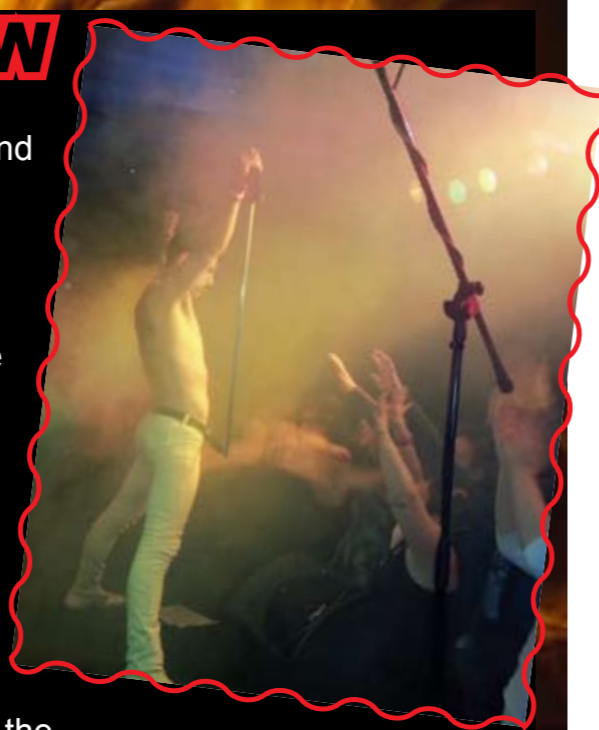
Sue ordered "Don't Stop Me Now" mid boogie and found the perfect opportunity to pose for a photo with the legendary "Freddie"

Fiona's "Body Language" and moves were of pure enjoyment, dancing along to her favorites.

And Pip said "I Go Crazy" out on the dance floor, showing her excitement by wanting to "Tell Mum" of her night.

Of course the favourite "Bohemian Rhapsody" EXPLODED into a room full of gasps and guitar solos before the night was over, and within a "Flash" we were all abuzz, until it was time to "Ride the Wild Wind" home.

"It's a Hard Life" having to "Spread your wings" and leave such a fun time behind, but the night was very much enjoyed by the ladies.



**THEY WILL
ROCK
YOU**

**CERTIFICATE IN WORK EDUCATION**

In August of this year, 11 clients commenced studying for their 'Certificate in Work Education'. This course is designed to equip students with knowledge of the work force, and to provide them with the skills and confidence to gain employment if they wish to. The course is being held at the former Outreach office in Dromana, which has now been converted into a classroom. It has been pleasing to see the effort and enthusiasm all the clients have displayed over the first few months of the course. It has been challenging at times, but we have also had plenty of fun. So far, the clients have come up with some career goals, learned about workplace safety, and practiced their decision making skills.

DROMANA ART GROUP

Have you got your Christmas Shopping done?

Christmas is nearly here, have you finished your Christmas Shopping? This year your shopping would not be complete if you have not checked out what the Dromana Art group has created this year.

Head Straight to 16 Beach Street Dromana to see the great range of hand made gifts; some would say the best on the Peninsula.

We have:

- Hand painted pure silk scarves, all lengths
- Beautiful makeup bags and change purses
- Matching earring and necklace sets
- 100% silk tops and pants
- Brightly coloured pendants of every colour
- Key rings

The jewellery is really spectacular and can be made to order to match any and all of your outfits.

Hand painted silk sarongs that are great for the beach or just lazing at home

You will save a fortune on your Christmas shopping by shopping at Dromana Art Boutiques!

Get in quick as everything is selling fast.





DRAMA CONNECTIONS

After the noise, lights and excitement of the Production all quietened down we discovered that the talented actors we have were still hungry to perform. A new and exciting program has been introduced this term called "Drama Connections" to satisfy that hunger.

The program allows the participants to further develop, experiment, and display the skills and techniques that they are learning every week. It is a fun and energetic program that assists the participants to broaden their dancing, singing and acting abilities.

We are really fortunate that we will be able to display the amazing talents in this years Christmas Carols performance being held in Somerville on Saturday December 14th. The guys are really getting into the spirit of the season and will be performing "The Christmas Story" and "Heal the World" at this event.

Merry Christmas



HEALTHY COOKING

During the term there has been some sumptuous and healthy dishes created with our very popular Healthy Cooking Program. The guys are really taking pride in the skills that they are learning and the results of their hard work. They are really enjoying the various colours, new flavours and textures of the ingredients being used.

The latest creations the past few weeks have been influenced from all around the world. From zesty Mexican Empanadas to hearty yet healthy European dishes like leak and potato pie and the light yet extremely tasty flavours of the Orient with stir fry's with the vegetables coming from our very own garden.

All are looking forward to what's on the menu next term... possibly a curry maybe even some tofu?

Yum!



MEN'S GROUP

The men's group has been enjoying making many items in the woodwork class.

Phillip is a keen woodwork participant, he made a pencil case which included a lot of sanding which he seemed to enjoy.

The group also made items which included a spice rack, Dominic did most of the joins for the spice rack he is very good with the hammer. Other items included a space shuttle, plane and a whirly gig in which John, Guy, Andrew and Josh helped to make.

Jenny also joined in the group and made a pencil case as well, and I must say did a great job, she is also very good with the hammer. The woodwork group have all chosen items that they would like to make next term so we will keep you all informed.



KINGSLEY



This term in the Kingsley room we have been busy making some room changes to freshen it up a bit and make it more user friendly for everyone. There has been great feedback on how the room looks thankyou to everyone who helped.

Bocce in the hall of a Monday morning can become very competitive between Ash house residents Theodora and Geoff but it always ends up with smiles and laughs keep up the great work both of you.

We will be starting a new program aimed at fitness for our room which will include fun activities and teach the guys great teamwork skills in the hall or when the weather decides to make up its mind and be nice for us this program can be shifted outside as well



Next year should be our turn to look after the aviary in the sensory garden which will teach the guys responsibilities in animal care and making sure they are happy. We are also pleased to announce that we have a few baby birds and that mum and her babies are going great.

It's also great to see the weather hold up for the days the clients have sailing and RDA horse riding everyone has a lovely day being in the outdoors soaking up the sun and come back with big smiles, having had a fun day.

Becky, Ben and Timara went to the Royal Melbourne show this term, the day was perfect and everyone really had a big day out, they all had a chance to choose before they left to decide what they wanted to buy to make it a bit easier on the day. After a lot of walking we were all glad to see the bus at the end of the day and relax on the way home.

A busy end to the term with client Christmas party preparations, program breakups, BBQ's, picnics and sing-alongs with Scott as the guys have been practising what songs they will be singing for everyone, a great end to an awesome year

Next year will bring a few well needed program changes hopefully and we can't wait for that to happen so stay tuned and from all of us here at 'focus' we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.



McALISTER



favourite, Drum Circle in Mentone. These programs have been made possible by Jo Delaney our Community Development officer. THANK YOU!!

McAlister have a Plot at the Frankston Community Garden, which has heard whispers of being the best looking plot there! We go down weekly to make sure that everything is in order. We have collected

This term McAlister have attended some fantastic outside programs. We have been to walk fest in Dandenong, the police band in Cranbourne and our

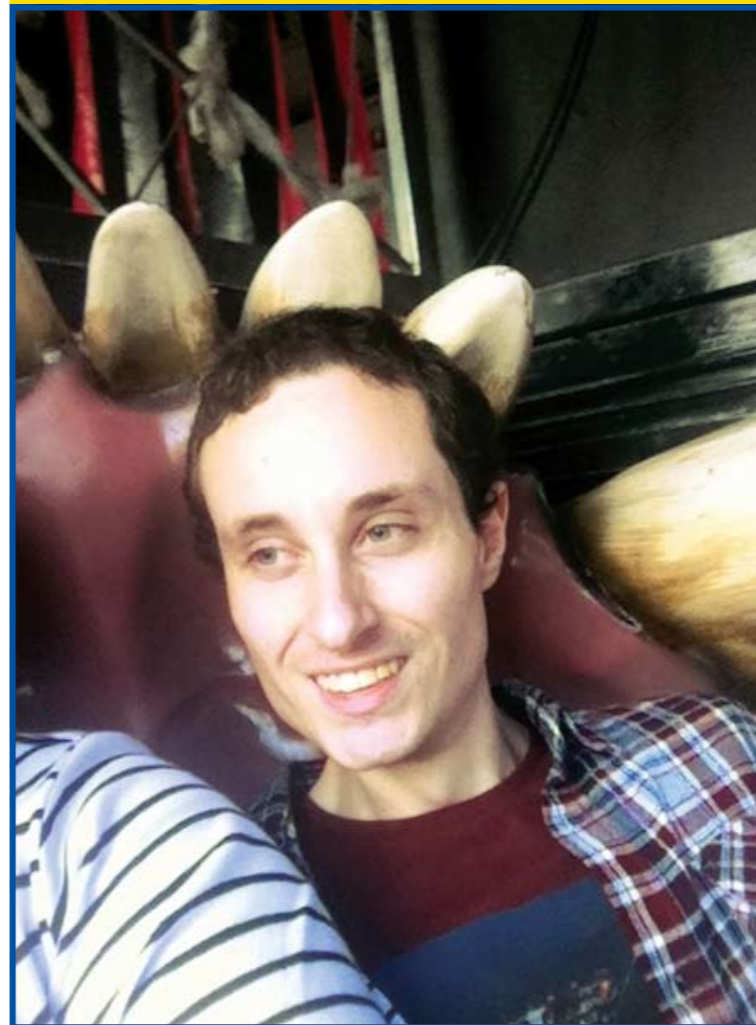


bags full of lettuce recently and our tomatoes are coming along nicely... Hopefully we can win the biggest tomato competition. The chickens here have been very busy laying eggs, we often have too many to keep track of so if you are interested in purchasing some free range eggs please get in contact with us! We hope that everyone has a safe holiday.



We really couldn't have asked for better weather for our day trip to Melbourne, and what a fabulous day it was!

After braving the hectic traffic, Nick, Deb, Mary, Marcus, Koochie, Amanda, Maryanne, Catherine, Bruce, Meigan, Hollie and Jacqui ventured out into the jungle that they called "The Melbourne Show..."



Although not all were crazy enough to try out some of the rides, our very own Nick Jefferies didn't let fear stand in the way of him and the famously terrifying "Hang 10" which judging by the screaming passengers was by far the scariest ride there! But did that faze Nick and his dare devil staff, Hollie? I think not! And straight after that he insisted on then going on the roller coaster AND the ghost train!

The others filled their day with exploring, show bag shopping, animal petting, yummy festival food, laughing, chatting and thanking God it was Nick and Hollie on the rides and not them!

We thank everyone for a perfect day and are looking forward to next years Melbourne show adventure!!



WOODWORK

We started a woodwork group this term, it came out of the Men's group wanting to do some projects.

We opened up the group to the women as well and they are all going ahead with their projects in leaps and bounds.

The skills the group has been learning are sanding, shaping and construction. Everyone in the group is doing their own individual project such as a Whirly Gig, Old fashioned toys like planes and space shuttles, pencil boxes, spice racks and a fantastic Japanese style water feature made from bamboo.

Come on down to Dromana for a look at the water feature, you may be tempted to make your own....or buy one from us.



FLINDERS



FLINDERS



LAWSON

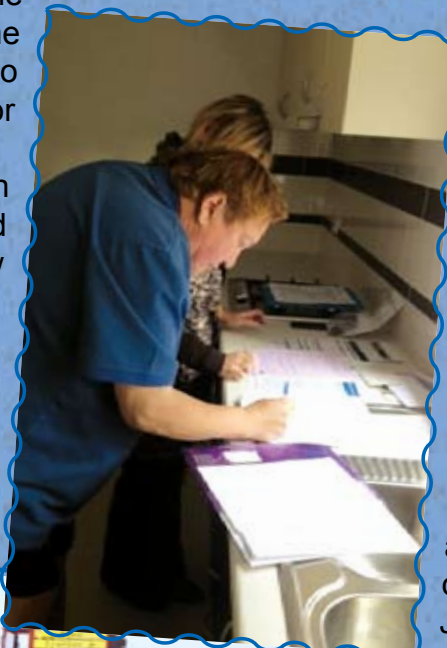




times a week. Gary is very proud of his new 'pad' - he has met some of his new neighbours and with a BBQ planned in a week's time he can get to meet many more. This is a wonderful achievement for Gary and his very supportive family. Gary is excited that he won't have to leave home to watch the Fireworks at the Hastings Festival!!

It is with great excitement that Gary is pleased to announce that he has finally moved into his unit in Hastings thus achieving his dream of living independently. Gary moved in on Monday 11th November and was given the keys at 11am - a significant time and day for all of us but more so for Gary who has been waiting for 2+ years.

Gary has settled in well even having to sleep on a makeshift bed on the floor for 8 nights as his new bed was not being delivered on the promised date. The location of the unit is in a prime position in Hastings within walking distance of shops and Pelican Park where he attends the gym and swims
t h r e e



Glad and Elizabeth enjoyed a week in Shepparton they travelled by train and met with their friend who showed them the sights including The original Ettamogah Pub where they enjoyed lunch and saw the "upside down dunny" on returning home they decided they would like to go back but really missed their dog "Shay" whilst away.

Elle enjoyed a weekend at Queenscliff travelling by ferry enjoying the sights and all the cafes for lunch, coffee and of course cake....

John Simmons, Michael Greaves and Elle Luks joined staff member Steve in showcasing their artwork at the Main Street Mornington festival. The festival celebrated its 18th year and it was a great way of showing off our artistic talents and passion for being creative to the public.

