



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 ...

As I sit to write this piece for the newsletter, the new Ash House is steadily taking shape. We have all been very busy choosing the fittings and the colours for the house. The people have all chosen the colour of the feature wall in their bedrooms and are watching in anticipation, while the finishing touches are made to their new home.



At this stage we plan to move back into the house around the end of October.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who have worked under some difficult conditions over the last few months while the new house has been built. To fit a whole household into spare rooms around the organisation has been a challenge, but the staff have accepted that challenge and worked wherever they have been sent. The clients of Ash House have all coped extremely well and settled into their new surroundings without complaint. They will all be well rewarded for their patience when they finally move back into the new house, their rooms are so much larger and the house has space for everything.

In other news, we are all working toward our next audit to be held in mid December this year. The compliance team has increased the level of auditing around the facilities, and as they do so they continue to work with the staff to ensure everything is in place. We know there is always room for continual improvement and the audit will point out the areas that we need to work on, but we do not expect that there will be major areas of improvement identified.

Update on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

On the 1st July 2014, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) commenced additional trials in three more regions across Australia. These are the Barkly Region of the NT, the whole of the ACT and the Perth Hills region of WA. These new sites will allow the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to further test the model design, before roll out to other areas of Australia, commencing in July 2016. While these trials are underway, the WA Disability Services Commission extended its 'My Way' pilots projects, to operate in parallel with the NDIA Perth Hills trial site. This will enable comparison of models and experiences, and should provide a broader understanding on what is working well and what requires some change.

AROUND THE HOUSES



There is still no news to report on when *'focus'* will become part of the scheme, announcements on the rollout to full scheme should be made around mid next year.

Please take some time to enjoy reading the stories about what the people in our services are doing and what they are achieving; I am sure some of the stories will brighten your day.

Gail Foster
Chief Executive Officer

BALCOMBE

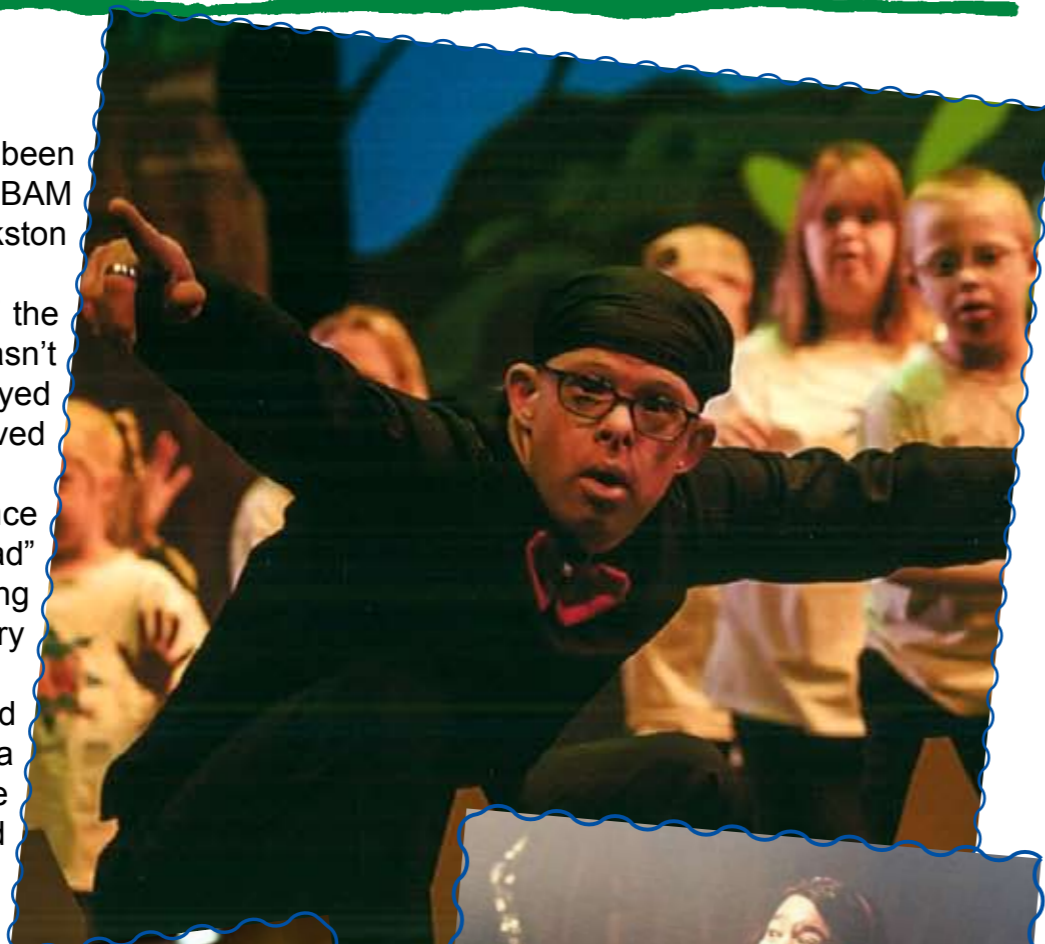
BAM DANCE

Marcus and Bruce have been practicing madly for the BAM Dance Show at the Frankston Arts Centre.

Marcus played the part of the mean Mr Fox, luckily he wasn't mean for long. Bruce played the part of a penguin that lived on the magical farm.

Marcus did a solo performance to Michael Jackson's "Bad" and showed his amazing hip hop skills to a very appreciative audience.

After the show Bruce and Marcus went to La Porchetta with the rest of the dance crew and their friends and families for the after party.



AROUND THE HOUSES



BALCOMBE

BALCOMBE CHRISTMAS LUNCH



AROUND THE HOUSES



BONDI

MEN'S SHED

Its been a busy couple months for Cade at Men's shed Frankston; planning and constructing his latest project. Some of the processes that Cade has had to do include, sawing, sanding, painting and nailing, the end result was our lovely new bird house which will hang proudly at Bondi.



BUNGOWER



MOONLIT SANCTUARY

The first great day the sky so blue,
We're heading off to a kind of Zoo,
We got there quick and in a tick,
We flung some seeds out with a flick.
Saw Willy Wombat, Tassie Devil
Slithering snakes and Kangaroos,
Dingoes, ducks and noisy parrots
And some Lizards were there too.
Everything loved our bags of seeds
Including us - coz they look like beads.
On flowering trees we saw a bee
So cool was Moonlit Sanctuary.



AROUND THE HOUSES

HARTIGAN

A DAY THAT TIME FORGOT...

There were rumours that something prehistoric had taken over in Somerville, something that was not for the faint hearted. We sent down our investigative team of Robert (Hartigan) and Kevin (Century) to, well investigate. Sure enough before their very eyes, were beasts like no other, creatures of great stature, DINOSAURS!
Lucky for them they were part of the attraction, Dinosaur World and had no interest in us mere mortals.
The guys had a tour and enjoyed all of the different species that were on show, MONSTER!



AROUND THE HOUSES



BALCOMBE @ WARRNAMBOOL

Catherine, Marcus, Tim, and Mary all went to Warrnambool for the weekend in August.

We caught a bus to Frankston, a train to the city and then a v-line train to Warrnambool.

The train ride was very comfortable and everyone was excited to arrive.

We walked to the Quest hotel and booked in. The quest hotel is very central and close to everything in Warrnambool.

The unit at Quest was fabulous.

On Saturday we went whale watching, we saw a mother and her baby out near the reef, they were quite a long way away. We saw a huge tail come out from the water and other whales playing in the sea. The whales were too quick to get a photo. It was a lovely day a nice walk and an amazing view.

Everyone went to The Maritime Village for dinner and then a walk around the village and an amazing light show depicting a shipwreck. The story was about a ship that came from England in 1874 called The Loch Ard. The ship carrying 54 passengers and crew and 2275 tons of cargo to the settlement of Melbourne. After travelling for 13 weeks and only a day away from Melbourne The Loch Ard smashed into rocks while entering the perilous seas of Bass Strait. The sound and light show was interactive and depicted how it would have been to be sailing on the Loch Ard, the hardships on the boat and the disaster of the shipwreck. There were only two survivors. As part of the cargo there was a statue of a peacock which was being sent to Melbourne from England. The peacock was washed ashore. Everyone enjoyed the show and learnt about an important part of our history.

We all had a fabulous evening and arrived back at the hotel in time to watch the last half of the football. Geelong and Hawthorn, Marcus is a huge Geelong supporter and Tim supports Hawthorn.

It was a very exciting game with Hawthorn coming out victors. Everyone retired tired and happy after a long day.



On Sunday we went back to the Maritime village to see the village in the day light.

First stop was the museum, where we saw relics from shipwrecks including The Loch Ard. The Peacock statue took pride of place at the museum. We were all excited to see this amazing piece of art that is now worth 4 million dollars.

We then wandered to The Art Museum in Warrnambool.

We all went to the hotel to freshen up and get ready for dinner. We went to a restaurant called Beaujangles and met Catherine's niece Gemma and her boyfriend Trent. Gemma and Trent live in Warrnambool, Catherine was very proud to introduce Tim and Mary to them. We had a lovely evening chatting and catching up.

Mary's words on Monday morning leaving the hotel were "Why does it have to be over?"

I think everyone felt a bit like that.



AROUND THE HOUSES

BERRY FLAT

Recently Mikael and Stefan went on their second YMCA camp; this time at Anglesea. It was perfect weather for a weekend away and when we arrived Friday night they settled into their cabins for a good nights sleep. After breakfast the first activity was archery where Mik and Stef had a lesson from one of the camp instructors. We were then off to the art group and to have a drink and listen to music. After lunch we went on a long walk to a nearby lake for canoeing, we then went for a walk down the shops for an icecream. After dinner Saturday night there was a sing along and some of the group shared their best moments of the camp to everybody. The disco started next where Mik did his famous pogo style dance, then off to bed. The last activity for Sunday was orienteering where we all went for a long bush walk around the property. The camp was a big success and a good time was had by all.



CERTIFICATE IN WORK EDUCATION. SEPTEMBER UPDATE.

The 11 participants completing the Certificate 1 in Work Education have been working hard for over a year. After commencing the course in August 2013, they have spent countless hours in the classroom learning all about employment issues. In the past month, all participants have started the practical component of the course. This means that they are now working one day per week in a work placement, as well as another day in the classroom.

One topic that has been covered this term is Hospitality. The students have practiced how to fold napkins, polish glasses and set tables the same way they do in fancy restaurants. They also took part in a Role- playing scenario, where the classroom was set up like a café. Half the students took on the role of waiting staff, while the others had the fun job of being customers! To keep things fair, the roles were swapped so everyone had a turn being both a café worker and a customer.

The waiting staff had to set tables, create menus, serve food and drinks and then clean up. Each customer was given some fake money to purchase what they wanted from the menu. They had to pay before leaving, so the café staff could practice counting money and handing out change. All students enjoyed this activity and performed their roles with style!

The group also visited Ozanam Enterprises in Mornington to see what sort of work was done there. We had a tour of the warehouse and saw the workers in action. One of the managers gave a talk to the students, and answered their questions about the workplace.

The students in the meeting room at Ozanam Enterprises, after a tour of the premises.

As mentioned previously, all students have begun their work placements, for 1 day a week. This is happening at the Mornington Community Gardens. The students have all had a go at weeding, spreading mulch, planting seeds and pruning flowers (to name just a few tasks they have undertaken). They are also doing some work with Mornington Youth Enterprises, next door to the gardens. It has been fantastic to see all the students participate enthusiastically and to follow instructions from their supervisors. Well done to you all!

AROUND THE HOUSES



OPPY HOUSE

FIONA LEGGO TV

Some months ago Fiona identified that something she would really like to have is a TV in her room. She has spent time with staff talking about what kind of TV she wanted and planned with her family the best way to pay for it. After several visits to the Good Guys in Frankston and their helpful staff Fiona is now the proud owner of her own TV – here she is pictured with Ryan on the day of purchase. Thank you to all who helped Fiona achieve this goal.



AFTERNOON TEA

What to do on a chilly Winter's afternoon? How about a scrumptious afternoon tea? Oppy ladies and the lovely people at Balcombe got together and enjoyed the afternoon and the chance for friendship and a dance to the odd Abba song.



OPPY LADIES

Late June it certainly was a **FUNHOUSE** when the Oppy ladies, Fiona, Jane, Pip and Sally teamed up with not so **BAD INFLUENCE** Olsen ladies Sue and Nicole to **UNWIND** and plan a **GREAT ESCAPE** to Frankston RSL for dinner and to see a Pink tribute show! The ladies were all **GLITTER IN THE AIR** with their outfits and out to make the best of the evening and no one was **MEAN** when it came to scrumptious meals which the ladies all said were certainly **TRUE**



AROUND THE HOUSES

LOVE and though all **SOBER** they were a **TIMEBOMB** as they said **GET THE PARTY STARTED**. All ladies were up the front of stage to **TRY** without putting **ONE FOOT WRONG** and when it was necessary for the star of the show to take a break they said **JUST GIVE ME A REASON** before she was back with more music and lots more dancing for all **WHO KNEW** (without having a **CRYSTAL BALL**) that they could **RAISE YOUR GLASS** quite so high and that they knew

they were not in **TROUBLE** but were simply a **TIMEBOMB** before they had a chance to meet "Pink" and pose for photos learning **THE TRUTH ABOUT LOVE** until sadly the night was at an end and they were left asking



WHERE DID THE BEAT GO? As they travelled home chatting how it really was not a **LONG WAY TO BE HAPPY** and how they should **TRY** to get to more awesome evenings like this...

VALE MARIA

Maria Vukovic was a long term resident of Oppy House since moving from Kew Cottages many years ago; she was a lovely lady with a wicked sense of humour and fun. She liked nothing more than to potter around the house doing chores, going out for a meal of lasagne (and coke!) or hanging out with animals. Maria passed away, in Frankston Hospital on the 29th July. She is sadly missed by Fiona, Jane, Pip, Sally and all Oppy staff; but we like to think she has been reunited with her long term friend Dianne and they are, once again, creating all kinds of mischief and chaos.



AROUND THE HOUSES



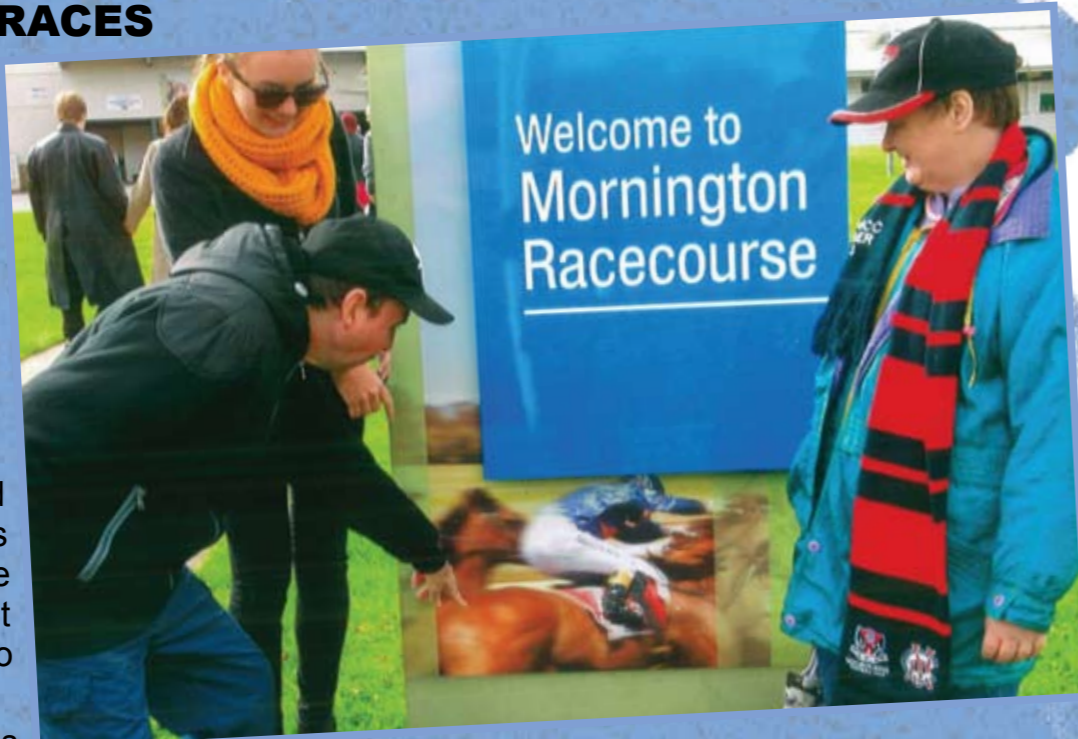
A DAY AT THE RACES

MaryAnne and James went to the Mornington Races on the Queen's Birthday weekend.

MaryAnne enjoyed watching the jockeys riding the horses and James was happy to get a beer from the bar.

Maryanne liked cheering as the horses crossed the finish line and James came right down to the barriers to watch them fly by.

We took lots of pictures and went to Office works afterwards to print them. Both James and Maryanne would like to go again.



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT



FOOTY FUN DAY

The Individual Support Services together with the Dromana Football Club hosted a 'Footy Fun Day' and our very excited participants from Dromana, Red Hill and McAlister came decked out in their favourite team's colours and ready to show off their style and kick a footy or two.

We were very fortunate to have the St Kilda Football Club, Fan Development Crew and students from the Sports Education Development Academy (SEDA) come and run an array of

football clinics and activities for us during the morning. Smiles were abundant as everyone took to the field to meet the St Kilda Crew and SEDA students, showcase their talent, learn some new skills, score a goal and have loads of fun.

There was an awesome session of handballing through targets and a great kick to kick session ran by the SEDA students. The St Kilda Crew showed us some tricks around how to handle the ball and offered some handy hints on how to kick and mark. The Crew were very impressed with Peter and Jen's handballing style and were blown away by Phil, Marcus and Gerard's goal scoring kicks.

To ensure the day was kept authentic and in the true Aussie footy spirit everyone enjoyed



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hot dogs with sauce for lunch, a vey popular choice.

After lunch Mark Crawshaw the President of the Dromana Football Club challenged us all as he tested our footy knowledge with a never ending list of football trivia questions. It was very competitive and everyone took away a piece of footy merchandise ie. flag, drink bottle, sticker, poster, socks, lanyard, footy cards from their favourite AFL club. A big thankyou must go to all of the AFL Clubs that kindly donated merchandise for our Footy as prizes and It was a

day, where everyone got involved and had a fabulous time. We are very appreciative of the St Kilda Football Clubs Fan Development Crew's time and that of the SEDA students who attended. Another thankyou also to Mark Crawshaw, even though he made our brains hurt.

Fingers crossed we will see the talents of the St Kilda Football Club players back with us in February 2015 running another Professional Development Day for our participants. If not the boys will have Mary-Anne, who is an avid St Kilda fan to answer to!

'FOCUS' SAYS THANK YOU

A BIG thank you to the following businesses that have supported 'focus' with our Fundraising BBQ's at Bunnings again this quarter.

- Dromana Fruits
- Rolls & Scrolls Bakehouse Dromana
- B.R.A.D's Fresh Meats Mornington

Another thank you must also be extended to Spotlight in Frankston for their generous donation of a gift card which was used to purchase blank canvasses for our participants to use in the artwork program.

Your generosity and support is very much appreciated!



focus ... on OH&S

Win Coffee for a Safer Workplace!

It is taken for granted by most people that you will return home from work in the same condition that you left in that morning. For 75 Victorians however, this will not be the case today. According to WorkSafe, one Victorian is seriously injured every 18 minutes while carrying out work-related duties each day. Clearly this figure is too high, and many of those injured workers simply thought, “It won’t happen to me”. Well guess what? It does! The WHS team takes your health and safety very seriously, and we would like you to give some thought to how you can improve the level of safety where you work, whether it is in the residential setting, in day services or more remotely in the community.

So, tackle the quiz on the next page and submit your answers! The first 3 people to answer correctly and submit their correct answers to the WHS Team will receive a coffee from Gloria Jeans on us! We will also buy a coffee for 2 people who offer the best solutions to our WHS practice challenge for this newsletter. So, what are you waiting for? Complete the quiz, give us your solutions and get free coffee!



Workplace safety is everybody’s responsibility!

focus ... on OH&S

Win Coffee for a Safer Workplace!

TIME CHALLENGE - Fill in the blanks using the words below...

bullying everybody’s risk
confidential cost Identify violence

Workplace safety is responsibility!
EAP is a no and support for employees.
Occupational and workplace are unacceptable.
..... the hazard
Control the



WHS PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Tell us how you are most likely to get injured at work, and what you can do to prevent that.

.....

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Workplace safety is everybody’s responsibility!

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT



SASI ART EXHIBITION

The SASI Art Exhibition was held at Cube 37, Frankston Arts Centre in August. We had 15 of our participants enter 18 pieces of artwork in this Exhibition.

Our talented artists were very successful, with Marcus Watson being awarded the Packers Prize for his entry 'Silk Scarves' and Owen McCaffrey winning one of the prizes in the Exhibition and then also taking out the People's Choice Award for his amazing artwork piece 'Good Guys and Villians'. Owen's piece was highly sought after and was sold during the exhibition. Both Marcus and Owen won for themselves an IPAD mini.

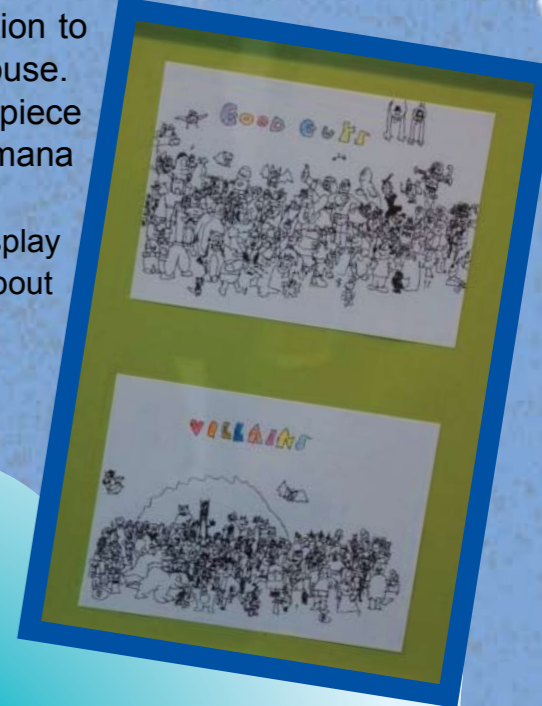
Sue Steedman who entered her artwork piece 'Rose' and Marie McLellan's artwork piece 'Trees and Flowers' were also sold. The ladies were thrilled to find that their artwork had been purchased by a Member of Parliament and will be adorning the walls of Parliament House in



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Melbourne. They ladies were also extended an invitation to come and view their art work hanging in Parliament House. The news doesn't stop there as Deb Black's artwork piece 'Magical Bird' and Marcus Schindler's painting 'Dromana Beach & Pier' have also been sold.

It was fabulous to see so many of our participants work on display at Cube 37 this year and all of our artists are very excited about their achievements. A huge congratulations to all of you!



OUT AND ABOUT

- Michael, enjoys the Music Program Activity in Red Hill, he loves dancing and listening to the Music playing by Scott.
- Camille, enjoys the Park Outing, he loves the Liberty Swing as well as walking around the Park, using the Slide and the Rocking Boat.

FLINDERS

What a busy time it has been. When the weather turned wet and cold, the Flinders participants got creative by decorating one of our room's. It all started with a box of coloured vinyl offcuts. We made the stencils and got busy cutting out the different shapes, we started by decorating a white cupboard, then a wall was turned into a bright forest then we added snow flakes and dragon flies. This is now a very bright wonderful space that everyone enjoys.

Another favourite day was the recent Football Day at Dromana Football Club, the guys were kicking footballs, hand balling and joining in all the fun activities. Over 100 participants sat together for a lunch of Hot dogs and cool drinks, everyone left tied and smiling it was a great fun day, leaning new skills making new friends, and wining prizes.



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THE WORKSHED

This term saw the launching of a new ISS site at Somerville. The Workshed has proven to be a great success for the participants involved, with a variety of activities for the guys to choose from.

Ben and Stefan recently embarked upon a trout fishing adventure at Macclesfield Trout Farm. Both gentlemen managed to reel a few in and - having thoroughly enjoyed the day – Ben was pretty proud to take his catch home with him - nothing like fresh fish for dinner!



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CIRCUS OZ - MCALISTER

'SHOW OFF PERFORMANCE'

McAlister and Dromana people Deb, Adam, Sam, Gerard, Amanda, Mary-Anne, Veronica and Erin who attend Cirque Sur Roues circus workshop, joined forces and were invited to the Frankston Arts Centre to show case their skills and talent for their 'show off' performance to the public in the foyer. Every one was dressed in costumes (Hats, scarves and other funky things). Every one involved worked very hard to put on a spectacular performance. The use of ribbons, hoops, spinning plates and devil sticks were used as part of the act. The crowd



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gathered and cheered. After the 'show off' performance the stars and their family members were invited to attend the matinee performance of Circus Oz in the theatre. The show was fantastic and every one cheered, clapped and laughed. What a talented group of performers we have.

RED HILL GARDEN PROGRAM

Spring has certainly sprung up on Red Hill. It has been all hands on deck, with participants from both Dromana and Red Hill rolling up their sleeves and greening their thumbs. They have drawn up the plan, organised a small mountain of soil to be delivered, and prepared for a veritable cornucopia of vegetables; silver beet, potatoes, pumpkins, carrots, lettuce, beans, and summer greens. They've planted a fruit salad of citrus trees, nectarines, peaches, and mandarins, as well as a sensory delight of herbs; sage, lavender and rosemary. Everyone has pitched in to dig the trenches, turn the soil and planted the seeds. With tender loving care, our garden of Eden is beginning to take shape. We are all looking forward to harvest time. Well done to all involved!



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT



A DAY TO REMEMBER!

Wow today was the first day of the new programs at 'focus'. The first of many great new programs, to come for our participants that attend 'focus'. What a train trip from Baxter to Crib point. Seeing Brett, Flynn, Bruce, Justin, Jeanne, David and Michael's. Glow on their faces made the day's outing fantastic and rewarding, to know we are doing what our participants want in their day.



STRETCH & MOVEMENT PROGRAM

The new program is now up and running, the participants have been fantastic, learning new skills and having a go.

The program is designed to improve hand eye co-ordination; motor skills, depth perception, balls skills, and most importantly keep active.

The first half of the program participants warm up with a series of stretches and gentle exercise, most of which can even be done from a wheelchair.

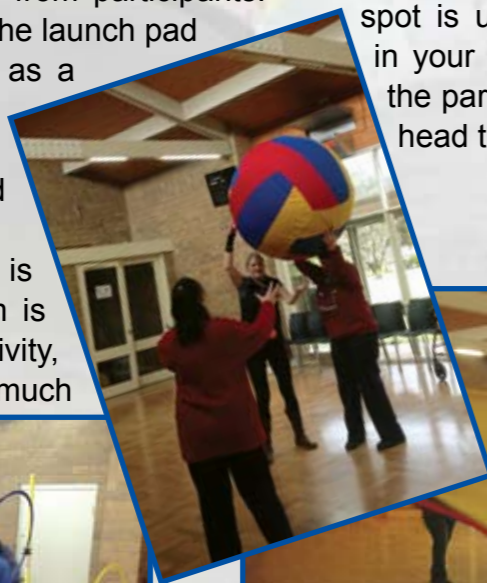
Then the participants move on through the activities, the hurdles, the floor ladder and what is becoming the favourite the target hoops – with a range of items such as lattice balls, dive sticks, dive rings, and gator balls to be thrown through the 2 different height hoops.

We certainly have had some incredible throwing skills demonstrated from participants. Then on to the rebound net, the launch pad and the ezy fling set. Then as a group the giant king ball is a bit of fun and again chosen to develop co-ordination and motor skills.

The last item in the program is the giant parachute, the aim is to wind down after all our activity, but there is usually so much



laughing we forget we are exercising. The best spot is underneath sitting on the floor or in your wheelchair, when the colours of the parachute float down just above your head then gently lift up to the ceiling.

**VALID CONFERENCE**

The People's Committee recently attended the VALID conference in Preston. The conference included topics such as 'The cost of Inclusion', 'Standards and Workforce Issues' and 'Achieving Social & Economic Inclusion'.

We stayed in Preston over night so we could attend both days without having to travel too far. This made it much easier and everyone in the group enjoyed staying at the local Motel the night.

Some of the feedback from the client's includes:

Veronica: We learnt about shared housing, and how to look after your money properly. I didn't like it when people interrupted you when you were trying to talk.

Mary: It was fun, they talked about human rights in residential houses.

Everyone was pleased to have attended the conference and got a lot of information out of it. Hopefully we will get to attend this conference again next year.

People's Committee.

**2014 HINTERLAND SCARECROW FESTIVAL TRAIL**

HINTERLAND
SCARECROW
FESTIVAL TRAIL

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ENTRY**

It's a springtime event that celebrates the Mornington Peninsula's unique creative character with a Touring Trail of Scarecrow Creations and Fabulous Farm-yard art. Once again, 'focus' ISS have been frantically fossicking around for chicken wire, feathers, sequins, bustiers', recycled items, and the all important hot glue gun, to create their masterpiece in time for voting.

This year's theme is 'Mother Earth'. Competition rules state that we can't yet show you the final product (she's beautiful), but please remember to vote for us. Many thanks to all Red Hill and Dromana staff and participants who contributed to the project. Look out for her from September 20th. For details please go to <http://scarecrowfestival.org.au>.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT >>>>>

RED HILL

Time flies when you're having fun.

The weather has been typically unpredictable this Winter, but we've managed to take advantage of every minute the sun has peaked through the clouds, and our participants have been involved in all sorts of activities including; bike riding around the property, our gardening program, bushwalking through national parks, swimming at Casey Race pool, enjoying the sensory room, keeping the rhythm in the Drumming circle, and participating in horse riding.

Flinders Room is committed to maintaining the birds in our aviary every day. Mitchell Room has been enjoying the occasional barbeque in the sensory garden, and Kingsley Room has been focussing on Italian food in their cooking program for the past few weeks. All involved are becoming quite adept at whipping up a decent lasagne. We were also delighted to bring back pottery classes – with a plethora of objects produced, from vases to wall hangings. Looking forward to Spring, but if the last season is anything to go by, one blink and it will be Summer time already.



YMCA CAMP ANGLESEA

In September Marie, Ashleigh and Erin set off for their weekend camp at Anglesea. The girls packed the luggage on the bus and said goodbye to fellow clients, they were very excited and couldn't wait to get there.

We arrived at Sorrento ferry to board and thankfully it was a beautiful sunny day and the sea was calm. When we arrived



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in Queenscliff we then set off for Anglesea with the occasional "are we there yet" from Erin.

On arrival at the camp we were welcomed by Leigh, shown our cabin. After dinner and dessert the girls then enjoyed a bit of art with a superhero theme where they made masks, they were then given a fuzzy bag to decorate and leave in the room so other people could leave notes in for them throughout the weekend. After a big day we all enjoyed a hot chocolate and chill out session whilst watching a movie before bed.

On Saturday morning we all got up at 6.45 much to our dislike and got ready for breakfast. Our first activity was Archery so we all walked down as a group to the oval and were given instructions by the leader of the activity on how to hold the bow and arrow. All three girls were amazing and learnt quickly. After Archery, we were off to our next activity, basketball. Then we were off for a big walk down to the lake for canoeing which wasn't to everyone's liking but we all had fun anyway.

It was our turn to set all the tables for dinner and help with the clean up afterwards so we all rolled up our sleeves up and worked as a team to get the job done. After we finished with the clean-up we got ready for the disco and trivia night. The girls looked amazing and enjoyed the night with lots of singing and dancing then after a big day/night it was time for bed no arguments from anyone.

On our last day our activity for the morning was called rescue mission where we had to go around the camp and find various items located within the camp. It was fun; we all laughed and enjoyed it. The best part was finding things before other teams did. After morning tea awards were handed out and everyone was given one for their outstanding work and ability to give things a go. Erin decided to make a speech and thanked everyone for a



great time and for the opportunity to be there.

Erin, Ashleigh and Marie had a great time away had lots of laughs and met lots of new people who they hoped would see again.

We would all like to thank Evan who was our leader for the weekend he did a great job and without hesitation was there to help us and motivate us, also to all the other leaders and helpers the camp wouldn't have been what it was without your hard work and effort we all thank you for that and hope to see you all again soon.

HOWMANS GAP - SNOW CAMP

After weeks of planning and anticipation Owen, Nick and Ben set off for their weekend in the snow. We joined our YMCA hosts in Melbourne, transferred our mountain of luggage to their coach and set off on the long journey to the mountains.

The journey was made easier as we watched movies on the coach's DVD system and after a couple of stops along the way we arrived in the late afternoon.

The Camp had already been covered with snow so as soon as we put our bags in our room we joined in the snowball fights outside until we got too cold and wet. Owen proved quite a good shot!!!

The weather the next morning was wet and windy - not much fun outside - so we were kept busy with craft activities until lunchtime. After lunch the weather had cleared up which allowed us to wizz down the slopes on toboggans and judging by the huge smiles on Nick and Owen's faces they liked high speed runs, the faster the better. Pulling the toboggans back up the slope was really hard work though and needless to say we ate well at dinner time.

WOW! Snow was piled up everywhere after a huge dump of snow overnight, begging the question "where was the bus parked"? As soon as we had finished our morning's craft activities we changed into snow gear and headed off outside to build snowmen and engage in a snowball war with the other participants. The snow afternoon so we made use of our toboggan piloting skills on the freshly laid snow. By mid-afternoon the snow fall was getting heavier and the wind picked up which drove us inside to rest before finishing the day off with a movie and dancing at the disco.

The morning brought another early start because we had to set off before the forecast bad weather set in. The bus driver dug the coach out and fitted snow chains to the wheels while we packed and polished off our breakfast. During the journey home we were entertained by more movies and a couple of stops for food and to stretch our legs.

On a final note we really enjoyed our snow camp especially the snow ball fights and speeding down the slopes on the toboggans. When we were not able to go outside into the snow we were always kept busy either with craft activities, playing games

or watching movies. The YMCA leaders and participants were extremely friendly and always encouraged us to join in all the activities. Will we go again? You bet!!!

