

WE
LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS
VE

WE
LIFE
VE
#17



Meet care leaver Stacey. Stacey is a young person who has turned 18 and left foster care to live independently. She is flourishing in her adult life as she studies to become a social worker.

PAGE
04

BEYOND
FOSTERING

PAGE
07

A JOB FOR
EVERYBODY

PAGE
08

EMPLOYEE
RECOGNITION
AWARDS

PAGE
10

MOCKINGBIRD
FAMILY

WELCOME TO WE LIVE LIFE

In *We Live Life* we shine the spotlight on individuals making a difference.

We hope you enjoy reading about our volunteers, carers and staff who, through their passion and commitment, are helping people to change their lives for the better.

In each edition we publish articles about our work with the people we support and our services, and share inspirational stories from around the country.



Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram @LWBAustralia



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE CLAIRE ROBBS

It has been a tremendous year for Life Without Barriers and I am delighted to share with you the final edition of 'We Live Life' for 2018.

This year we've supported thousands of people across Australia to achieve their goals and welcomed hundreds of new staff while continuing to maintain the trust of the people who choose our services. *We Live Life* provides a snapshot of all the great work happening throughout LWB at the moment and this is also celebrated through our Annual Report 2018 'Partnering in Action'. Over the 2017 – 2018 Financial year we supported more than 22,850 people and helped champion opportunity across Australia. You can read our report by visiting www.lwb.org.au and accessing the report from our homepage.

In this edition of *We Live Life* we meet three of our care leavers Stacey, Kieren and Chloe and learn about the joys and challenges that come with entering young adulthood after foster care (Beyond Fostering – Meet our Care Leavers, page 6), we also meet Katelyn, who has secured ongoing and meaningful employment thanks to Joblife. Joblife is a joint venture of Life Without Barriers and Angus Knight Group that helps people with disability secure employment by providing the right support. Katelyn now works as a hairdresser in Queensland's Sunshine Coast (A Job for Everybody, page 7).

We also explore our new approach to Foster Care called the MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ which brings together 6-10 local foster care families in a 'constellation' or community where there is shared support, understanding and social activities. The Brisbane constellation covered in the story is the first of its kind for LWB, and in fact a first for Australia, and is already leading to positive outcomes for carers (Mockingbird Family, page 11).

I encourage you also to learn about the winners of our 2018 Employee Recognition Awards (page 8). The stories of courage, innovation and commitment to the needs and goals of the people we support is exemplary and inspiring.

I hope you have a safe and relaxing festive season and enjoy reading this edition of *We Live Life*. I look forward to sharing many more stories with you throughout 2019.

Claire Robbs



PARTNERING IN ACTION ANNUAL REPORT 2018 OUT NOW

Visit www.lwb.org.au to read the report



Kylie Harrison, Community Peer Worker from SA, holding her Lived Experience Award

CONGRATULATIONS KYLIE

LWB Community Peer Worker Kylie Harrison has been awarded the Lived Experience Award by The Mental Health Coalition of SA. The award receives nominations from a number of standout candidates and exists to publicly honour and celebrate the achievements and contributions of people with a lived experience and the organisations who have embraced the lived experience to help more people. Kylie works in our Mental Health and Homelessness team in South Australia.

“When I won the award I could hardly believe it! I was so happy and proud of my achievement,” Kylie said. Kylie has given approximately 170 speeches about mental health and her lived experience which has greatly destigmatised mental illness in her community. “It’s had a rippling effect. I loved the fact that I was being congratulated for my work including doing stand-up comedy and writing my poetry book. I was given the award by Mental Health Commissioner, Chris Burns and had a photo taken with the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr John Brayley. Words cannot express how blessed I feel to have won this prestigious award.”



LWB having fun at the Mental Health Expo in Glenorchy in Tasmania



The Tassie team on their river walk

A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

LWB staff get involved in raising awareness during Mental Health Month

In October, LWB joined thousands of organisations around the country to celebrate Mental Health Month. The focus of Mental Health Month is to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. It is about destigmatising mental health issues and encouraging the community to check in with each other, especially with people who may be struggling.

Across Australia, LWB offices and programs got on board with Mental Health Month in unique ways. In South Australia, LWB supported the community to access a traditional Aboriginal healing experience provided by the Anangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC).

Ngangkari services involve the use of ancient traditional healing practices to restore people’s physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological wellbeing. The traditional methods of healing include Pampuni which translates to ‘healing touch’, which is a traditional hands-on therapeutic healing method. The also used muscle manipulation, blowing, suction and spiritual healing. Evidence demonstrates that Ngangkari healing services have a range of benefits including positive health outcomes for patients and the provision of a holistic two-way

health care model and team approach to Aboriginal health.

Numerous people received a healing experience from Ngangkari during SA’s Mental Health Week promotion and many shared their positive feedback with LWB staff. People reported feeling ‘great, lighter and happy’, ‘surreal and calm’, ‘relaxed, content, healthy’, and one commented ‘I wish I could have a session every day.’ It was a great experience for people to learn about a different way of approaching mental health but also experience a traditional practice used for centuries by Australia’s First Nations people.

Our Tasmanian teams also got on board with promoting the importance of mental health and wellbeing. The teams came together for a Stronger Together morning tea and staff recognition event, with the Hobart team even hosting a silent disco! They organised a lunchtime walk, 10 minute massage therapy, relaxation yoga and mindfulness activities, attended mental health expos to promote LWB and even created a virtual suggestion box that allowed staff to give input on how to increase mental wellbeing at work. The suggestion box was such a good idea that it was available nationwide and the ideas were sent to the mental health lead for each state.

CELEBRATING OUR CARERS

Foster and Kinship Care Week

In September LWB joined foster care agencies around Australia to celebrate Foster and Kinship Care Week. It was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge and thank our foster carers for the countless hours, care and dedication they give to the children they care for. It was also a chance to join with us other agencies to run foster care thank you events which brought together many local foster carers and gave them a chance to meet other carers, connect, share stories and build those friendship and support circles that are so

BEYOND FOSTERING: MEET OUR CARE LEAVERS



CHLOIE

Chloie has finished her journey in foster care and is now forging her way forward into her adult life as she studies to become a primary school teacher. Prior to moving to campus to start her degree she lived with Steve and Vickie, her foster parents, who also care for her three younger siblings.

Chloie entered care at the age of 10, but when she moved in with Steve and Vickie in her mid-teens, it was then she knew she'd found her home. "It was scary but I knew that I would be going into a loving home. When I met them [Vickie and Steve], they were lovely," Chloie said. "They actually gave me a

little welcome package and a little card that I still have today. It said 'Dear Chloie, welcome to our home. We are really happy for you to come and live with us. We consider it a privilege for you to be here. Always remember life is what you make it. We are here to help, support, care and love you if you will let us. Vickie and Steve.'

This little detail went a long way to make Chloie feel safe and wanted. "It just touched my heart that they cared a lot about me. They had no idea who I was but they still went that extra mile," Chloie said.



STACEY

Having left foster care recently, Stacey is a young woman with an exciting future. She is 18 and studying a social work degree. Upon graduation she hopes to work in a foster care or health setting. Apart from setting her career in motion, she has also moved out on her own, purchased a car and is holding down two casual jobs while she studies.

Stacey, along with her brother and sister, entered foster care when she was four years old. "It was

kind of strange, like I just didn't know what was happening," Stacey said about that time. "Random people came to my front door and the next thing I knew I was going away from Mum... and I didn't know what was happening until a good two or three years later when I understood I didn't live with Mummy and Daddy anymore."

Stacey and her siblings went through two other placements before they were placed with their long



KIEREN

When a young person moves out of home, there is often some false starts, with many young adults using the 'revolving door' at their parent's house. This tends to be the norm for young people leaving home, but it is often not possible for young people when leaving foster care.

Meet Kieren, who is now a young adult in his mid-twenties living in Sydney working full time. Kieren entered foster care when he was 12, moving in with Rob* and Diane*. Sadly, Diane passed away during that time, but Kieren remained with Rob until he was 18.

Kieren described what happened when he first came into his foster home with Rob and Diane. "When I first got there, the carers were very caring, they were open, they were accepting. Something I like to describe is they weren't sympathetic, they were empathetic. They understood what I'd been through. They didn't give me a lot of 'I feel sorry for you' kind of thing, but when I made mistakes they knew where I came from so they gave me a little bit of extra rope."

Kieren remembers many fun times growing up with his carer and foster brothers. They were a house full of boys who would ride motorbikes, build go-karts, go iceskating and have bonfires.

vital to raising children. At LWB we celebrated our carers through holding High Teas, BBQs, Barefoot Bowls and a visit to Dolphin Magic for those on the mid-north coast of NSW.

We also highlighted many new stories from our foster carers and for the first time, our care leavers. Care leavers are young people who have been in foster care with LWB but have turned 18 and are now living independently. Their stories were heart-warming and encouraging, but they also didn't shy away from the hard parts of entering adulthood from foster care. The experiences of Foster Carers are so valuable and help us share the benefits of being a carer for a child or young person, so that more people consider supporting a child who really needs them.

Chloie's foster dad Steve really appreciated the support he received from Life Without Barriers. "They give us training in different aspects, we have a care team of three to four people that we see on a regular basis that give us advice and guidance," Steve said.

Steve also noted the importance of being able to keep the Chloie and her siblings together. "It was heart-warming to see her reunite with one of her brothers and a month later another sister joined us and then a few years later another sister," Steve said.

Steve feels becoming a carer is the best thing he has ever done. "I remember reading a motivational book years and years ago," he said. "The happiest people in life are those that have purpose.

I've come to realise that over the last several years that this is the purpose that my wife and I were meant for."

Chloie describes Steve as a "great big cuddly bear," she laughs. "On the outside he looks rough around the edges; on the inside he's soft as a marshmallow. He's very kind and caring and has always been there for me, whenever I needed it."

And now with Chloie studying to become a primary school teacher, Steve couldn't be prouder. "Chloie is an amazing person. She makes me want to improve my life because I've seen how she can improve her own life," Steve said.

term carer, who Stacey lived with for 11 years until she moved out on her own a few months ago.

"My carer's family took me in because they were a loving family and it was important to me because I needed that love and support to help me grow as a person. Without that, I wouldn't have a sense of identity of who I am as a person today," said Stacey.

Since moving out of home, Stacey still sees her carer regularly. "We still go on our normal coffee dates. We still have our lunch

get-togethers and she is always still caring for me," said Stacey. "When I moved out, she was coming over almost every single day helping me get my apartment together."

When asked how she's adjusting to living out of home, Stacey said, "Going from a household of nine to one is different! I've also realised how expensive living on your own is! The good thing is, my carer's family are living around the corner. I've got my carer a phone call away so I'm not always alone."

As well as the fun times, Rob also guided Kieren through the challenges of his teenage years. "I remember one experience where I got emotional, I got a little bit aggressive and tried to tackle Rob – but he didn't take it the wrong way. It was right when my other foster carer passed away and I got very emotional and I got angry at the world," said Kieren. The next day Rob let Kieren calm down and didn't hold it against him, he just forgot about it. Like any parent would.

Kieren tried to move back in with his family a few times, and when it didn't work out, he'd be welcomed back into Rob's home.

After he left care when he was 18, Kieren went through a relationship breakup and he got into what he describes as some bad habits. Rob was there for him through this tough time and

Kieren moved back in for a few years. "My carer helped me through that – he let me come back and stay with him and that was a big thing for me because he didn't have to do that. It gave me that time to pick up and get back on my feet and it was great."

Kieren still has a great relationship with Rob and sees him often – in fact, he recently joined him for his 60th birthday.

Kieren believes his foster carer has had a profound impact on the man he is today. "My foster carer helped me to get where I am now. I went through a lot and I would have struggled harder if I didn't have someone to support me. A lot of people outside foster care don't get how good it can be."

*Names changed



CE, Claire Robbs stands united with CEOs of Alliance20 organisations as she addresses media during the launch at Parliament House in Canberra

ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE

LWB partners for a better NDIS

Through collaborations and a shared vision, the Alliance20 was launched in October at Parliament House. The Alliance20 brings together Australia's most influential disability service providers to shape the NDIS for a future that enables choice; ensures value; minimises complexity and delivers better outcomes. LWB has joined 15 other leading organisations in creating the Alliance, including Endeavour Foundation, Cerebral Palsy Alliance, House with No Steps and the Benevolent Society.

The member organisations are deep believers in the NDIS, who want to work with government and stakeholders to ensure it works best for everyone. "We believe in the NDIS and are deeply committed to the success of the scheme for the participants and our wider community," said Claire Robbs, CE. "Only through a joint approach between the National Disability Insurance Agency, the sector and other key stakeholders, will we, as a community, achieve the goals of the NDIS."

All of the service providers have seen the transformational effects the NDIS has had on the lives of their clients,

but each organisation has also seen the issues with implementation that have been experienced as this unprecedented program has rolled out throughout Australia and believe improvements can be made that would lead to better outcomes for all participants.

It is with this goal in mind that the Alliance plans to use its collective decades of experience to see change in three priority areas; supporting people with a disability with high and complex needs, servicing participants in rural and regional areas and boosting employment outcomes for NDIS participants.

For a long time, LWB has partnered with people with disability to change lives for the better, and this has usually been achieved through a one on one support model. In recent times however, LWB have also begun to work with governments for sector wide change, which benefits all people with disability. Our involvement in the Alliance 20 is just one part of our broader work in public policy and we will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to create change where it is needed.

Learn more at www.alliance20.org.au



Support Worker Rhys (left) wearing the Manly Sea Eagles jersey with Kelvin

A LITTLE FRIENDLY RIVALRY

LWB client Kelvin comes out on top

For anyone who knows Kelvin, there's no doubting his absolute passion for NRL and love for the Manly Sea Eagles. You can't go far around Forster or Tuncurry in NSW without him striking up a conversation with one of his friends about his team versing theirs, or just a general chat about the most recent round played.

As the season started, Rhys, who supports Kelvin every Monday, thought it might be some fun to have a little competition for when his team (the Brisbane Broncos) came head to head with Manly in round ten. If the Broncos win Kelvin would wear a Broncos shirt for a day, and of course should Manly win Rhys would don the dreaded Manly shirt. The competition became a hot topic, with Kelvin letting people know about it for weeks prior to the battle.

It was the weekend of the big game, it felt almost as important as the grand final at Kelvin's house. When Manly won Kelvin was ecstatic! He got the spare Manly shirt out straight away ready for Rhys to wear all day Monday. On Monday morning Kelvin could not have been happier – when Rhys put that Manly shirt on, Kelvin was the happiest Rhys had ever seen him. Kelvin insisted on a photo and was sure to rub it in, but only a little.

A JOB FOR EVERYBODY

Joblife partners with Katelyn to keep her apprenticeship on track

Petene Hughes was struck by Katelyn's enthusiasm and eagerness when she interviewed Katelyn for a vacant apprentice hairdresser role in her busy salon called Zimbuca, in Maroochydore. But there was something else about the teenager that resonated with Petene.

"I saw myself in her. She reminded me of myself. I had always struggled with aspects of schooling and learning. But I believe that everyone deserves an opportunity, I offered her the job, and I have not been disappointed," she said.

"Katelyn needs additional help with aspects of her TAFE course, particularly book keeping and comprehension. We had some initial support for her but without any notice that support disappeared."

Pregnant with her first child, Petene found herself playing the role of big sister, patiently working with Katelyn to help her with her studies as well as completing the practical modules for the course.

It was at times challenging but she enjoyed seeing the progress and growth

that Katelyn was making. However she realized she could not continue without finding external, additional support for Katelyn, particularly with the imminent birth of the baby.

Enter Heath Doman, employment consultant with new local disability services provider, Joblife Employment, a joint venture between Angus Knight and Life Without Barriers

"He has been nothing short of amazing. He organized a teacher's aide for Katelyn, he is helping her to get her licence and he is getting her to TAFE so she can attend classes," Petene said.

"He keeps me up to date with what is happening and we are all working as team, along with Katelyn's family, to help and support her through her apprenticeship. We love having her here. She is a vibrant, happy young woman who is committed to becoming a hairdresser. And I am living proof that even if you struggle academically you can still be successful."

Petene had been in business for six years and had no idea that this service was available. "It is a great resource for business owners who want to employ someone who is great at their job but needs some help to stay there," Petene said.



L to R: Petene and Katelyn at Zimbuca Salon

Joblife paid for three professional driving lessons for Katelyn, and Heath continues to maintain a strong presence through regular contact with Petene, Katelyn, her teachers and her family. He's also become a client of the salon!

Support for Katelyn has been provided through an Australian Government initiative, Work Assist. This service helps people stay in work if they risk losing their job through illness, injury or disability. Work Assist is delivered by Joblife Employment, which is a joint venture between Life Without Barriers and Angus Knight group. If you have a client or loved one with disability that would benefit from support to enter the workforce, please visit www.joblifeemployment.com.au

DRIVING CHANGE

Aboriginal Drivers Program is changing lives

Meet Loretta Lennon, 18 from Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. Loretta lost an eye to a rare cancer 14 years ago but this has not stopped her from achieving her goals. Loretta recently obtained her license with the help of LWB's Aboriginal Driver Training Program and this has dramatically changed her life.

Loretta said after obtaining her license with the help of LWB's free program, her personal confidence has grown and she feels empowered to achieve whatever she dreams of. "It takes me about 20 minutes to the max to actually get used to it properly," she said. "Then I can drive around with no nervous feeling inside of me, no anxiety or anything.

"It's peaceful, it's really lovely. I love to drive myself, even though I've only been driving for a little period of time."

While being able to drive from one place to another may seem simple, Loretta is the first person in her family to obtain a driver's license and this has literally changed her life. She is able to drive herself and her family to appointments, which is particularly useful as Loretta has regular check-ups in Perth.

Prior to getting her license Loretta didn't have the independence or confidence she has now. "I'd actually built a barrier on being confident, but now I think I'm just breaking out of that little shell," she said.



Loretta's self-confidence has grown now she can drive

This abridged story has been republished with permission from Tom Joyner, ABC Goldfields.



Scott Orpin



Larissa Dempsey, Jason Kehl and Helena Holdaway



Cherie Walters and Scott Orpin



Rod Best with Daniel Biggs



Amarjeet Singh with Loretta Perry and Jan Lowe



(L to R) Kerry Elliss, Catherine Ward, Daniel Biggs and Joumana Jeffers

THE WINNERS ARE IN

Life Without Barriers Employee Recognition Awards

On Tuesday, 11 September LWB staff donned their best outfits and came together to honour the winners and finalists of the Employee Recognition Awards for 2018. With a spectacular view of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House from the Museum of Contemporary Art, the nominators, finalists and LWB Executive, Board and State/Territory Directors recognised some of the staff within LWB who go above and beyond.

The theme of the night was undoubtedly courage. Courage was woven through the actions of the nominees and was evident in each of the stories shared by the finalists. It was plain to see that LWB staff are committed to thinking outside the box in order to achieve results for the people we support, and it was wonderful to recognise them for their efforts.

During the night, awards were presented for values, innovation, safety, reconciliation, practice, leadership and the ever popular People's Choice Award, with Jason Kehl from Toowoomba absolutely blown away to have won the People's Choice.

Another stand out for the evening was Cherie Walters from People, Safety & Culture, who received the 'Living the Values' Award. Cherie is the driving force behind the awards and due to this she has been unable to win an award, even though she has been nominated many times. She was shocked but honoured when Executive Director of PS&C, Scott Orpin called her name for her to accept her special award on stage.

The winners of the 2018 Staff Awards are:

VALUES CHAMPION, INDIVIDUAL

Amarjeet Singh,
Disability Support Worker, TAS

Amarjeet has created a relationship with the Special Olympics which has allowed our disability clients to join sporting teams independently of LWB. Amarjeet's work saw three clients' skills improve so much they were chosen for the Southern Tasmania cricket team. Showing real leadership, Amarjeet has encouraged his fellow support workers to stay after team meetings for delicious traditional Indian meals he and a colleague prepare.

VALUES CHAMPION, TEAM

Maha Razouk and Momina Ali,
NISS, NSW

The NISS team have developed many in-house programs to support the needs of clients from learning English to education and employment skills, working after hours to organise and run programs. The NISS team insists that all their clients are treated as equals, to make sure every individual client has a place in the LWB community and are engaged in the broader Australian community.



South East OoHC Team with Rod Best and Terry Lawler



(L to R) Maha Razouk and Momina Ali from NISS NSW



Helena Holdaway and Mary McKinnon



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander State Leads



Union St Team with Doug Dean and Angela Connors



(L to R) Sue Jamieson, Michael Ainsworth and Katina Nomikoudis

CAROL PELTOLA PRACTICE LEADER

Michael Ainsworth, Clinician, VIC

As the Practice Clinician for Victoria, Michael works with our teams as they support clients dealing with the impacts of trauma. When the team were experiencing safety incidents in disability services, Michael spent days working side by side with the Disability Support Workers to experience firsthand challenges and offer support and guidance. As a direct result of his leadership, the clients and teams have settled, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of incidents and a new level of confidence in managing difficult situations.

INNOVATION

Digital Team, NSW

The digital team designed, tested and released the Service Agreements and Claiming App – SACA, which assists with the day-to-day claiming process. This app digitalises a manual process and makes it consistent across all teams and states. SACA effectively shortens the claiming process and it easily scales to the business needs. Expertise and unique knowledge of employees was the most valuable investment into this project. The team were brave in suggesting innovative approaches which has resulted in a great solution for LWB.

RECONCILIATION

South Each OoHC Team, QLD

The team continually provide innovative approaches to ensuring the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, carers and staff are respected and supported. Highlights over the last 12 months include Return to Country trips for young people in care, The GITTABA Strong Brothers Cultural Camps with Waka Waka Elder, Uncle Boomie Hegarty, organising for clients and staff to attend the Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival and development of Carer and Staff Cultural Training. These activities are also acknowledged in their wider community as leading the way in Reconciliation.

SAFETY LEADERSHIP

Union Street Team, NSW

When the Parry St Day program and Denison St Day program combined into one large day program in Union St, in downtown Newcastle, the team were presented with safety issues due to the inner city location of the site. So the team developed a detailed traffic management plan with appropriate controls and client activity risk assessments in place. This foresight led to a smooth transition for staff and clients. Additionally, management of workplace injuries out of the Union St Day program is one of the best in NSW. Incidents are investigated quickly and actions to prevent re-occurrence are put in place.

LEADERSHIP

Jackie Gallagher Service Delivery Manager DUO, ACT

There isn't a part of the DUO business that Jackie isn't across, but her key contribution is within the Service Delivery team. Within this team, all work is scheduled for the hundreds of clients and support workers. As well as developing her own HR knowledge, Jackie invests significant time in developing the skills of her team to allow them to perform the technical components of the role, while keeping the client at the centre of all decisions.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Jason Kehl, Administration Officer, QLD

Jason is the first person everyone sees when they enter the Toowoomba office. He greets people by name with a smile and asks how he can be helpful. He takes the time to listen and solve problems wherever he can. Unbeknownst to most who meet him, Jason is legally blind. He has only 3% sight in one eye and none in the other. He embodies the work LWB does; equal rights and roles for everyone. He is courageous in his convictions to seek open employment for himself, regardless of his disability, work amongst his peers, retain his position for almost 10 years and he continually strives to better himself.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our latest Reconciliation, LGBTQI and Inclusion News



Learning to carve a spear at Hopevale Coloured Sands Camp

RECONCILIATION NEWS

The Strong Mob program from Carins/Yarrabah and Hopevale/Wujal Wujal joined together to organise a camp for participants at the Hopevale Coloured Sands camp ground. The camp went for three days and was a fantastic opportunity for both groups to share stories and get to know each other better. The group participated in a range of activities including; painting T-shirts, basket weaving, fishing, collecting coloured sands, spear making, dance and there was lots of laughter and yarning around the camp fire. All participants said it was such a positive experience and they are looking forward to next year's camp.



The group camped at Uncle Boomie's property 'Gittaba'

In October our People, Safety and Culture Lead team had the rare opportunity to camp for a night at Gittaba, the property of Uncle Boomie, outside Brisbane. Guided by Uncle John and Uncle Boomie, the team were culturally supported by Leoni Lippitt, Grant Williams, David Pearce and Sylvia Jones-Terare. David led the group on a meditative journey called Dadirri, which encourages inner listening and recognises the deep spring that is inside all of us. The team ate wonderfully well, yarned around the campfire, bush walked and painted. It was an incredibly grounding experience for all.



Perth participate in their first PrideFEST Fair Day

LGBTQI NEWS

Our LGBTQI events calendar has been buzzing with activity and we are proud to have participated in the very first Newcastle Pride Fair Day on Saturday 25 August. Committed LWB employees showed their support for the LGBTQI community and promoted our Foster Care and Disability Services to the LGBTQI and wider Newcastle community.

On Friday 31 August, 15 LWB sites also hosted a Wear it Purple Day celebration with Employees encouraged to wear an item (or more!) of purple clothing or an accessory on the day. Wear it Purple is a not for profit organisation that fosters supportive, safe and accepting environments for LGBTQI youth.

Throughout the latter half of the year we were also out and about promoting becoming a foster care at the Brisbane Pride Fair day in September, the Cairns Tropical Pride Fair Day in October and the PrideFEST Fair Day held in November in Perth.



Our new AIEP will be launched in early 2019

DISABILITY NEWS

Our Diversity and Inclusion team are on track to deliver LWB's next Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan (AIEP). Our new plan sets a target of 7.5% of our entire workforce to self-disclose disabilities by the end of 2020. There has been a wide consultation process to gather insights from staff across the country. We will also soon launch our first Disability Employee Network and in line with the 2018 International Day of People with Disability theme, we are excited about the opportunity to empower people with disabilities and ensure inclusiveness and equality.

MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™

Creating a community of carers

We often hear the phrase “it takes a village to raise a child.” The idea that a community bands together to support a child succeed and thrive resonates with us here at Life Without Barriers. We ask ourselves how can we utilise the benefits of community for children and carers who could gain so much from it?

MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ is a great way to do this.

MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ is an evidence informed approach to foster and kinship care that LWB has adopted to strengthen community connections for children, young people and their carers and families. It was first developed in 2004 in the USA by The Mockingbird Society and has been designed to improve the social and emotional well-being of children through the development of an ‘intentional community’. MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ creates a community network focused on the individual needs of its children and young people by ensuring carers are skilled, supported and confident in providing the best care for children and young people. Evaluations in the USA and UK show promising results in decreasing placement disruptions and improving the attraction and retention of carers.

MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ unites 6 to 10 foster and/or kinship carer homes in a local community called a Constellation which is supported by an experienced carer who takes on the role of Hub Home Provider. The Hub Home Provider is responsible for planned and emergency respite, the coordination of monthly Constellation meetings, quarterly social activities and a range of practical and emotional supports to the Constellation families. The Hub Home Provider is paid as an LWB member of the care team to provide the additional functions that are outside of the established caring role.



In July this year, LWB launched its first Constellation in the suburbs of Brisbane. It is a community of children and carers that live within a close range of one another and are building healthy connections.

The monthly Constellation meeting is a fun event with over ten children playing together, enjoying one another’s company and engaging in some arranged activities. The children now know each other well and they also know each other’s carers who they greet warmly. The carers are also eager to meet together, share their ideas and experiences and discuss how everyone in their Constellation is going. Everyone takes time to listen and understand one another and they all relate well to each other, respecting the knowledge and ‘lived experience’ of each other and learning together. As one of the carers said: *“The carers in my Constellation just get it”*.

Finding appropriate respite to meet the needs of children and young people in OOHc can sometimes be difficult. Children often have to adjust to new carers outside of the community where they live. MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ makes respite more family-like where children are able to spend planned and unplanned time with the Hub Home Provider who they know and have a trusting relationship with. This helps children build trusting relationships with adults and helps to alleviate anxiety of being away from their carers. If the Hub Home Provider is not available then one of the other Constellation carers who is also well known to the child or young person can provide respite *“We are like a grandparent figure to the children, like aunties and uncles,”* says the Hub Home Provider in the Brisbane Constellation.

Already the LWB support staff who work with the children in Brisbane have seen that the connections between the children in the Constellation are helping build social skills and self-confidence. Having new relationships with peers to interact with has benefitted a number of the children in this Constellation.

Another benefit of the Constellation has been the strengthening of carers’ relationships with each other. At the beginning of the MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellation in Brisbane, one of the carers shared how hard it had been for her to make friends. As a carer her time was dedicated to the caring for a child with complex support needs in her care. Becoming a member of the MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellation has opened up opportunities for her and her children to develop social relationships with other families, feel supported by peers and reduced her feelings of isolation.

As the Constellation grows in both numbers and the connections with one another, all carers in the Brisbane MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ are positive about this new approach. They especially like the practical support they’ve found within the group and meeting other carers who have walked in their shoes.

Life Without Barriers will launch more MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellations in the near future. Through these Constellations we will improve the outcomes for children and young people by supporting and empowering carers.

For more information about MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™, contact Chris Skinner, Practice Advisor, National Practice and Quality on Chris.Skinner@lwb.org.au

WELCOME ABOARD



Transfer of disability services in Victoria

As the NDIS rolls out across the country, The Victorian State Government has announced LWB as one of the five providers who will be responsible for a number of Supported Independent Living accommodation and Short Term/Respite services previously run by the state. LWB is delighted to partner with the Victorian Government to support the transfer of services which allows us to work with

participants and their families in Victoria and the Department of Health and Humans Services staff as services transfer in 2019.

Our number one commitment is to ensure participants, their families and DHHS staff experience a smooth and positive transfer. Within LWB there is a dedicated group of specialist staff who are working diligently to make sure participants,

families and staff have all the information they need and feel supported along the way.

Throughout late 2018, we attended numerous meet and greet sessions run by DHHS which allowed us to meet many DHHS staff and participants. You can visit a special website established to support the transfer and stay up to date by visiting www.lwbvic.org.au



Caitlin Rogers at the Camel Cup in Alice Springs

RACING WITHOUT BARRIERS

LWB runs naming competition for the Alice Springs Camel Cup

Held in July every year, the Alice Springs Camel Cup is a long held tradition in central Australia that brings together the community for a family friendly day of camel racing, laughs, bets and fun!

This year Life Without Barriers was a sponsor of the Cup meaning we were granted naming rights to our very own race. To add another layer of fun and get teams around the country involved, LWB Alice Springs held a naming competition that any staff member from LWB could enter and the winner would be rewarded with flights, accommodation and VIP entry to the Cup.

The lucky winner was Anne McKinstry, Program Manager OoHC Darwin with her entry: 'Life Without Bumps Cup'. As the winner, Anne was eligible for the prize but unfortunately had prior commitments that weekend so she couldn't attend. Luckily, the runner up could make it. So Caitlin Rogers, Case Manager Dandenong Victoria picked up the prize with her name 'Racing Without Barriers'. The naming competition attracted so many brilliant, enthusiastic entries from across the organisation, that it was pretty much a photo finish. Many entries – which came from a diverse range of positions throughout the organisation, came up with similar combinations to our two winners, but the exact combination of

words, including the tense and descriptors used, made the difference in a very tight race.

The day arrived for Caitlin and her colleague Emma Junhankit to head to Alice Springs for the Cup. They were lucky to spend the entire weekend in Alice Springs, where they checked out all the great programs offered by LWB in the local area and got dressed up to attend the event. Operations Manager Neil Egan and his team were extremely warm and welcoming. Emma and Caitlin met many of LWB's clients, as they also attended the race day. Hopefully the naming competition will run again in 2019 so more LWB staff can have a chance to attend this extraordinary event.

WE
LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS
VE

www.lwb.org.au