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Night of Stars



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Cover image: Heather McMillan (left) is presented with the Star Award by Colleen Stallion from Salary Solutions and Board President Susan Neuhaus



Vocal Point is the official newsletter of Minda

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FROM THE CEO CATHY MILLER

It was exciting to officially open Minda's new Mount Gambier-based office recently, which strengthens our regional presence and fills a major gap in local support. Made possible with the help of a Future Jobs fund grant by State Government, the new office is also predicted to create 100 jobs and provide a range of additional economic benefits to the local community.

Minda already has a strong presence in the metropolitan area, so it is fantastic to expand into other parts of the State. We have already received a number of enquiries from the Limestone Coast region by people keen to engage Minda as their service provider of choice.

With about 32,000 South Australians expected to access the NDIS by 2019-20, it is critical for Minda's long-term sustainability to lead the sector by offering competitively priced and innovative services and support.

Many of you would have seen the recently-released findings from an independent pricing review commissioned by the NDIA. In general, Minda welcomes and accepts the findings, but there is no doubt that the NDIS has certainly come at a cost. In fact, the 25 recommendations made in the pricing review are estimated to cost the NDIA an extra \$250 million to \$420 million to implement.

The recommendations include increasing travel allowances for carers working in rural areas from 20 minutes to 45 minutes; paying

more for highly skilled carers who look after clients with complex needs, and temporarily increasing the price of standard care to allow for the cost of overheads and administration.

Where the review falls short is it does not ensure financial sustainability for sector participants, which means that providers must further refine their business model to suit. The lingering concern for many operators is that NDIS pricing is inadequate to cover the actual labour costs of a skilled and stable workforce, nor the infrastructure needed to provide quality support. There are sure to be those that will have to close their doors because operating at a loss is simply not an option, and people left without a support provider will be impacted the most.

Minda has undertaken significant planning to have a sustainable operating model in place that will continue to support South Australians with disability. Our Minda 2020 strategic plan ensures we concentrate on innovation and sustainability initiatives so we can remain a leader in this highly-competitive environment. We continue to diversify our income streams through retirement living, smart investments and fundraising, with the most notable example being our Master Plan and creation of SA's largest disability support hub at Brighton.

And as we celebrate our 120-year anniversary milestone, there are sure to be plenty more changes to come. But what remains unchanged is our values and strong commitment in supporting people with disability to live the lives of their choosing.

Cathy Miller
Chief Executive Officer



FROM
THE
PRESIDENT
SUSAN
NEUHAUS



It is a pleasure to be able to provide an update on the progress of Minda's Master Plan and the progress of the Stage 2. As anyone who has visited the site recently will attest, the transformation of Minda's Brighton site continues to be nothing short of amazing and we are now close to the successful completion of Stage 2.

The people Minda supports now have greater diversity of choice as to the type of accommodation they want to enjoy, with a range of one and two-bedroom apartments, shared 3 and 4-bedroom community living options, and independent living units for people with high support needs, integrated into the Master Plan design.

We have already seen a number of people move into their new homes as part of Stage 2, and the final touches are now being put on the next component of Brighton Dunes.

Minda has gone to great lengths to set an industry benchmark with its Master Plan, and the success of this is showcased for all to see through our magnificent buildings. What isn't as easy to spot is the responsible approach that we have also taken to manage and minimise our environmental impact.

Nearly 95 per cent of waste materials created by demolition activity have been recycled rather than ending up in landfill. In fact, about 198 tonnes of concrete, 37 tonnes of steel, and 287 tonnes of other building materials have been separated to be used again. In addition, almost 1,700 cubic metres of clean sand excavated has been returned to the beach front under the guidance of the local council and EPA to

help combat natural erosion of the primary dune system.

That work supports the comprehensive rehabilitation program of the dunes and enhancing the secondary dune system through native revegetation initiatives, including construction of wetlands to attract native fauna to the area.

More than 80 per cent of our Brighton site will be retained as open space. Greater connectedness with the local community will also be assisted by removing perimeter fencing and replacing with pathways and road networks around the site. These initiatives will be complemented by public art, areas designed to promote interest and enjoyment and development of a new café to replace Isabel's.

The State Government has recently announced funding to extend the coast park walking trail across the front of Minda's property and provide an uninterrupted 70km metropolitan coastal trail for the community to enjoy. Minda has offered a 500m easement as a gift to the local community which will make it far more accessible for people with disability, older people, parents with pushers and cyclists and an asset for all South Australians.

This ongoing initiative provides another example of how our Master Plan is creating a vibrant community hub, encouraging increased social inclusion and improving lives.

Susan Neuhaus CSC
President

120 Years of Minda

This year is Minda's 120th, and we are celebrating the milestone throughout 2018!

This has included the launch of a special 120-year logo, our 120 Faces of Minda on Facebook and Instagram, and a soon to be unveiled coffee table book, featuring a photographic history of Minda.

"The coffee table book is such a wonderful way to commemorate Minda's 120 years, and we look forward to launching it at the official opening of our new Lifestyle Precinct in July,"
Cathy Miller says.

"There has been a great response to our '120 Faces of Minda' on Facebook and Instagram, which acknowledges some of the fantastic staff, people we support, volunteers, corporate partners and friends of Minda who have made a significant impact on the organisation, and helped improve the lives of people with disability."

Minda will also be celebrating 120 years at the major fundraising event for the year, the Rock Carnival, which you can read more about on page 11.

"Celebrating 120 years is an amazing milestone and it is clear to me that the great success of Minda rests on the work of its capable and dedicated staff, our customers, our Board, volunteers and of course the Minda community."

Chris Loves Independent Living

Chris is relishing having his own space and living independently in his new apartment at Minda Brighton. Chris chose a one-bedroom apartment in the new apartment building on Bonython Way.

A further 65 people transitioned into accommodation based on their choice of where they wanted to live, who they wanted to live with and how they wanted to live their lives.

Having previously lived in some of the old congregate dwellings at Brighton and in the community before that, Chris says his new apartment is by far “the best”.

“My favourite thing is having space to myself,” Chris says. “Before the move I was really looking forward to living in my own place and being independent. The apartments are good because I’ve got my own space, but there’s other people around for socialising too.”

Chris has two budgerigars in his apartment, Hamish and Jack, and he especially likes the view from his apartment balcony.

“From my balcony, I can see a bit of the ocean, I can see planes taking off, I can see the Grand at Glenelg,” he says. “Living here has made me happier.”

Minda’s allied health team, Southern Disability Support (SDS) played a crucial role in preparing people for the move.



Chris on his balcony

Accommodation Services Manager Lisa Feder says SDS assisted with transition books for each person.

“SDS developmental educators supported each customer to develop a transition book, documenting their individual process regarding the move and also assisted with coordinating visits and for some customers attended orientation at their new homes,” Lisa says.

“This process was very successful as an individual approach was taken in supporting each person with their transition to a new way of living.”

In addition to the new apartment building on Bonython Way where Chris is enjoying his new home, people have also settled into the new Bright apartment building off Fassina Way as well as nine new homes on Fassina Way – built as part of Minda’s Master Plan Stage 2 construction.

Waste Not Want Not

Minda is setting the benchmark when it comes to the environmental management of the Master Plan and the demolition of existing accommodation blocks had seen nearly 95% of materials recycled for re-use rather than ending up in landfill.

“Our old ward-style accommodation blocks needed to be replaced, but we have wanted to do it in an environmentally responsible way. It has been very pleasing to see building materials recycled, which includes concrete, steel and other building materials to be used again,” Cathy says.

Under EPA and local council guidance there has also been has also been around 1,700 cubic metres of sand redeposited to the dunes to help combat natural erosion of the primary dune system.

Native revegetation initiatives have also helped to enhance and rehabilitate the secondary dune system, with the introduction of wetlands.

More than 80% of the Brighton site will be retained as open space, and as part of Minda’s commitment to preserving and maintaining the natural heritage value there is a well-established program in place to monitor and maintain significant and regulated trees and other plantings.



Sand being redeposited onto the primary dune in 2017



Mount Gambier Office Opening - Minda's Disability Choices office in Mount Gambier



Mount Gambier Mayor Andrew Lee and Cathy Miller at the opening, cutting of the ribbon



Mayor Andrew Lee and Cathy Miller during the speeches

Mount Gambier Office Opening

Minda has celebrated the official opening of its Disability Choices office in Mount Gambier. The office meets growing demand from Limestone Coast families wanting local access to disability support services and programs.

The office was officially opened on 1 May by Mayor of the City of Mount Gambier, Andrew Lee, and Minda CEO, Cathy Miller.

It means that families living across the Limestone Coast now have access to a much greater range of day options, in-home support, advice, advocacy, training packages, allied health services recreation and leisure activities for adults and children of all ages.

With the help of a Future Jobs fund grant by the State Government, Cathy says the new office will provide economic benefits to the local community, including the creation of 100 jobs.

"Minda has a strong presence and reputation for excellence in the southern metropolitan area, and more recently in Adelaide's north, so it is fantastic to now expand into other parts of the State. We have already received a number of enquiries from the Limestone Coast region by people

keen to engage Minda as their service provider of choice," she says.

"We already support more than 1,800 people with disability in metropolitan and regional South Australia, and the community has told us there is significant unmet need in the Limestone Coast region due to the limited existing services available."

Cathy says that local families also want help with navigating the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and advice on how it might impact on their specific circumstances and needs.

"Disability Choices is the gateway to services and supports at Minda and we're proud to set the benchmark in South Australia when it comes to individualised program options that puts a person at the very centre of decision-making, and we

have gone to great efforts to transform our organisation to best-prepare for the widespread changes arising from the NDIS," Cathy says.

"Families have told us they are lost when it comes to knowing what they or their child want or need and are confused about what is available to them. Minda will help them to better understand the NDIS and what it means to individuals and their families.

"We expect strong local demand for our highly-popular MyPATH day program, as well as allied health services, and we also plan to explore the need for accommodation and respite service options for people with disability in the region."

Minda's Disability Choices Mount Gambier office is located at Commerce Arcade, Shop 3, 28 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier.

For more information, please contact Disability Choices on **1800 164 632**.

Thailand Relationship Strengthened



Chai, who has autism (pictured at left), uses the My Feelings app



Attendees at the second week of training



Staff from the Department of Empowerment for Persons with Disability



Fran is thanked by an official

Building new connections and strengthening existing ones was the focus of a 'very positive' trip to Thailand as part of Minda's relationship with the Thai Government.

Senior Manager, Learning and Development, Frances Tullis, along with Learning and Development Coordinator Brenton Hales and Developmental Educator Michelle Kappler spent two weeks in Bangkok to deliver two training programs as part of professional development in late February / early March.

Fran says the first program was delivered to 53 people from the Department of Empowerment for Persons with Disability, including staff and volunteers, as well as community based volunteers, family members and people with disability.

"This program focussed on skills building and supporting community integration for people with disability," she says.

"In the second week, we presented to 57 people from the Department of Social Development and Welfare. This program was about supporting people considered homeless and destitute with skill building and community transition.

"This training had some familiar faces for Minda – our recent Thai exchangees Man and Bell, and Fah and Tong.

"One of the highlights was hearing Man, Bell, Fah and Tong presenting to the group their experiences of coming on exchange to Minda. They talked about what they had implemented in their work back at home – Bell and Tong are in Bangkok, and Fah and Man are in regional areas.

"It was great to note that all of them had emulated or replicated parts of MyPATH. They also encouraged others to apply for an exchange."

Fran says in addition to the training, highlights of this program included visiting the Autistic Thai Foundation, Autistic Centre Nonthaburi, the Banrajawadee home for boys with disability, and Centre for Persons with Disability Occupational Promotion workshop.

Other highlights included sharing Minda's 'My Feelings' app with students, and Michelle sharing how to make sensory boxes for supporting people with autism.

"It was a full-on two weeks, but there were a lot of great outcomes. We made many new connections during this training program," Fran says.

"Feedback from both our training programs was really positive, with all the students leaving with action plans to roll out. The staff who attended demonstrated a real passion and desire to provide good quality services, and what we provided allows them to take skeleton tools and modify them for roll out in their areas."

Fran has been involved in the Thailand training program for five years and says there's a significant difference now in how services are provided and resourced.

"It's much more person centered, there's a growing awareness around getting people engaged, and we're seeing some great outcomes and changes," she says. "It's rewarding to see that what we're doing with the exchange helps to make a difference."



Brenton Hales, Fran Tullis and Michelle Kappler with Thai department officials

Celebrating our Shining Stars

The outstanding commitment of Minda and SAGE employees was celebrated at the annual Night of Stars on 6 April at the Stamford Grand, Glenelg.

The night honoured staff who have demonstrated great success in their work, with disability support worker Heather McMillan taking home the top award.

Heather was presented with the Salary Solutions Unsung Hero Star Award by Colleen Stallion from Salary Solutions and Minda's Board President Susan Neuhaus.

Heather says being presented with the award is an experience she will never forget: "I will always remember this Night of Stars as it was very special to me, as Minda also celebrates 120 years," she says.

Cathy Miller says Heather is passionate about everything she does at Minda. "She is dedicated to supporting people with disability and her colleagues, and always strives to do her very best," Cathy says.

"Heather is very respectful and always

accountable, quietly working to ensure the needs of those living at Brighton North are met. Always keen to offer suggestions and solutions when the need arises, Heather's dedication is appreciated by colleagues, families and the people she supports."

Cathy says Night of Stars is an important annual event in honouring the contribution employees make to the success of Minda and SAGE.

"Night of Stars is all about recognising the outstanding achievements of individuals and teams across our business."

Cathy thanked corporate supporters Salary Solutions, BankSA, Hesta, Phil Hoffmann Travel, Terry White Chemmart Marion Compounding and Your Nursing Agency.

"In particular, I would like to express sincere thanks to Salary Solutions for their ongoing support of this event since its inception in 2012," she says.

The event was hosted by Angus O'Loughlin from radio station Hit 107, with music from band The Flaming Sambucas.

Night Of Stars Award Winners

Salary Solutions
Star Award (Unsung Hero)
Heather McMillan, Brighton North

Your Nursing Agency
Service Excellence Support Staff
Rajesh Kumar

HESTA
Service Excellence Corporate Staff
Peter Watchman

Phil Hoffmann Travel
Excellence in Leadership
Stephen Meredith

BankSA
Innovative Solutions
Terry Kaiser

TerryWhite Chemmart Marion Compounding
Team Performance
Envirocare



Heather McMillan (centre) with Cathy Miller and Colleen Stallion



The ERA team enjoy the sunset with Cathy Miller on the balcony at the Stamford Grand



Plenty of fun was had in the photo booth



Rajesh Kumar, winner of the Service Excellence Award for support staff



Terry Kaiser, Innovative Solutions award winner, with BankSA's John Pielich



Peter Watchman, with Colleen Hogan from HESTA

Adelaide Development Company

A family business established in 1922, Adelaide Development Company (ADC) is one of the state's leading developers, having created more than 35,000 residential allotments in South Australia.

ADC's commitment to quality is paramount, and its dedicated team of industry professionals carry on the tradition of excellence in every project. The company takes a long-term strategic position to optimise value through direct ownership, or in joint venture with compatible organisations, like Minda.

For more than 95 years, Adelaide Development Company has been creating landmark residential and commercial developments in South Australia based on a clear philosophy.

"We believe good design is timeless and we adopt a long-term strategic position to optimise value, whether through direct ownership or in partnership with similarly-minded individuals or organisations," CEO of ADC, Ian Marker says.

"As a family owned business spanning three generations, we believe integrity is paramount; leading edge thinking and a culture of offering 'the best' in any given market demonstrates our commitment to do the 'right thing' and not just take the easy option," he adds.

ADC's continuous 20-year relationship with Minda through the award-winning Blackwood Park development is a perfect example. "We welcome discussion with anyone that shares our vision and

philosophy to form a mutually rewarding partnership."

ADC is proud of its partnership with Minda in the creation of the Blackwood Park residential development, and continues to support Minda in the valuable services it provides to the community.

To learn more about ADC and its projects, call **(08) 8223 1488** or visit www.adelaidedevelopment.com.au



Blackwood Park development

Salary Solutions

L eading national salary packaging provider and long-time supporter of Minda, Salary Solutions have been helping employers and employees make the most of their benefits since 2004.

"The expert support we provide ensures our clients and their employees can take full advantage of benefits available to them, delivering an efficient and effective employee benefits program that maximises savings available to employees," Client Relationship Manager Colleen Stallion says.

"Providing great value service is so important to us and we can support a wide range of salary packaging needs."

Salary packaging can help deliver additional benefits to employees in a variety of industries and Salary Solutions' goal is to make salary packaging easy.

"Our range of employee benefits can be tailored to your industry and your needs, and they can be simple too – saving you time and money," Colleen says.

Salary Solutions are valued supporters of Minda, and have been



Colleen Stallion (middle) with Minda Board President Susan Neuhaus and Night of Stars finalist Matthew Reiche

major sponsor of employee recognition events Night of Stars and Stars of Minda since their inception.

"We are proud to have such a long history with Minda, and we have a particular fondness for the 'Stars' award evenings – they're always so much fun and a wonderful way to recognise the great work of Minda staff members."

To find out more about Salary Solutions, call **1800 680 180**, or visit their website www.salarysolutions.com.au

News from Reynella

More than 180 supported employees at the Commercial Enterprises Reynella site are settling into their 'big and bright' facility located off Panalatinga Road.

Supported employees are enjoying the spacious warehouse facility, meeting their peers from other areas and getting to see other work going on nearby – and the canteen has been met with much enthusiasm too!

Packaging employee Aaron says his favourite things about Reynella are "seeing new and different people" and "the canteen"!

"It's much bigger and brighter, there's lots of space and I like getting to see different people," says Aaron, who worked at Packing Solutions Lonsdale for six years before the move to Reynella.

Misha takes pride in her work at Reynella, enjoying the new surroundings along with her TRAK Furniture peers and says, "The work is good and I've met a few new people."

Adam is enthusiastic about his new work place: "It's very big, there's more room, more space, which is great," he says.

"I've got lots of friends here. I think it's quite good actually to see everything, and to see all the other areas of work."

Commercial businesses which moved into the Reynella facility in January were Packaging Solutions Lonsdale, Packaging Solutions Somerton Park, TRAK Furniture, Horn Australia and Wire Ware.

General Manager Commercial Enterprises, Jamie Higgins says there is a 'one-team' approach at Reynella.

Jamie says supported employees are working in 'manufacturing' or 'packaging', with the opportunity for them to work across different areas of the business and expand their skillset.

"We're getting close to six-month mark since the move and I'm very pleased to say that employees have transitioned really well," he says.

"The atmosphere at the site is so positive and it's fantastic to get to work with such a great team of people."



Aaron takes pride in his packaging work



Adam with John Kinnear at Reynella



Misha enjoys her labelling work



The volunteer parade in full swing

National Volunteer Week

To celebrate the invaluable contribution volunteers make, Minda took part in the annual National Volunteer Week parade on 21 May.

The annual celebration acknowledges the generous contribution of volunteers, with events held across the country from 21 to 27 May with the National Volunteer Week theme: Give a little. Change a lot.

Volunteer Coordinator Debi Carr was instrumental in organising the Minda cohort and says the parade was a great success:

"Marching down King William Street with our volunteers was such a thrill, and I'm so pleased we could recognise their outstanding contribution to Minda."

The parade was followed by a barbeque at Victoria Square, with around 35 people representing Minda.

"Thank you to everyone who marched and to everyone who lends their time and talents to support Minda – every hour makes a difference, so the Give a little. Change a lot theme was so appropriate," Debi says.

Coin Collection Champs

Coin collection volunteers John O'Neil and Murray Stewart enjoy driving, building relationships and making a difference.

They work as a pair in Minda's coin collection program, which involves travelling to locations across Adelaide and some regional areas to install, empty and replace coin collection units hosted by various local businesses.

"We encourage other people to consider joining the Minda coin collection program. Your help will be much appreciated as more hands make light work," John says.

Fundraising & Volunteer Services Manager Lauren Halliday says Minda is always keen to hear from people who might like to volunteer as coin collectors: "If you can spare one day every three months, during business hours, to travel to our host businesses to empty units, we'd love to hear from you," Lauren says.

"Similarly, we'd love to hear from community-minded businesses willing to host a Minda coin collection 'house'."

For more information, please contact Community Engagement Coordinator, Shelley Pyrah on **8422 6544** or email: community@minda.asn.au



John and Murray all set for a coin collection outing



Rosemary and Towsif collecting donations

Glenelg Footy Fundraiser

On Saturday 19 May, the Glenelg Tigers took on the Adelaide Crows at Gliderol Stadium and Minda volunteers were there to soak up the amazing atmosphere!

Glenelg Football Club has been supporting Minda since 2015 and the game gave Minda an opportunity to fundraise with volunteers collecting coins at the gates, with around \$250 raised on the day.

Thank you to everyone who took part, and thanks Glenelg Football Club for helping Minda to continue to kick goals!



CMI Toyota

We're very pleased to announce that CMI Toyota have signed on as a corporate partner of Minda!

The CMI (Commercial Motor Industries) history spans more than 50 years and in 1963, CMI Toyota became the South Australian distributor for Toyota commercial vehicles.

CMI Toyota is South Australia's number one Toyota dealer and the team at the West Terrace dealership has been a major supplier of fleet vehicles to Minda for over a decade.

In addition to providing an outstanding customer and supplier service, the CMI Toyota team, in conjunction with the CMV Foundation, have for many years supported Minda's fundraising efforts.

Through sponsorship, attendance at fundraising events and the donation of funds for special projects and equipment, CMI Toyota has made regular contributions which have resulted in improving the lives and wellbeing of people supported by Minda.

"One of CMI's key values is commitment to employees, customers and our wider community and we're so pleased to be partnering with Minda to help enrich the lives of South Australians with disability," CMI Toyota Branch Manager, Adam McCallum says.



CMI Toyota Adelaide

CMI Toyota Adelaide is South Australia's favourite and most awarded Toyota Dealer and CMI stocks the largest range of new and Toyota certified used cars and they're nearing the end of their EOFYS, or end of financial year sale.

There are still a range of amazing specials available – for more information visit their website www.cmitoyota.com.au, or contact their Adelaide, Cheltenham or Christies Beach store.

Mother's Day Wrap Up

Minda was delighted to be back in Adelaide Arcade for Mother's Day Gift Wrapping on 11 and 12 May, raising around \$200.

Minda has been gift wrapping in Adelaide Arcade since December 2013, with the opportunity provided by Minda donor and head of Adelaide Arcade Andrew Jonats.

Thank you to Andrew, the team from Adelaide Arcade and all of the volunteers for their generous support!



Our amazing wrappers at the booth

Rock Carnival Auction

On Friday 29 June, the Adelaide Convention Centre is going to come alive with the Minda and Phil Hoffmann Travel Rock Carnival, with all proceeds going toward helping to brighten the lives of South Australians with disability.

Even if you can't make it to the rock extravaganza, you can bid in the online auction on everything from a family pass to feed the giraffe's at Adelaide Zoo, to a luxury weekend getaway in the Clare Valley, there is something for everyone!

To find out what's on offer, visit:

www.mindainc.com.au/rockcarnival





Dale started the Special Olympics torch run at Glenelg

Special Olympics Success

Employees in Minda's Commercial Enterprises had some outstanding success at the recent Special Olympics Australia National Games, held in Adelaide, bringing home an impressive medals tally.

Envirocare employee, Jim, is no beginner when it comes to a national level sporting competition. The recent Games saw Jim compete for the third time, bringing home a silver medal in the men's division one basketball. The team has been together for four years and practice every Saturday morning.

"Division one is the toughest category. We won every match against teams from Victoria and New South Wales, except for the grand final unfortunately," Jim says.

Starting out playing basketball when he was seven, Jim remains a strong fan of the sport: "I just love going on court. And I'm always meeting new people!" he says.

The adventurous 21-year-old is now considering competing in swimming at the next Special Olympics, as well as exploring Aussie rules football.

Dale also took home an impressive medal haul, with the 22-year-old representing

South Australia in several tenpin bowling events, with a performance that was nothing short of impressive.

Winning medals in three categories, gold in the doubles and singles events, and a silver in the team event, Dale says initial nerves were quickly dispelled.

"I was nervous on the first day and again on the last day as it was a big game against people I'd never met before. But once I start to bowl, the nerves just go away," he says.

The Laundry & Linen Services employee has bowled competitively for 14 years and having had his first taste of national Special Olympics competition, Dale is now looking forward to more national and even international competitions in the future.

On behalf of the Minda community, congratulations to Dale and Jim on their incredible results; we can't wait to see what you have in store next!



Dale and Jim with their medals



Jim back at work at Envirocare

Having Their Say

Four self-advocates supported by Minda have enjoyed the opportunity to have a say about issues that affect their lives and to celebrate ability and achievement.

Chris, Brenton, Katelynn and Jessica attended the Having a Say Conference in Geelong, along with Developmental Educator Melissa Cheung and MyPATH support leader Karen Berry.

The Having a Say Conference is the largest conference for people with disabilities in Australia, where people can find their voice, speak up, be heard and be respected. More than 1,000 people attended from across Australia.

Chris gave a presentation on the first day of the conference, on the main stage.



Chris presenting on stage for Our Voice

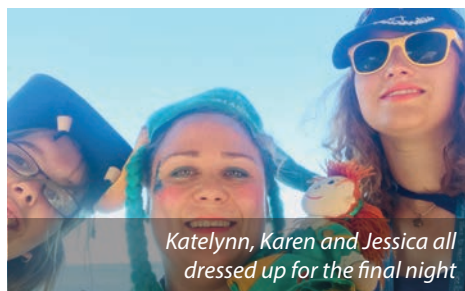
"I felt good and confident about the presentation," Chris says. Chris presented the same presentation in Tasmania last year, and says he enjoyed catching up with his friends from Our Voice.

Jessica and Katelynn gave a joint presentation on the second day of the conference to talk about 'Our life and our community', which was the theme of the conference.

"We felt like lots of people were listening to us speak," Katelynn says.

Jessica and Katelynn say they felt good that they got to speak up, and speak about what they do including advocacy at Minda and leadership at MyPATH.

"My favourite moment was getting up and



Katelynn, Karen and Jessica all dressed up for the final night



Jessica arrives in Geelong for the conference

speaking during the open mic (on the first day)," Jessica says.

The number of people who are able to attend the conference depends on the amount of money raised from the Express Yourself Quiz Night and Easter Raffle, so make sure you support these fundraisers in 2018!



Karen, Jessica and Katelynn enjoy speaking up!

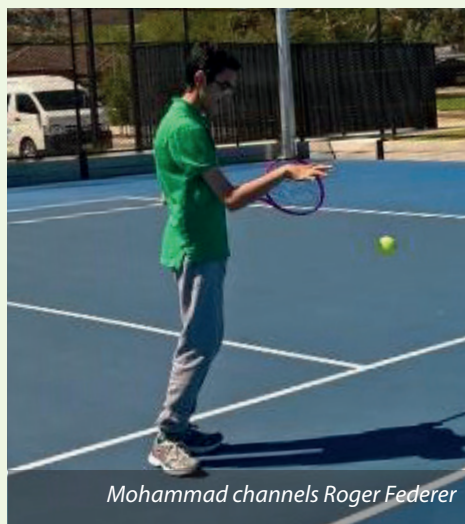
MyPATH in the North

It's been an active last few months for MyPATH at Minda's Northern office, with lots of fun and exciting outings.

First, the group visited Minda's ReStyle Sanctuary on Brighton Road where they learned about working in a retail environment.

They then headed to the Turramurra Recreation Centre at Highbury and the new tennis courts at Elizabeth. Everyone had fun working up a sweat while practicing hand and eye coordination through a range of fun games.

It was the first time many in the group had tried playing tennis, with Mohammad saying, "The ball is very tricky... it bounces so quickly!" Keep up the great work team!



Mohammad channels Roger Federer



Benjie enjoys a set of tennis

Cert III Brings Success

Making the decision to change careers and return to study has brought much fulfillment for former school teacher Donna Atkin, who now works in Minda's MyPATH program.

Donna, who formerly worked in both mainstream and special education for the Education Department, completed the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) at the South Australian Learning Centre (SALC) in 2015.

“I had been looking for a change in career, but I knew from my previous work that I really enjoyed working with children with disability,” Donna says.

“I did the Certificate III at SALC three years ago and got through it really quickly, in just six months. I then did my placement in MyPATH, which was probably the best hands-on learning I could have got. When I talked to people who were studying elsewhere, I saw them really struggling to find placements, but at SALC they organised our placements for us.”

Donna recommends the Cert III in Individual Support (Disability) at SALC to anyone considering a career change.

“At a later age, going back and studying some 15 or 20 years since you last did so ... it can be quite daunting,” she says.

“But I found all the lecturers were fantastic; you could contact them any time and they'd be there to help. The support from SALC was incredible.”

After her placement, Donna secured a permanent position in MyPATH in the leisure and recreation program.

“MyPATH has all different areas – there's cooking, there's IT, but the leisure and recreation program is where my skills fitted the best because I'm someone who likes to get out and about and be quite active,” she says.

“The best thing about working at Minda is the people you work with, both the staff and the people Minda supports, and the activities we do.”

Donna took on a Pathway Session Lead role at the start of this year and is about to upgrade her qualifications to a Certificate IV in Disability, again through SALC.

“I'm happy I've made that decision to go back and study, it's definitely something I want to keep on doing and keep on growing ... and hopefully I'll be working in this field for another 15 years,” she says.

For more information about courses at the South Australian Learning Centre, visit the SALC website

www.salearningcentre.com.au or call **8422 6530**.



Donna working on IT skills with Josh



The South Australian Learning Centre at Minda Brighton

New Opportunities for Noah

When Noah was only little, he was diagnosed with autism, a lifelong developmental disorder, which affects how his brain processes information.

"Noah had been hitting all his milestones along with his twin sister, until he was about 12 months old. And then it was like we lost him," Noah's mum, Kate, says. "He suddenly didn't want to be around us, he stopped talking and went vacant."

The once happy, engaging Noah suddenly disengaged; the little boy the family had come to know over the first year of his life was no longer there.

Noah is now 11 years old; he is non-verbal and needs constant supervision. Unable to communicate, he makes noises to express heightened emotions like excitement or fear.

Noah struggles to sleep through the night and also doesn't understand safety, which is dangerous when he wants to explore and runs out of sight.

"Noah doesn't really have any friends. He doesn't go to parties or get asked on play dates, and I understand why, but I feel sad for him," says Kate.

"I just hope that Noah can lead a happy, fulfilled life like the rest of us and isn't destined to a life of loneliness and boredom. I couldn't bear that."

With your help, we can support Noah and his family to live a happier and less stressful life. Fortunately, Minda has been able to provide Noah with a team of support workers who spend time with him two on one and help Noah by taking him out and getting him used to coping in various situations.

"Noah has two support workers that come and take him out. I don't want him to

just be babysat – he's got these new friends now, that's how I see them," Kate says.

"They are so kind and understanding of him. They don't bat an eyelid at his behaviours. He has gone to inflatable world, play cafes, Henley Beach, playgrounds; he is getting all these experiences, whereas before he would've just stayed home with me.

"Kids his age often play with their friends and don't hang out with their parents all day. He never really got that. But now, he is going out with his friends and having a ball."

A huge difference can be made in someone's life when they receive the support they need and the over and above support Minda provides, support that children like Noah deserve, can only happen with help from the Minda community.

"I knew that we needed support, not just to enhance Noah's life but also to give time to our other children. It's their childhood too," Kate says.

"Now, when one of our children has sport or a presentation night, they can have both their parents there. One of us doesn't have to stay home with Noah, because we know that he is off having fun, doing something he wants to do. It's important to be able to do things like that.

"Now that we are receiving support I feel so much more confident. There are people to help us. We're not alone," Kate says.



THANK YOU



Minda thanks the many generous individuals and businesses who support people with disability.

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