

August 2019

# CONNECTIONS PLUS AUSTRALIA

## Newsletter

### A new place and...

***We're expanding!*** Some of you may have known that we've been looking for a suitable place to accommodate our 'Day Program'. Well, after many anxious months we finally can inform you that we did find a suitable place.

***Where is it?*** Most of you would know the building as the former Manager's Residence, which is the building near the Tura Beach Library.

***Why did we chose this building?*** It's very conveniently situated, with 2 shopping centres and the library very close by and ample parking. An internal rebuild will revamp this building to meet everyone's needs and make this a versatile Day Program facility.

We've already met with our builder, Grant Dowdle, who has been very helpful with ideas. Our next step is to meet with the drafts person and prepare our Development Application to Council.

We'll keep you posted on the building works.



### ... a new face

**Connections Plus welcomes our new Support Coordinator, Shannon Sutton, to our team.**



I've called the Far South Coast of NSW home for the past 10 years and love living amongst the beaches and national parks.

Over the last 4-5 years, I have worked in various roles within the Disability industry and have enjoyed getting to know and support various individuals along the way.

I'm currently working as a Support Coordinator and am well versed in the NDIS and

have worked in a collaborative environment with the NDIS, local service providers, clinicians and local businesses since the NDIS roll out in the Bega Valley. Providing an individualised approach, I'll support you to understand your NDIS plan, while working towards the goals outlined within.



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## Music program

After a successful introduction, we will continue to have music teacher Ricky Bloomfield delight our participants with music and songs that encourage movement and participation each fortnight. Under Ricky's encouragement, everyone has the opportunity for a solo contribution on their percussion instruments and generally respond enthusiastically.

Thank you to the Merimbula RSL Club for your continued support in providing the venue to run this valuable program. The music program runs in line with the NSW school term, and will resume Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July at 11am in the RSL Basement.

Participants are encouraged to bring a percussion instrument or instrument of choice to each session.

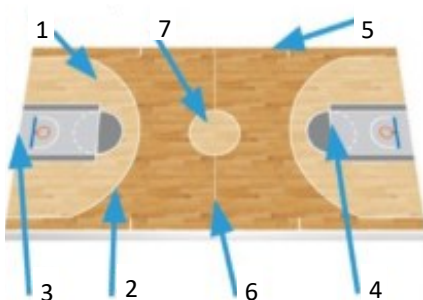


*Interested in joining music with Ricky Bloomfield and our Basketball skills program? Let us know via email [connections@connectionsplus.com.au](mailto:connections@connectionsplus.com.au) or phone 6495 3797*



## LABELING BASKETBALL COURT PARTS

Can you name the numbered parts of a basketball court? Write your answers on the list below.



- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_

## Basketball skills program

The Merimbula Basketball Association continue to support our ball skills program each Tuesday fortnightly at the Merimbula courts located in Ocean Drive Merimbula. Repetitive skills of throwing, catching, passing and rolling a ball not only enhance hand eye co-ordination and gross motor skills, but also muscle response; all whilst co-operating in a social group in the great outdoors.

Thank you to Sarah Maguire for your energy and bringing big smiles to all of our participants at each session. Basketball skills will recommence fortnightly Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 11am. Participants are reminded to bring a hat and a drink bottle to each session.



## Soup On Saturday

**EDEN UNITING CHURCH**  
St George's - Est. 1866  
20 CHANDOS STREET, EDEN NSW 2551



**Soup On Saturday**

EVERY SATURDAY - 27 JULY to 31 AUGUST

**DOORS OPEN - 5:00pm**

Join us for a hot meal and a movie.  
All Welcome!



**MOVIE STARTS 6:30pm**

SOUP ON SATURDAY kicks off Saturday 27 July from 5:00pm at the Eden Uniting Church hall with a free meal and a movie!

All are welcome to enjoy hot soup and a chat in the warmth of the Community Pantry Hall, located next to the church. Movie is announced each week on the Soup on Saturday facebook page.

It will be soupa to see you all there!



Did you know there are four ways to manage funding in your NDIS plan?

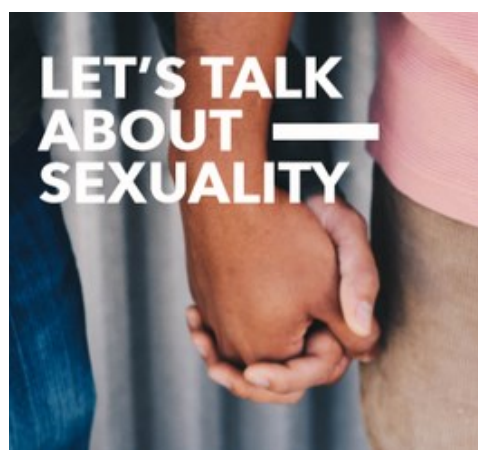
**ndis**

**There are four ways to manage the funding in your plan**

1. Self management
2. Plan management
3. NDIA management
4. Combination of above

For more information, download booklet 2 - Planning at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/how-planning-process-works>

*Interested in attending a free workshop?*



## A FREE WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS WITH A DISABILITY

Birds and Bees will be delivering our 'Lets talk about Sexuality' Workshop for adults with a disability in Merimbula on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October.

The workshop is free for participants and support staff. 20 of these workshops are being rolled out across NSW in 2019 and this is the only time that the workshop will be in **Merimbula**. The workshop is funded through the NDIS- ILC (Information, Linkage and Capacity Building Grants.)

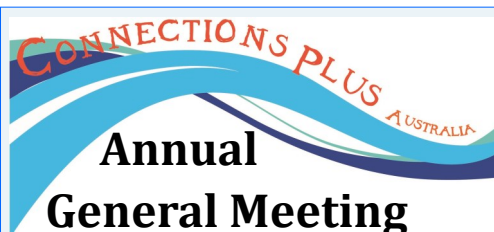
If you have any questions, please contact Jodi Rodgers on 0422 371 331 or [jodi@birdsandbees.com.au](mailto:jodi@birdsandbees.com.au)  
Registrations will close on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

For more info and to register: [www.birdsandbees.com.au/what-s-on](http://www.birdsandbees.com.au/what-s-on)

**WHERE:** Merimbula RSL  
**WHEN:** Thursday 10th October, 2019  
**TIME:** 9.00am for a 9.30 start / 3.30pm finish



Delivered by the  
National Disability  
Insurance Agency



Connections Plus will be holding our **Annual General Meeting 23 October, 2019** 7:00pm in the William Dawes Room, Merimbula RSL.

Supper and light refreshments will be supplied.

RSVP by 16th October to (02) 6495 3797 for catering purposes.



## Connections Plus Australia TRAVELS WITH NDIS ...

### Prices update

On 1 July 2019, the NDIS updated its price guide. This has meant a price increase for some services. Your NDIS plan budget is automatically increased to allow for this price increase.

Connections Plus Australia remains competitive in its pricing by not charging establishment fees or evening rates and minimising our costs where possible when providing short term accommodation assistance.

Some of our most commonly used rates are:

Weekday: \$56.81

Saturday: \$78.14

Sunday: \$101.61



Damon Borch enjoying the garden

Reminiscing on NDIS can be stressful. Reflecting on the NDIS journey then and now, Rainer takes a minute to explain:

Year one, year two and year three of the NDIS rollout in our region felt like a battle every day (sometimes even every hour). The 'Portal' disaster, the mental health eligibility, Planners, LAC's, Reasonable and Necessary disputes, OT reports and quotes, pricing pressures etc, etc. What a nightmare. It was never-ending and naturally that took a lot of energy to maintain. Almost every month the goal posts got moved, but '*Patience is a virtue*'.



Damon Borch washing up

Since these frustrating beginnings we finally started to see a light at the end of a never-ending tunnel, at least that's what it felt like. Yet since, every couple of months or so, there was a landmark ruling or decision made, which finally made sense to us.

### Our CEO reflects on our journey with the NDIS

Our confidence in the system rose and all of a sudden everyone's energy levels rose to another level. NDIS, the system finally made some sense. Today we are closer than ever to a truly national Scheme. Networking and partnering with other providers is more common than ever, which makes for fantastic ideas and concepts and with today's technology we don't have to travel as much, we now can use Skype, face-time and WhatsApp to communicate and pick the brains of anyone who lets us. NDIS has won us over.

We at CPA are proud not to see our Participants as numbers and spreadsheets. More than ever we're totally person centred with an eye on the long term goals. After all, we are in the people business and the support we deliver and the advocacy battles we wage are very often a matter of being able to guarantee a better life for our Participants and our care staff.

Getting the NDIS right for Participants is a serious business with serious goals comprising serious work, but it's also enjoyable, diverse, emotional, joyous and sometimes funny. Now it's time to smell the roses and don't be afraid to laugh at the appropriate time. Now is the time to enjoy the progress we all have made and look forward to more good news to come.

As of Dec 2018

**73,000**

**Australians are receiving NDIS supports for the first time.**

## Talented staff of Connections Plus Australia

Congratulations to Joanne Clarke who featured in the Valley's latest production "Ladies in Black" which sold out every night and received standing ovations. You might have recognised Jo in her solo dance with a soldier.



You may have seen Shannon Sutton in the Merimbula Weekly Times. Merimbula Tennis Club's autumn/winter competition has concluded with a win for the Wombats who went into the finals in fourth place.

Starting in February the competition finished in June with four top teams playing each other. Despite going in as the underdogs at number four, the team pulled out all the stops to perform on the night and take top spot.



Tennis night comp winners, John Tobias, Logan Staight, Denise Dion and Shannon Sutton



**Australians have some form of disability. That's over 4 million Aussies**



**Wanting to know more about Guardianship or need legal advice? Contact IDRS...**

IDRS is a community legal centre (CLC) which focuses on the rights of people with intellectual disability.

We have 3 lawyers who can provide legal advice to people with intellectual disability about a range of legal issues including criminal matters (and AVOs), consumer rights, complaints about services and service contracts (particularly in relation to the NDIS), credit, debt, discrimination, employment, fines and also guardianship and financial management. Many people do not understand guardianship, what it means, how it works etc, and so it can be very important to speak to a lawyer about these things.

We are also able to provide legal advice to anyone with an intellectual disability who has been arrested between 9am and 10pm every day. You can get advice by calling 1300 665 908.



From the coast to the snow fields, it's all fun with Connections Plus Australia.

## Compliments and complaints

Happy with our service, or not so happy, and would like to let us know?

You can contact the Service Manager on 0427 953 795 or, if you're not comfortable to contact the office, you can email our Committee on [committee@connectionsplus.co](mailto:committee@connectionsplus.co)



The NDIA hosts regular webinars on key topics related to the NDIS.

**Learn more about Assistive Technology—Wheelchairs, aids and devices.**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=157&v=Tu3PY168sH4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=157&v=Tu3PY168sH4)

## Connections Plus Australia Inc.

Established by local families in 1988 and formerly known as Respite Care Bega Valley. Although we have grown considerably from 1988, Connections Plus Australia still maintains the personalised approach of a small service in its delivery of disability services in our community.

1/35 Beach Street  
PO Box 199  
Merimbula NSW 2548

Phone: 02 6495 3797  
Email: [connections@connectionsplus.com.au](mailto:connections@connectionsplus.com.au)



## Congratulations

Support Worker Francie Timms welcomed her first child Maisy to the world on May 31st. Thank you for dropping in to the office so we could meet her. All the best to you and Will on your parenting journey.



## Quiet Hour

**Tuesday's 10:30 - 11:30am**

Quiet Hour provides a low-sensory shopping experience by making changes in store, such as reducing noise and distractions, to help make a difference to customers who find it challenging to shop in a heightened sensory environment.

Coles partnered with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) in developing the program to help support customers who are - or have family members - on the autism spectrum.

During Quiet Hour, customers will notice the following changes in participating Coles supermarkets:

- Store lighting will be reduced
- Coles Radio will be switched off
- Register and scanner volumes will be reduced to the lowest level

- No trolley collections and roll cages will be removed from the shop floor
- No PA announcements except in the case of emergencies
- Free fruit will be offered at customer service
- Additional team members will be available to support customers

Together with Aspect, Coles is creating a 'no-judgement' shopping space where people on the spectrum and their families can feel comfortable and welcome while they complete their daily shop.

Local Woolworths stores are not offering this service at this stage, however are considering it for the future.



**Connections Plus has new office hours**

Our office will now be open from  
8:30am to 5:00pm

