



*Life's possibilities are endless with Lifestyle Solutions*

*Leah (left) and Julie (right) and their three children.*

## Girl power fueling the Pilbara

Over in Western Australia we shine the spotlight on Lifestyle Solutions' employee, Leah Scholes.

Leah Scholes is a Support Manager for Lifestyle Solutions in the remote Pilbara region. Leah became a registered carer 15 years ago, inspired by her grandmother who ran a welfare home in New Zealand.

During her career Leah held a variety of roles in Child Protection and Community Youth Justice. In 2013, she became the primary carer of the Karratha Family Group Home, taking over from her mother who was retiring from the role.

Leah struggled for over three years to find placements for a sibling group who'd resided in the home, and who were facing separation. With the eldest child having special needs, Leah and her partner, Julie, made the decision to foster the three siblings long-term and together they became a forever family. They haven't looked back since.

If that wasn't already enough to keep her busy, Leah is also the Founder and President of the Pilbara Motorcycle Sisters (PMS) – a group of like-minded women who love to ride.

The all-female group do amazing work in the Pilbara community and, with a common interest in the empowerment of women, together they raise awareness around the damaging effects of domestic violence and suicide prevention.

Being a remote area like the Pilbara, Leah said it is important that PMS have a presence for women feeling helpless or who are perhaps new to the area.

"We're just a really great bunch of ladies who love getting together for a bike ride," said Leah.

"One of the main things we really want to do is get ourselves out there in the community and raise awareness for family and domestic violence and suicide prevention."

The ladies support an array of community initiatives including providing practical needs for women and families who are restarting their lives by promoting community donations for home furnishings, clothes and toys. They are huge advocates for White Ribbon Day which raises awareness on men's violence against women, held annually on 25 November and International Women's Day (IWD) held annually on 8 March.

"The Pilbara Motorcycle Sisters might only be a small group of women, but we are certainly very well known in the community" said Leah.

To mark this year's IWD event, Leah and Julie were among three guest speakers at the Soroptimist Society's Sparkling High Tea with Poetry and Portraiture event which represented diverse cultures.

What amazing women and encouraging role models for their three beautiful children.



# NDIS UPDATES

## Northern Territory

Participants in supported accommodation in Alice Springs have completed transition to the NDIS. Whilst there have been some issues gaining access to plans and allocation of Support Coordinators, we are starting to get Agreements completed and continue to provide support and assistance to participants through the transition process.

Participants in Darwin's accommodation services are going into plan reviews and have begun receiving their second plans for the NDIS. Staff in our Darwin office have been involved in assisting with plan reviews.

## Victoria

A further six areas in Victoria will transition to the NDIS between July 2018 and June 2019. These areas include Southern Melbourne, Brimbank Melton, Western Melbourne, Goulburn, Mallee and Outer Gippsland. Staff in Victoria are continuing to sign up participants with NDIS funding, as well as assisting families through the planning and transition process.

## Queensland

The NDIS in Queensland continues to roll-out and pre-planning tools have been provided to assist with preparation. From July 2018 onward, the final areas will transition to the NDIS.

These areas include Logan, Redlands, Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Tablelands, Croydon, Etheridge, Cape York, Torres Strait, Brisbane suburbs north of Brisbane River, Brisbane suburbs south of Brisbane River, Fraser Coast, North Burnett, South Burnett, Cherbourg, Gold Coast, Hinterland, Moreton Bay, Strathpine, Caboolture, Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie.

## New South Wales

The NDIS roll-out in New South Wales is to be completed by 30 June 2018. In some areas participants are into their third and fourth plans. The NDIS has reported that there are still delays of up to three months for plan reviews but they are triaging requests for review based on urgency of need.

## Support Coordination

Do you have Support Coordination in your plan? If not, talk to our experienced Support Coordinators who can advise you on plan reviews, plan implementation and sourcing alternate supports.

**For any enquiries, information or assistance please talk to your local Facilitator or contact our Intake Team.**

**Phone 1800 NDIS 4U  
1800 634 748**

**Email  
enquiry@lifestylesolutions.org.au**



## Disability Supports

Lifestyle Solutions is a registered NDIS service provider.

We offer the following NDIS supports in all states and territories:

- Coordination of support
- Assistance with daily living
- Travel and transport
- Assistance with increased social and community participation
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and SDA Support Coordination
- Improved living arrangements
- School leaver employment supports
- Improved relationships, health and well-being, learning, life choices and daily living
- Australian Disability Enterprise, Bindi - Northern Territory
- Early intervention support.

Contact us for additional supports and services.

# Good360

Thanks to Good360 and hundreds of generous, community-minded companies we can make life a little easier and more comfortable for the people we support.

Good360 is a dynamic, charitable organisation that links companies with excess stock to not-for-profit organisations like ours.

"Through Good360, we can source a huge range of goods which complement the services we provide and meet the specific needs of the people we support," said Business Development Manager, Melissa Collins.

"Whether it's toys and clothing for children in our Out Of Home Care services, or furniture and

kitchen goods for our supported accommodation homes, Good360 is helping us transform lives."

"Since 2016 we've received more than \$32,000 worth of goods – including over \$6,000 worth of LEGO. In addition to that amount, we've sourced a massive range of Christmas supplies from BIG W stores Australia-wide equating to \$4,800."

"Being able to provide goods that meet the individual needs of the people we support is fantastic," said Melissa.

[www.good360.org.au](http://www.good360.org.au)



Support Coordinator, Melissa Smith, and Support Worker, Jeewan Tamang, were busy distributing goods to our service facilities.

# HARMONY DAY LUNCH

Not letting the wild rain and wind affect the day's morale, our National Support Centre in Islington held a barbeque lunch for Harmony Day, generously supplied by Woolworths Mayfield.

Harmony Day is a celebration of cultural diversity on 21 March with the theme 'everyone belongs'.

Inviting office neighbours, people we support and staff, Support Coordinator Lisa Papasavvas, usually connect in the office and community to share in something that effects every person – diversity," said Lisa.

The team took time out to enjoy lunch while listening to Ed

Sheeran and sharing in a special hour of respect, compassion and celebration of cultural diversity.

"My father was a Greek Cyprian refugee during the Turkish invasion, so I know first hand not feeling connected to general society and how important it is to keep trying every day to celebrate diversity," said Lisa.

"It has always been important to me to create dialogue with the community in work and social life and I think if we do this every year we can encourage more community members to come along and connect with Lifestyle Solutions."

Lisa's work did not go unnoticed

with many staff expressing their deepest admiration for Lisa's efforts to create the event.



*Listening to Ed Sheeran and enjoying the BBQ lunch at National Office.*

## A message from our CEO

It has been a busy start to the year. In my last message I spoke about our plans for an exciting future for Lifestyle Solutions. We have a fantastic vision for the organisation that is grounded on a clear purpose to provide all people with equal respect and equal opportunity.

Our newly defined purpose is underpinned by a promise to our participants to deliver "better service," which to us means reliable, responsive, flexible, caring, friendly and empathetic support for you our customers.

Well-trained, engaged and happy carers are essential in meeting our promise of better service. Significant investments in training and development programs have been made to properly prepare and support our staff to provide better service. We will continue to prioritise our investment in our people who do amazing work and we want to make sure that our people have the right resources and support to continue to improve our service.

Better service is an essential objective to ensure that our customers are safe, secure and satisfied. Our industry is often criticised for not having the appropriate controls in place to protect the vulnerable in our society. Your safety and protection is our priority. In this context I would like to remind you that we take our responsibilities to the people we support and their communities seriously. If you need information, assistance or wish to provide feedback, please phone 1800 634 748. Your feedback will be received with utmost confidentiality and respect.

I really want to stress how important it is for me and the organisation to continue to have an open, honest and free flow of discussion and dialogue between all our stakeholders. As we learn more about each other we can improve our understanding of our customers needs, our employees' needs, the industry's challenges and together, we can find ways to improve all aspects of this great sector.



I look forward to working toward a future that is vibrant, diverse and sustainable.

Regards

Andrew Hyland

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# PRESSING FOR PROGRESS ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

It was ladies to the front in March as Lifestyle Solutions' staff and people we support across our organisation celebrated and recognised the importance of International Women's Day and this year's motivational Harmony Day theme 'press for progress'.

Held annually on 8 March, International Women's Day is all about celebrating the achievements of women and uniting everyone as we move towards gender equality and inclusivity in all aspects of life.



*Dressed in purple at the Wallsend community hub.*

Several of our Community Hubs and residential care and support centres in NSW, QLD, TAS and WA hosted events on the day and we would like to thank all staff for their support of this wonderful cause.

Here is a quick snapshot of some of the events across Lifestyle Solutions...

To celebrate the day, the lovely team at our Matgrass residential care service in Woy Woy, NSW held an afternoon tea requesting that they be treated like princesses, from the male staff.

The ladies of Matgrass were spoilt with crowns, tiaras and bling to be worn as they ate their culinary delights.

"I am wearing my crown today proud to be part of such a wonderful team, surrounded by such strong, inspirational women and men," said Nurse Manager of Matgrass, Jodie Pavett.

Our community hubs in Wallsend and Port Stephens had a great day celebrating International Women's Day.

It was all purple at the Wallsend Hub, with everything from purple

outfits to purple flowers, balloons and streamers. The people we support even enjoyed purple pikelets with purple jam and a sausage sizzle with purple coleslaw.

"We had a great day celebrating International Women's Day at the Wallsend Hub. After our purple-themed lunch, it was smiles and laughter all round as the people we support and staff interacted with balloon games," said acting Hub Coordinator, Caroline Sheens.

Activities were equally exciting over in Port Stephens where people we support went shopping at Kmart to buy presents for the special women in their lives. The gifts were then wrapped with personalised cards and decorations such as love heart stamps and pictures.

The other activity on the day was shopping for ingredients and decorating biscuits to take to their



*Everyone enjoyed the purple pikelets.*

favourite women, which were covered in coloured icing, edible butterflies and sprinkles.

"In the following days, some individuals did some research and a presentation on inspirational women such as Bethany Hamilton and Oprah Winfrey. The group also suggested they want to do inspirational men next," said Hub Coordinator, Becky O'Leary.

Our offices around the country celebrated with morning teas and lunches throughout the day run by our supportive male staff.

Each office joined together to celebrate the wonderful contribution our female staff make at Lifestyle Solutions.

In honour of the day, men at the Hobart Service Centre provided

afternoon tea for the female staff and people we support. Neal Phillips, Employment Consultant at Lifestyle Solutions, spoke about the significance of the day.

"I encourage everyone to take a moment to honour the extraordinary contribution women make to society in general and to disability care in particular," said Neal.

Our National and Newcastle West Support Centres spent the morning spoiling their female counterparts with a feast for the ages with Daniel Kiriakidis and Anthony Sampaklis leading the day.

"It was great to see Lifestyle Solutions celebrate this special day throughout the organisation. By stopping to hold a morning tea or luncheon, it was a great opportunity to reflect and recognise the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women," said Daniel.

"There was an overwhelming consensus that gender inequalities still present in society are unacceptable and accelerating gender parity is imperative."



*Alex enjoying the sausage sizzle.*



*The men at our Newcastle West Support Centre showed their commitment to gender parity.*

# Real Life Heroes



Generosity can come in all shapes and sizes and for one of the people we support, Danny, it came in the form of the friendly faces at Ballina Lighthouse Surf Life Saving Club.

Every Sunday, Danny and his support worker, Suzy Maloney, head to his favourite beach where he loves to drink a coffee, chat with the locals and watch all the beach activities – sometimes even spotting whales or dolphins.

Limited to where he can manoeuvre, Danny was never able to gain access to the beach or the ocean he adores.

With the help of the amazing team at the Surf Life Saving Club, one Sunday the sand was smoothed, and beach access matting was placed from the surf club paving the way down to the water for Danny.

“With this enormous and positive team, Danny was rolled down to the water. He took his sandals off and felt the sand between his toes. The smile on his face was enormous,” said Suzy.

If this wasn't enough, Lifeguards, Terry and Dave, helped Danny the last few metres to the water's edge

and supported him while the waves rolled in.

“Danny exclaimed how cold it was and was laughing and saying thank you to everyone over and over.”

“Afterwards, as we were driving away, Danny was calling out the van window telling everyone he had been down to the beach.”

“He didn't stop smiling for the rest of the day.”



*Danny enjoying his favourite beach with the help of lifeguards, Terry and Dave.*

# Wallsend Hub get their DIY on

Whether it's woodworking, painting, gardening or creating wall art, the people we support at our Wallsend Community Hub love attending the DIY Workshops at Bunnings Warehouse every second Thursday.

Toni Hunt, Hub Coordinator at the Wallsend Community Hub said "The team at Bunnings Warehouse Wallsend have been excellent supporters of our Hub. They supply all the equipment for the DIY Workshops, run the activities for free and have even donated plants for our vegetable garden."

Not only do the people we support learn new, practical and creative skills, they build on their social and fine motor skills.

"It's a great way for them to get creative, have fun and learn to DIY. Bunnings staff member, Nick, and Lifestyle Solutions Support Worker, Caroline Sheens, are great at encouraging and inspiring our participants, who just love going along. It's excellent for their social development and they are always so proud to take the things that they have made home," said Toni.

Our up and coming DIY experts have learnt to make planter boxes, paint pots, decorate Christmas wreaths, make money boxes and paint boomerangs.



*Our DIYers show off their work. Images supplied by Bunnings Warehouse Wallsend.*

## QLD Child and Family Team celebrate ten years

Congratulations to the Child and Family team in Queensland who celebrated their 10-year anniversary. The team commenced in April 2008 after successfully being awarded a tender for three Out Of Home Care residences in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Gladstone.

Over the past ten years, the Queensland Child and Family team have supported numerous children and young people to reunite with birth families, find long-term nurturing families and transition to their own homes once reaching adulthood.

Petra Green, Senior Manager, Child and Family Residential Services Queensland, said "Our care teams have witnessed many children and young people in our care to experience their firsts: first Christmas tree, first birthday party and first holiday. The team were there to applaud loudly when our young people were celebrating school awards, graduations, performances and achievements."

"We have supported young people to go to their formals, attend family visits, build independence and create connections in their community that will stay with them once they leave our care.

We are only a small part of a young person's journey, however, we hope to make a lasting positive impact," said Petra.



*Tanya Kururangi, Liz Manoo, Verity Sly and Ange O'Connor from the QLD Child and Family Team.*

# Lifestyle Solutions reaches Top 50 in Hunter for blood donations

Staff from our National and Newcastle West Support Centres have been named in the Australian Red Cross Blood Service's Top 50 Red25 organisations in the Hunter, NSW.

Red25 is a great program which encourages staff to donate as a group and help work toward ensuring 25% of Australia's blood donations are secured.

The Lifestyle Solutions' donation team has been a Red25 group since October 2017 and currently rank in 17th place among the Top 50, alongside other large organisations in Newcastle such as NSW Ambulance, TAFE NSW, QBE Insurance and University of New England.

One blood donation is needed in Australia every 24 seconds so the need for donors is ever present and never-ending. In January, a total of 681 were made by the Top 50 organisations which helped save over 2,000 lives in the community.

Melanie Marshall, Accounts Payable Officer at our Newcastle West Support Centre, has been the driving force behind organising our Red25 group and the number of donors has been growing each month.

"24 staff members from the Islington and Newcastle West office have donated so far this year, saving a total of 72 lives. I have 16 bookings made for staff during the next four weeks. It's tremendous seeing the number of donors grow," said Melanie.

"The Red Cross bus picks us up from both offices and drops us back when we're finished."

The maximum time it takes to donate blood, or blood products such as plasma or platelets, is 2 hours.

"It's such a small amount of time out of your day and it costs you nothing. In January, our group made three donations which

helped save nine lives. It brings you so much joy knowing you've helped save so many lives in a short space of time."

"We're all very proud to be supporting this great service," said Melanie.

If you are interested in forming a Red25 group in your area visit the Australian Red Cross Blood Service website.



*Blood donor coordinator, Melanie Marshall.*

## Budding artists get a platform at the Manning Regional Art Gallery

Budding artists from our Forster Community Hub have been recognised for their artistic talent in the community with an invitation to exhibit their work at the Manning Regional Art Gallery. The Hub held an inhouse art exhibition to showcase their collection to the general public, successfully selling 80 per cent of their work, and were appointed by the Manning Regional Art Gallery to be a part of their exhibition program.

The Manning Regional Art Gallery Exhibition Program provides access to international, national, established and emerging artists for the communities and visitors of the Manning, Great Lakes and Gloucester regions. The Gallery has several exhibition spaces, featuring curated and touring exhibitions from around Australia.

Jenny Macdonald, Team Leader at the Hub, said "This was such a fantastic achievement based purely on the quality and talent of the people we support at the Forster Hub."

"We use our art programs to connect with the incredible people we support on many levels. A lot of thought and consideration goes into developing our programs and ensuring that they are provided with the necessary tools, materials and guidance to produce the best quality work they can. We are just so proud that our budding artists are earning a reputation in the community for their amazing art," said Jenny.

"We find that people are far more open and honest when

chatting among friends, peers and mentors, whilst involved in creating something fun and beautiful. While exploring new painting techniques, they are also exploring aspects of each other's lives. Some may call it art therapy, but we call it 'art to live'", said Jenny.



*Sherrie and Connor working on their art project.*

# Fostering a forever family

Foster carers, David and Chris, have seen firsthand the struggles that come with finding Out Of Home Care placements for children and young people at risk of harm and neglect at home.

School principal David, and teacher Chris, have observed a lot of children living in difficult circumstances through no fault of their own. They felt that if they were going to continually argue the case for children and young people in need to be placed into foster care and offered better opportunities, then they needed to 'put their money where their mouth was' and do something about the situation themselves.

And so they did, and they now foster four wonderful children, the youngest of whom they have had since birth.

"With the staggering number of children in Out Of Home Care increasing year on year, not only in this state but in this country, it seemed like a no-brainer for us that fostering was the way to start and then grow our own family," said David.

Proud fathers, David and Chris have been fostering for over nine years and are just one of the amazing families Lifestyle Solutions support through their foster care program.

Lifestyle Solutions not only facilitates long-term care, we also

provide respite care, short-term care and emergency care for children and young people.

For David and Chris, their decision to foster children was about creating a family, so it was important for them to have children who would need care until they were adults.

"It truly has been transformational for us, and not just for us as individuals and as a couple, but for our extended families as well. The old saying 'it takes a village to raise kids' is so true. It's not just Chris and I contributing to the future of these kids, it's our friends, families, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins. It's definitely transformed our lives for the better," said David.

These inspiring parents consider themselves incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the future of the children they foster.

"I always say, we are the lucky ones because we've had the opportunity to witness these children grow into the people they are or are going to become. One day we will be able to sit in our rocking chairs on the veranda and say we helped contribute in that way and that's a pretty special thing to be able to say," said David.

Fostering is a life-long journey for David and Chris, they have found their forever family and are

currently in the process of adopting their children.

## Interested in becoming a foster carer?

Foster carers from all walks of life, backgrounds and cultures have opened their homes and hearts to children in need of a safe and secure environment that they can call home – and you can too.

If you'd like to make a positive difference in a child's life, talk to us today about becoming a foster carer.



Proud parents David and Chris.



Lifestyle Solutions®  
pioneering change for good

Free call Australia-wide

1800 NDIS 4 U  
(1800 634 748)

[enquiry@lifestylesolutions.org.au](mailto:enquiry@lifestylesolutions.org.au)



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