

# Quarterly Newsletter

WINTER 2021 EDITION



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

***To our valued community,***

The continual changes that the Victorian lockdowns present can be challenging and we are grateful to all of our community for working together to help reduce COVID-19 infections, increase vaccinations, and keep exposure sites low.

We are also grateful to our staff who respond each time to new care directives, lockdown guidelines and changing infection control requirements quickly and efficiently. It means that updates are communicated to participants and families in a timely manner - an important constant in an ever changing environment.



Supporters at the OC Connections Charity Golf Day on 27 June 2021

Should you have any questions or concerns about our COVIDSafe operations and the impact on our support delivery, please contact us via phone or email.

As you know, people living with disability are eligible to get their COVID-19 vaccine if any of the following apply:

- they are an NDIS participant
- they are living with significant disability requiring frequent assistance with activities of daily living
- they attend centre-based services (day programs, respite care, supported employment)

We fully support and recommend that the community take this opportunity to get vaccinated where they can. Please read more on the vaccine rollout on the following pages or keep up to date with vaccine rollout news on our webpage [www.occonnections.org/covid-19](http://www.occonnections.org/covid-19).

On a lighter note, we are delighted that our annual Charity Golf Day was held on 27 June at The Metropolitan Golf Club and was a great success. It is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year. All proceeds go towards helping people with disability by providing supports that are not funded by the NDIS. Read more about our Charity Golf Day overleaf.

If you have any queries regarding our operations, fundraising or support please don't hesitate to get in contact with us on (03) 9569 0603 or email [administration@occonnections.org](mailto:administration@occonnections.org)

**Therese Desmond**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



Supporters at the OC Connections Charity Golf Day on 27 June 2021

## A GREAT SUCCESS! OCC CHARITY GOLF DAY

**A huge thanks to our players, supporters and volunteers for helping us to put on a wonderful Charity Golf Day last month. Whilst an annual event in our fundraising calendar, this year's event was even more special given we had to cancel last year's because of lockdown.**

Thank you also to our wonderful hosts, The Metropolitan Golf Club for their generosity and ongoing support of this event.

We had an amazing response this year with the event being a sell-out. We had 200 players, 12 sponsors and more than 20 amazing volunteers fulfil important roles on the day.

We are very grateful that each year The Metropolitan Golf Club and its members provide a day where the public can access this prestigious Melbourne golf course and assist us in raising much needed funds for the people we support.

As part of the day, players not only had the opportunity to play a first-class golf course, but also take part in activities, which included:

- a hole in one competition, for a chance to win a Toyota Yaris, thanks to Chadstone Toyota
- tips and tricks from Australia Long Drive Champion, Steffan Scutti, for a small donation, thanks to Toshiba
- Raffle prizes totalling \$5,000, including a Marvel Stadium corporate box (thanks to CoTe software); games at both Metropolitan Golf Club and Huntingdale Golf Club; and some furniture from P4 design
- Trophies for best male and female players, longest drive and nearest the pin. Each winner received a hamper from HESTA, Vetta Pasta or the Byron Bay Cookie Company.

The funds raised from this day help to fund supports, equipment, activities and other items not funded by the NDIS. This event will provide a significant boost to the fund so that we can support more opportunities for people with disability.

The event is not only an opportunity to raise funds, but also provides the chance for us to share our vision with the wider community. Players and sponsors come from all over Melbourne and in some cases this may be the first contact they have had with a disability support provider. Our hope is that they left the golf course with a new appreciation of the disability sector along with the challenges faced by people with disability and the opportunities that we provide in terms of support.

This connection with the extended community is a major boost to OC Connections and was a chance to celebrate in the midst of a challenging 18 months.

Thank you again to the staff, volunteers and community who helped support the day, as well as our sponsors who included The Metropolitan Golf Club, CoTe, Chadstone Toyota, Toshiba, Woodards, Scent Air, Eziway Salary Packaging, Interconnect Healthcare, Huntingdale Golf Club and P4 design.

Congratulations to winners on the day who went home with some great prizes. You can view the list on our website at [www.occonnections.org](http://www.occonnections.org)

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**IF YOU MISSED OUT ON PLAYING OR VOLUNTEERING THIS YEAR, YOU CAN REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR NEXT YEAR AT**

**[administration@occonnections.org](mailto:administration@occonnections.org)**



## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR 2021 WINTER APPEAL

### Donate today and make a difference to people with disability

Did you know that there are many things not covered by the NDIS that people with disability need?

Now more than ever, we rely on fundraising to help us ensure that people of all abilities have access to a range of opportunities and resources that enable them to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Your donation to our Winter Appeal will go towards supporting participants for things such as access to new activities, purchasing iPads to improve communication and buying sporting equipment to improve and learn new skills.

### FIND OUT WHERE YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL GO AND TO DONATE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[www.occonnections.org/get-involved/fundraise/winter-appeal](http://www.occonnections.org/get-involved/fundraise/winter-appeal)

## OC ACHIEVE FUND SUPPORTS DAVID THIS WINTER

Support Worker Bill says that Atkinson Street resident David has nothing but positive things to say about his new TV. He especially enjoys the large screen and its many features compared to his old one.

Thanks to generous community support of the OC Achieve fund, OC Connections was able to fund David's new widescreen TV. It arrived just before his birthday and just in time for a cold Melbourne Winter and weekends indoors.

Bill told us that David particularly enjoys watching news, sport, movies and comedy shows. Disability Support Worker Miki Kim said David was very excited and was grateful for the quick response from OCC Facilities Manager, Alex, who mounted the TV conveniently onto the wall.

### FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE LIKE DAVID ON OUR WEBSITE AT

[www.occonnections.org/get-involved/fundraise/winter-appeal](http://www.occonnections.org/get-involved/fundraise/winter-appeal)



### MORDIALLOC CAR WASH CREW 'MAKE THE CARS SPARKLE'!

As part of its community-based employment options for supported employees, OC Connections Enterprises (OCCE) offers a mobile car wash service to government and private businesses across greater metropolitan Melbourne. Some of the current car wash customers include the City of Kingston, the Department of Health and Human Services, the City of Casey, and Tradies Heaven.



Major Road Projects Victoria is delivering the Mordialloc Freeway Project, a 9-kilometre freeway that will connect the Mornington Peninsula Freeway at Springvale Road in Aspendale Gardens to the Dingley Bypass in Dingley Village.

The McConnell Dowell Decmil Joint Venture (MCDDJV) is the construction partner building the Mordialloc Freeway and in November 2020 they engaged the services of OCCE for the mammoth task of cleaning their project site vehicles.

*OCCE's car wash operations provided a social and environmental component to the project, an important consideration for all Victorian Government construction projects. Not only does our car wash provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the team use environmentally friendly and bio-degradable products and an innovative cleaning system that utilises less than half a litre of water to wash an average size car.*

Richard Craze, Social Procurement and Inclusion Manager from MCDDJV said,

By the end of 2020, there were more than 70 MCDDJV vehicles needing some real love and attention on site, after COVID restrictions ceased regular car cleaning.

The OCCE Car Wash Team, comprised of Supervisor Rishi, Team Leader Philip, and team members Aaron, Adrian, Belinda, Chris, Clinton, Elias, Gary, Mark, Michael, Peter and Trent, who stepped up to the challenge.

Troy Walters, Plant Coordinator for MCDDJV, remembers that when the team arrived on site for the first time, they were excited and ready to start cleaning.

When the OCC Marketing Team visited the team on-site, they told us that they are passionate about doing a good job and that it is important to concentrate on windows, door handles and common touch surfaces.

The team said they like having the option to either meet at OCCE and travel to the MCDDJV Head Office site together or travel there independently. After cleaning five to six cars in a shift, they head back to OCCE to unpack.

Team members Clinton and Belinda said that they particularly like working in the fresh air and being part of a hard-working team.

Troy looks forward to a continuing partnership with the OCCE team, saying:

*I have enjoyed being part of the crew. They are an awesome group of people, always smiling, always great to talk to and always willing to do their best. We still have plenty of vehicles to clean, so keep your spray bottles on hand and your smiles wide and continue to make our vehicles sparkle. Great work guys!*



## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS AT GEORGE STREET

The George Street community living house has just celebrated 10 years since they opened in 2011. Current George Street residents, Peter, Warwick and Ross were part of the original 2011 resident group and they continue to love their home. Julie, team leader at George Street says that the dynamics of the house have changed over the years with residents bringing different skills to the household. The residents have built relationships with each other and their families. It's now ten years since George Street opened its doors and staff continue to ensure that residents have choice, that they are treated with respect and that a person-centred support approach is applied so residents are supported in a way they would like to be supported.



## DAMIAN COX JOINS OCC COMMUNITY LIVING TEAM

**We are delighted to introduce you to Damian Cox, Manager, Community Living at OC Connections.**

Damian is responsible for leading the day-to-day operations of the Community Living department. Community Living provides support to participants with a disability in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), Short Term Accommodation (STA), Supported Independent Living (SIL), and in-home support.

Damian has worked in the disability industry for more than 12 years and brings some solid qualifications to the role including Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management, Advanced Diploma of Disability Services, Cert IV Government Investigations and Cert III Aged Care.

Damian has hit the ground running at OCC and has big plans. He is passionate about empowering his team to deliver high-quality care and supporting participants to achieve their goals.

He plans to make his mark on the role by focusing on participant goals and ambitions and is already working to identify ways he can share his skills and experiences with other departments.

“I’m a lead by example manager and want to give my team full support. I have an open-door policy and will never turn anyone away.”

Damian is particularly looking forward to assisting his team to effectively navigate the NDIS to achieve the best outcome for Community Living participants.

Damian started his career working as an aged care assistant. He transitioned to the disability sector with the desire to support a person with a disability and to help them achieve their goals and ambitions.

We love that Damian is a procedure and process guy. He says he is pedantic about documentation requirements with a strong focus on medication administration and management. He also admits to being a clean freak and likes everything in its place.

Damian came to OC Connections knowing about the organisation’s excellent reputation. He felt welcomed and impressed that one of the participants was involved in his interview process.

While professional, super driven and passionate about his job, Damian also has a fun side. He adores his dogs and cats, pottering in the garden, listening to a diverse array of music genres and loves to travel! He and his partner have travelled widely throughout Europe and the United States.



### ALLEN STREET RESIDENTS RECYCLE OLD PHONES

**Allen Street residents have taken the initiative to share unused mobile phones. Resident, Carl and his partner kindly donated an old iPhone to Dianne, who was very excited by the proposition and is now loving her new phone.**

Whitney, Team Leader at Allen Street says that Dianne didn't have a phone before this. "The mobile phone has given Dianne independence, the opportunity to communicate with her boyfriend and importantly, be more independent in the community, able to easily contact her Support Worker if needed."

Whitney said that Dianne has been eager to learn how to use the iPhone. She particularly likes the voice to text button where she can say what she wants, and it automatically converts into a text message. All she has to do is press 'send'! Dianne is delighted that she can message anyone she likes at any time with complete independence.

Not only is recycling phones between residents a cost-saving opportunity, but it is a wonderful eco-friendly initiative to reuse old mobiles so they don't go to landfill and damage the environment.



### ACCOMMODATION VACANCIES

We currently have several accommodation vacancies available. These are a mix of SIL/SDA and individual living options. These vacancies exist in:

- Hampton East
- Chadstone
- Clayton
- Oakleigh
- Ashwood
- Oakleigh South
- Mount Waverley

Please share with anyone you know who may be looking for alternative accommodation options. Find out more on our Community Living website at [www.occonnections.org/my-home](http://www.occonnections.org/my-home)

### THE DISABILITY GATEWAY

**The Australian Government's new Disability Gateway has information and services to help people with disability, their family, friends and carers, to find the support they need in Australia. This is an important tool for all people who live with disability to access the right services and support.**

You can use the site to search for disability information and services and access information on income and finance; employment; aids and equipment; housing; transport; health and wellbeing; everyday living; education; leisure; discrimination and legal issues. There are also news and updates, emergency contacts, safety and help and COVID-19 updates for people with disability.

**You can access the gateway via the website [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au) or phone 1800 643 787 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm.**

## REMINDER - NON-FACE-TO-FACE BILLING

From 1 July 2019, the NDIS made a change to allow service providers such as OC Connections to claim or bill separately a person's plan for key activities conducted that did not involve direct face-to-face support with the individual participant. Previously these costs were incorporated within the NDIS Price Guide rate.

OC Connections held off making those changes in 2019, however, from 1 July 2021, we will be claiming or billing for non-face-to-face activities that are conducted to support a person's face to face support separately to the support line-item billing. All activities that will be claimed by OC Connections will be allowable under NDIS guidelines. NDIS has advised providers that non-face-to-face activities are billable if:

- Activities are part of delivering a disability support item to a participant such as writing a report about the client's progress (rather than a general activity such as staff rostering)
- The provider explains the activities to be billed to the participant
- The proposed charges for the activities comply with the conditions set out in the NDIS Price Guide.
- Billable non-face-to-face activities must relate specifically to the non-face-to-face services delivered to a particular participant, and do not include general administrative tasks. The amount charged can only relate to the time taken to deliver the non-face-to-face support each time.

It is important to note that NDIS specify what a provider cannot claim or bill for and providers cannot simply adopt and apply a standard non-face-to-face fee to all support items and/or a participant's ongoing appointments. The charge needs to be reflective of what is delivered each time a support is provided. These charges and related times will be recorded for NDIS auditing purposes.

**Please contact us on 9569 0603 if you have any queries.**

## HANNAH ISLES RECEIVES ALLEN JAMES AWARD

Congratulations Hannah Isles, Towards Employment Facilitator at OC Connections Enterprises (OCCE), for receiving The Allen James Award at the Annual Rotary Changeover Dinner on Monday 5 July. The coveted award is given to a staff member from OC Connections each year for their outstanding work in disability.



The Allen James Award is named after the late Allen James, a founding member of the Oakleigh Centre and the charter secretary of the Rotary Club of Oakleigh. It is a vocational award to be used to further study.

Hannah was nominated for the award by Athena Kontonis, Learning & Assessment Manager and Steve Betinsky, General Manager, Employment & Enterprises from OCCE. Steve said Hannah has done a sensational job with developing the Towards Employment curriculum including building the online delivery model which was used to great effect during the Covid-19 lockdowns. She has received several glowing endorsements from participant's parents who have observed positive changes since their family member commenced the employment pathway.

Peter Webb from the Rotary Club of OHC Inc. (Oakleigh, Clayton and Huntingdale) presented the award to Hannah at the award ceremony and dinner held at the Clayton Hotel.



## APPLY NOW! NEW ACCESSIBLE PARKING SCHEME

A new Accessible Parking Permit scheme has been introduced across Victoria. The new scheme is designed to create fairer outcomes and free up accessible parking bays for the people who need them the most.

The main changes for drivers with disabilities or injuries are that:

- You'll need to start the application or renewal process online before you visit the doctor
- Accessible parking permits will be extended from three to five years
- People with permanent disabilities will no longer need to be re-assessed in the future.

**Check your eligibility and apply, visit [www.accessibleparking.vic.gov.au/permits](http://www.accessibleparking.vic.gov.au/permits)**

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND DISABILITY WORKERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Some people with disability are at greater risk of becoming very sick if they catch COVID-19 so getting vaccinated is very important. OC Connections strongly encourages all employees, participants and their families to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine. People with disability who are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine include:

- all NDIS participants
- People with disability with:
  - an underlying medical condition
  - significant disability
  - attending centre-based services such as day programs, respite care and supported employment.

You can check your eligibility on the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker at [www.covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility](http://www.covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility) and also check your state/territory health department's website for any additional eligibility requirements at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

## VISIT THE OCC WEBSITE AND STAY UP TO DATE

Please visit our website [www.oconnections.org](http://www.oconnections.org) to get the latest OC Connections announcements including COVID-19 updates, participant stories and useful support resources.

## DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE

As the Disability Royal Commission continues, we would like to remind participants and families that support services are available to help by way of counselling, advocacy and legal services. You can find out more about these services on our website [www.oconnections.org/royal-commission](http://www.oconnections.org/royal-commission)