

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

panorama

Monthly Issue August 2023 #90B

Seeking Services
Prevents You Falling
Through the Cracks

RU OK? Day:
Choosing to Listen

Making a Real Change
to Your Health

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About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 70+ of our services in New South Wales, Southern Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria.

Contact Flourish Australia!

1300 779 270 or
flourishaustralia.org.au

Chair: Prof Elizabeth More AM
Chief Executive Officer: Mark Orr AM
Chief Development Officer: Peter Neilson

About Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

The faces behind Panorama...



Warren Heggarty



Grant Everett

Subscriptions, questions, feedback, praise, curses?

You can ALWAYS email us at...

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Disclaimer

Panorama's content is not intended as a substitute for the advice of any specialised or qualified professional. The views expressed herein are those of the authors, not necessarily of Flourish Australia, or any associated enterprises, their staff, management, employees, or service recipients

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Flourish Australia's
New Outlook service PHOTO
BY GRANT J EVERETT

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Contributors include...

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Dylan Cotter-Bradley served as a Council Member with Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council for two years

Julianne Panayi has accessed Flourish Australia services at Canterbury/Bankstown, and is doing a marathon to raise funds for The Smith Family

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Contributions are welcome!

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You don't need to be a writer to share your story with Panorama's readers: we can help you to write your story. We especially like recovery stories from people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Email us at: panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Flourish Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea and waterways upon which we live and work.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and recognise their strong and continuing connection to land, culture and spirit.

Panorama magazine would like to acknowledge all people who live with a mental health issue, as well as those who encourage and support loved ones. Our universal right to lead full and inclusive lives is the driving force behind why Panorama exists. We also acknowledge the strength it can take to share our stories. The impact of reading about people's journeys cannot be overstated. Sharing our experiences has the potential to change lives and we hope by reading true recovery stories, it gives hope, optimism and support to our readers, especially those on their mental health recovery journey.



Keeping physically strong & healthy will help you reach your recovery goals

Talk with your local Flourish Australia team today about keeping your physical health and recovery on track.



Back On Track Health Program



SEEKING SERVICES PREVENTS YOU FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

By Scott (as told to Grant J Everett)

ABOVE: Scott at New Outlook at Jae Magsipoc's EP launch.
OPPOSITE: Scott with his CPS program worker, Ryan.
PHOTOS BY GRANT J EVERETT

I connected up with Flourish Australia's New Outlook service in Wollongong while I was incarcerated. I spoke with Paul (Mental Health Worker) when I had two weeks to go, and rang him again right after getting out. I visited the New Outlook service the very next day, finally meeting Paul in person, and he showed me around the place and explained what it was all about.

That was 13 months ago today, and I've been visiting here ever since.

Rebuilding

I've been attending New Outlook pretty much every day, and it's changed my life. My anxiety has improved, and I've been getting better at communicating and socialising with people. I've met so many new friends here!

I was actually just invited to a get-together with some guys in a couple of weeks, and it's fantastic to be able to do something fun that doesn't involve drugs or alcohol to be a part of it. Just socialising, you know?

So many people fall through the cracks when they get out of prison or out of hospital, so I'm surrounding myself with these good influences.

When I visit New Outlook I usually meet up with Ryan, my Mental Health Worker. Every major obstacle I've had, Ryan has been there. For example, Ryan supported me when I was going through my divorce, and he's also helped me with my Centrelink applications.

I also see Emma. She's my NDIS coach, and she's been very helpful with finding out what I'm eligible for and helping me to fill in the paperwork.

Finding A Home

The day I got out of prison, I was brand new to the South Coast of New South Wales. I moved into a boarding house at Port Kembla, but as this was only meant to be temporary until something better came along, Flourish Australia supported me with finding more

permanent accommodation. I moved into my own house at Wollongong in August 2022, and it's been an incredible step up. The Flourish Australia staff actually visited my house for the first time the other day, and I know they can support me with my home if I need them to.

Once I'd moved closer to New Outlook, I could spend the whole day here and attend every single group. Whatever was on, I'd do: art, yoga, meditation, photography, bus trips, tennis, walking, swimming, whatever they have on offer!

Addiction

My life used to be very isolated. I was a loner, and I'd drink and do drugs on my own, and that would be really bad for my mental health. I'm happy to say I've been clean for over 9 months now, and there have been a number of ways I accomplished this.

First off, I've engaged with every service on offer that could help me turn my life around, and that includes getting dosed at a clinic each morning with a medication that helps with opioid dependence, and attending Alcoholics Anonymous four times a week. And while the support and encouragement from everyone at New Outlook has helped me stay clean, too, when I'm at that service I like to just focus on socialising with people, rather than talking about drugs and alcohol all the time.

I consider myself to be very honest nowadays, and this was put to the test when I found a wallet full of money about four months back. If somebody is addicted to using hard drugs, then I reckon it's very likely they'd keep the money. However, I handed all of it into the police station, as that's how I'm trying to be these days. I want to be a good person, and I'm doing all I can to accomplish that.

Finding Purpose

I just started a new job last week. Paul helped me connect with someone who offers professional pest control, lawnmowing and cleaning services, so I've been doing the lawnmowing a few days a week.

I'm really glad to be a part of the

workforce again, as work is more important than just money: it gives me a purpose in this world. And when I'm working, my mental health issues don't tend to bother me.

Another reason I'm so happy to have this job is because I had unsuccessfully applied for a job at a fast food chain a few months back. They'd initially wanted to take me on until they learned about my criminal record, and I was absolutely gutted when they knocked me back for that.

When it comes to doing studies, I did start an Accountancy course at TAFE a while ago, but the online learning thing wasn't for me. I'd prefer to go to a class in person, so I've put that aside for now. If I can do the course face-to-face, I might be interested in trying it again. For now, I'm happy with the job I have.

Getting around

As I lost my license for seven years, I've had to learn to get really good at catching public transport. Thankfully, my workmates pick me

up from my house in the morning and drop me off afterwards in the evening.

I'm actually going for my license again in a few weeks, and the New Outlook staff have been helping me with the paperwork. They'll also be coming to court with me on the day as moral support.

There Is Support: Look Around!

My advice to anyone who's dealing with mental health issues, substance addiction issues or getting out of prison or hospital is the same: find out about all the services that are on offer, and engage with them. There is so much help out there if you look, but you have to make the effort to reach out. For instance, when I had no money, I was getting free feeds from food vans and charities around Wollongong nearly every night. On top of that, I've also gotten my teeth fixed, as they were all stuffed, and I got new glasses, all from community services and charities. You've just gotta ask!



Flourish Australia New Outlook

3 Station Street, Wollongong NSW 2500

1300 779 270

Weekdays 8:30AM to 4PM

RU OK? Day: Ready to Listen

September 14th, 2023

By Grant J Everett and Tink

PHOTO: Tink is a creative soul who always has a kind ear and a shoulder to cry on.
PHOTO BY GRANT EVERETT

R U OK? Day is a reminder to check in with the people we know to see how they're going with life's ups and downs.

Have you noticed a change in a friend's or loved one's behaviour? Does it seem like they're doing it tough? If you feel something's not quite right, trust that gut instinct and ask them: "Are you OK?"

By reaching out and offering to have a meaningful conversation, we can make a positive difference in other people's lives.

If somebody says they aren't OK, then the RUOK website has all the resources you need to find them the right support. The site also contains conversation strategies and other material.

If the person turns out to be fine, though, then at least they'll know that you care enough to listen to them, and this may motivate them to speak to you if life gets tough in the future.

Are You In The Right Headspace?

Of course, as well as looking out for others, we need to make sure we're OK ourselves!

To help you decide whether you're ready to have deep, meaningful conversations, ask yourself:

- Am I willing and able to genuinely listen for as long as it takes?
- What do I do if they aren't okay?
- Do I understand that I can't 'fix' someone's problems?
- Can I hold the conversation somewhere private and comfy?
- Do I accept that they might not be ready to talk, or might not want to talk to me?

If you're not in the right headspace to be having a tough conversation, perhaps someone in your support network could talk to them?

Living RU OK? Day All Year Round: Tink

In order to overcome her addiction issues, Tink has surrounded herself with good influences at Flourish Australia's New Outlook service at Wollongong. And if there's one thing Tink's friends know about her, it's that she's always happy to lend a kind ear. For Tink, every day is R U OK? Day!

"I like to help people however I can, because I've been there and seen it all before, and I can tell if somebody is struggling. I've been through hell

and back, but I think experiencing tough times qualifies us to support others. So even if it's 3am, I'll take their call or answer their text to make sure they're all right. We've got to be there for each other!"

"A number of friends at New Outlook regularly come and sit with me and share how they're doing. I don't tell them what to do, though I may share what I'd do if they want to know. A key message I share is that recreational drugs WILL negatively affect our mental health and wellbeing and keep us from being OK. It's common for people to say that they use because their life is hard, but I guarantee taking drugs only makes things worse...or the drugs are causing their problems in the first place!"

"My advice to anyone struggling with addiction is simple: If you are determined, connect up with the right services and surround yourself with good influences, then you can do it. In my case, I also had to cut out many toxic friendships and relationships. Now that I'm clean, though, I have a more positive view in life, and my mental health is great. I've come a very long way, the future is bright, and your future can be bright, too!"

Source: <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

Every Australian Can Make A Difference: Fundraising

By Julianne Panayi (as told to Grant J Everett)



I discovered The Dream Run, a charity event that challenges you to walk or run between 25km and 100km, while I was perusing Facebook. You can run by yourself, or with a team. I instantly thought this was a great idea and signed up.

I am glad to be fundraising for The Smith Family because they are a charity I hold close to my heart. I remember the donation bags from school that we would take home and fill with clothes we didn't want anymore. One year, unbeknown to my sister, I donated all of the doubled-up outfits she had for her Barbies. Thanks, Mandy Lou! xox

I like that The Smith Family provides programs at foundational levels within the education system, allowing for a more equal start for young Australians. I believe every schoolchild should have new, clean school uniforms and school shoes that fit, as well as schoolbags and stationary, and be able to attend excursions.

Sadly, one in six Australian children and young people are living in poverty, where even life's basics are hard to come by. When families experience financial disadvantage, children can fall behind with their learning, leaving them more vulnerable to hardships later in life.

It all counts

Anyone who knows me knows I love charity, particularly those that have dual outcomes and come from a strengths-based recovery mindset, such as Dry July. I've sponsored education programs, gone door knocking with my children, and participated in readathons,

sleepovers, fundraising dinners and donation nights.

I believe every Australian can make a difference, so thank goodness we've dispelled the old school of thought that only people of means can be valuable contributors! Most charities survive based on the generosity of average people like you and me, so if we all do our bit, it changes lives.

I've experienced many benefits to The Dream Run. Setting a routine and achieving milestones has been a great way to get active, healthy, and maintain a good mental health mindset. Making a difference in the lives of other people, whether in big or small ways, always brings me joy.

Reaching the best outcome

My advice to anyone who wants to fundraise is to choose a charity you are passionate about. It's also a good idea to know enough about the charity to be able to answer questions from donors, and be sure to let them know all donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible. Also, post all of your progress on social media.

Leaps and bounds

Since my previous recovery article in Panorama magazine in 2021, I've been volunteering with various organisations, had my full drivers licence reinstated, and I've enrolled in a Masters of Counselling and

Psychology that starts in September. I've been gaining real insight into who I am and who I want to be, and I've been building on my endurance and resilience. Learning Tai-chi, meditating, singing and dancing have all helped.

I am so thankful for the brilliant job Panorama magazine does in bringing together like-minded people to inspire, educate, and motivate each other, and for the support and guidance it offers to those who are impacted by mental health issues.

An obstacle, not a stop sign

Completing my 25km goal seemed easily achievable...until I had a bad fall in Bankstown on a wet and rainy day that I'm still recovering from. However, I love The Smith Family with such fondness that I simply didn't have the heart to cancel. I've continued to walk as much as I can each day, and while I'm not jogging, I'm going faster now. One step at a time, day after day! I still grin each time I update my dashboard.

The fall may have slowed me down a little, but it hasn't stopped me! I'm well on target.

"Don't forget that Flourish Australia is itself a Registered Charity! To donate, please go to Flourish Australia's web site." Editor

Dylan's Story...

GIVING BACK BY SPREADING A POSITIVE MESSAGE

By Dylan Cotter Bradley
(as told to Grant J Everett)



Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council (The Council) are people accessing Flourish Australia services who have been elected by their peers to represent their local service and be their voice. Council Members have a 2 year tenure and are then invited to be part of The Council Alumni.

THE COUNCIL

I recently finished a two-year term with the Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council on behalf of the Newcastle service. I first found out about The Council from Simon Swinson, a former Council Member, and he mentored me so I would be ready to take his place once he'd finished his tenure.

One of the main reasons I joined The Council is that I wanted to be able to give back to Flourish Australia, as the organisation has helped me with my mental health and wellbeing for over 9 years. The most fulfilling thing about being a part of The Council was that it helped me to discover my confidence. I was really nervous

about how my time with them was going to go, as I didn't know if I had anything worthwhile to contribute, or if my input would even count.

However, all the Council Members and Fay Jackson (General Manager, Inclusion) and Kim Jones (Project Officer, Inclusion) helped me through the early meetings, and they were there every step of the way to make sure I wasn't getting overwhelmed. I learned that The Council definitely isn't tokenistic, and our contributions are highly valued. This gave me the courage and confidence to say, "I can do this!"

I wouldn't change my Council experience for anything in the world, but I am glad that somebody

else will get the chance to join in my place, and I hope they get as much out of it as I did.

FLOURISH AUSTRALIA NEWCASTLE

I just love the word "flourish." It sums up the organisation so well!

I first connected with Flourish Australia when I was attending headspace. As they only work with people up to a specific age, when I no longer fit into their criteria, they helped me to connect up with the Newcastle service. I've been regularly attending Flourish Australia and taking part in one-on-ones with the staff and the groups ever since, and I always have a lot of fun. I particularly enjoy the art group, and

I'm really glad that we've recently gotten our music group back together after a break.

It may seem impossible when you're down and out and have negative thoughts running through your head, but if you come to Flourish Australia, there's always someone to talk to, no matter how busy things are. If you feel broken down or you're suffering a loss, Flourish Australia can help you to deal with the hard times, and support you to rebuild so you can move on with your life. They give you hope and courage to be the best you.

I've learned that socialising and having community connections is really important, as it helps you to know you aren't alone with your mental health issues, and there's hope for every recovery journey. That's the biggest thing: knowing that things don't have to be bad forever gives me hope, and I know it can give other people hope, too.

Sometimes I wake up in the morning, and just don't want to get out of bed. But whenever I wake up in a bad mood like this I just go visit the centre to brighten up my day. It always works!

I always feel like I'm learning something when I attend Flourish Australia, and it keeps my mind active and away from the bad stuff that's happened. This is helping me to get my life back on track, because I've had a bit of a rough trot. But the positive thing is that I keep on ploughing through, and I'm building my resilience.

I find it very important to put other people before myself. I don't like seeing people upset or suffering, especially when I have a personal experience with some of the things they're going through. I've been told I have a really big heart, and I want to prove that in the way I live.

I've been living in the community for the whole time I've been accessing Flourish Australia services, so if somebody wanted to know how to stay out of hospital, my best advice is to find something that gets you out of bed in the morning, that brings you hope, and makes you happy.

MY PASSION: SPREADING A POSITIVE MESSAGE

I mentioned that I enjoy the Music Group at the Flourish Australia service, and one of my biggest passions is rapping. I like doing freestyle, which can be very hard to learn. It's one of the ways I express how I feel, and I use it to tell people that they aren't alone, they can get through whatever they're experiencing, that there is help out there. My rap has a positive message behind it, and not much rap out there has that!

A NEW BEGINNING: A NEW CAREER

While I finished up my term with The Council in July, this wasn't the end for me: it's a new beginning.

For starters, I'm looking forward to studying to become a Peer Worker. The course I'm going to complete is Community Services Certificate III, which broadly covers all the areas of being a Peer Worker, and I'm planning on doing the on-site training with Flourish Australia's Newcastle service. So I'll be focusing on my studies for a couple of years, though after that I may apply to re-join The Council if I am still accessing Flourish Australia services.

OPPOSITE, BELOW: Dylan has gotten a lot out of attending Flourish Australia's service at Newcastle, and he's always keen to encourage others to make the most of what's on offer there. PHOTOS BY DYLAN COTTER-BRADLEY



Flourish Australia Newcastle
 627 Hunter Street
 Newcastle NSW 2300
 (02) 9393 9700
 Open 9am to 5pm Weekdays

A Space That's Yours: A Home is More Than Just Walls and a Roof

Homelessness Week 2023: August 6-12

By Nicole Pearce and Grant J Everett



According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, every night over 122,000 Australians either experience homelessness or sleep in unsuitable accommodation, such as emergency shelters or couch surfing. This is enough people to fill two-and-a-half Sydney Cricket Grounds to capacity.

Homelessness Week 2023 aims to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness and educate communities on how they can make a difference. The theme for this year is "It's Time To End Homelessness."

What can people do to overcome (or avoid) homelessness?

"We are seeing a shift in what leads to homelessness, as we are currently going through a housing crisis," said Nicole Pearce, Flourish Australia's Housing and Homelessness Coordinator at our Tamworth service. "Rather than being evicted for not paying their rent or for not looking after their rental property, since the start of COVID we are seeing many, many people getting asked to leave their homes with a No Fault Eviction. This only gives them 90 days to find new housing, and while this may seem like a lot, we're seeing up to 60 applications for any given property. Affordable private housing is almost nonexistent at the moment, with properties that used to be rented for between \$180 and \$240 per week rising to \$300 to \$400 a week. Double income families are seeking housing support for the first time ever, with some having to live in hotels and motels."

How can Flourish Australia support people with housing?

"Our Tamworth service has the Homeless Men's Program for men aged 24 and over with mental health needs, and our HASI Plus program offers 24 hour support in our block of units. NERSHH (New England Regional Sustainable Housing and Homelessness) provides early intervention and all the necessary support that people need to gain and maintain a tenancy, and you don't

need a mental health issue to access it. We can also offer NDIS support.”

“If a person is having budgeting issues, we can refer them to free services that offer financial education on how to gain and maintain a property, such as the Rent It Keep It (RIKI) program. We also make sure people have active public housing applications even if they’re currently in private rental, as they may need housing commission in the future and it’s a long, long list. We can also provide referrals to tenancy advocacy services for legal support.”

What are the events Flourish Australia held for Homelessness Week?

“We had the Tamworth Homeless Connect Day and the Gunnedah Community Connect Day which encouraged all local services to come together and educate people about what supports are out there. We offered hot breakfasts and lunches, free haircuts, free health checks, as well as free clothes, blankets and kid’s needs. We also helped people to get copies of their birth certificates for free.”

“As domestic violence is a huge reason for homelessness, we wore purple to work and used social media to discuss the links between homelessness and domestic violence.”

Who would benefit from these services?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, homelessness is defined as “not having suitable accommodation,” which could include dwellings that are inadequate or unsustainable, like refuges, crisis accommodation, or hostels. Many people also experience “hidden homelessness,” which means they could be sleeping in a car, or on trains. In fact, the “rough sleepers” you might see on a bench in the park only account for 7% of Australia’s homeless population.

The ABS says that the best way to maintain a tenancy is to form a strong support network to address the common causes of homelessness. With the right people and services in your corner, it can be easier to deal with the impact of sudden life changes,

neglect, family breakdown, substance abuse, poor living conditions, unemployment, a lack of rental options or bereavement. Flourish Australia can help with all these needs, or connect you up with a specialty service that can.

It’s worth noting that a home isn’t just any place with walls and a roof: it must provide security, stability and privacy, and be a living space you can control.

Numb3rs

One in six Australians experiencing homelessness are over 55, with women over 55 being the fastest growing group, and more than 15,800 children younger than 12 years are classed as homeless. Groups that are at a significantly higher risk of homelessness include veterans, First Nations people, people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with mental health issues. In fact, up to 30% of men and 75% of women who experience homelessness have mental health

issues, and up to 25% of them also have addiction issues. This is often a result of being released from hospitals or prisons without proper community supports in place.

Flourish Australia Can Help

Flourish Australia believes that every Australian should have access to safe and secure housing, and our homelessness services can offer emergency, transitional and supported accommodation to people with a lived experience, as well as referrals to other services.

See below for how to get in touch with us so we can discuss your housing needs.

SOURCES:

www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/sort

<https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/homelessness-week-2023/>

<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/ending-homelessness/homelessness-in-australia-statistics>

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/lived-experience/contributing-lives,-thriving-communities/housing-homelessness-and-mental-health>



Want to know more about our housing and homelessness services?

Link up with the Connection Team Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, through...

LiveChat on the Flourish Australia website (click the Chat With Us button on the bottom right of the screen)

Call on 1300 356 874

Or email us at ndis.online@flourishaustralia.org.au

NAIDOC WEEK 2023 in Jamison Park: *For Our Elders*

By Grant J Everett



NAIDOC Week events are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture, achievements and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. No matter where you live, you won't be too far from events being hosted by communities, government agencies, councils, schools and workplaces.

2023's theme was "For Our Elders." Across every generation of First Nations people, Elders have played and continue to play an important role, holding a prominent place in communities and families.

Kiama Council proudly hosted the NAIDOC Awards for 2023 at The Pavilion on the 29th of July.

Flourish Australia services from Penrith and Seven Hills took part in

The traditional custodians of the Nepean area are the Darug people.

a major NAIDOC Week celebration held at Jamison Park on Friday the 7th of July. They ran an information booth that handed out goodies like hats, lollies, beanies, balloons, magnets, pens, drink bottles, and lots of resources.

There were many other information booths from other services and programs on the day, and the one thing they all had in common was that their services were specifically tailored towards the First Nations community.

There were fun things to do for children of all ages, including a jumping castle, a helicopter, a fire truck manned by the fire brigade, a culture tent, and performances by Indigenous dancers and didgeridoo players. There was also a free BBQ lunch to be enjoyed by all. Like every year, there was an excellent turnout.

There are many residents living in Penrith and its surrounding areas who identify as First Nations people, and Flourish Australia has seen that the three services this group values the most are respite care, social assistance, and financial assistance. NAIDOC Week is a great

opportunity for Flourish Australia to let people know that we can provide this support.

A huge thanks to all the Flourish Australia staff and people who access services who generously donated their time to make this event really special.

The CEO of Flourish Australia, Mark Orr AM, gave a statement in support of NAIDOC Week.

'In July we marked NAIDOC Week, celebrating the contributions of First Nations peoples and communities to our organisation and the communities in which we live and work. The theme this year was "For our Elders." As part of our support for First Nations people and communities, Flourish Australia is going to progressively add First Nations location names to our addresses on Chirp, the website and emails, consistent with Australia Post recommended addressing guidelines.'

SOURCE:

www.naidoc.org.au/about/naidoc-week

ABOVE: Rachael Phillips was honoured for her work in Aboriginal childcare services in Tamworth during the last NAIDOC Week PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNY DALTON

National Carers Week 2023: *Celebrating Their Contribution*

October 15th to the 21st

By Grant J Everett

It's not an understatement to say the 2.6 million carers in Australia who provide for the needs of loved ones and friends are vital to keeping our country running. National Carers Week is the perfect time to promote the health and wellbeing of carers who do so much all year round.

Back in June, Carers NSW was offering \$300 Grants to carer support groups and organisations across NSW to fund events and activities that celebrate and recognise the contribution of carers. This included morning teas, games, sporting events, and more. Flourish Australia will be running many events across the country, so get in touch with your nearest centre to find out more!

All Of Us

As anybody can become a carer at any time, including young people, people who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people from the LGBTIQ+ community, everyone is welcome and encouraged to get involved with National Carers Week.

We can promote this week of events in our local communities, organisations and businesses. If you want to know more about running your own event, you can find kits on the National Carers Week website that can help with marketing, social media, flyers, email banners and more, as well as all the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) you may have.

<https://carersweek.com.au/>



FAMILY & CARERS

At Flourish Australia, we understand the important role many families and carers play in supporting someone with a lived experience of a mental health issue to stay well and part of their local community.

When someone comes to us and asks for support we discuss with them the involvement of their family and other important people in their lives, and what supports they provide. If we are able to obtain that information we will record it so our staff know who is important to the person and their recovery. We will also make contact with you to check what supports you may need to undertake your important role and discuss your involvement and communication preferences.

Other Organisations

Sometimes families and carers want more information and other contacts. There are a range of organisations that provide specialist supports and information for carers. A list with contact details can be found on our website at: www.flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers

Mental Health Carers NSW Ph: 1300 554 660
Arafmi Queensland Ph: (07) 3254 1881
Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network Ph: 1300 620 042
Mental Health Carers Australia Ph: 1300 554 660
Kids Helpline Ph: 1800 551 800
COPMI – Children of Parents with Mental Illness: www.copmi.net.au

How to Easily Make a Real Change to

Our Health

By Grant J Everett

It's never too late to do something about your health! National Walk to Work Day and World Heart Day are both in September, so why not observe them by introducing some walking into your routine?

Walking is good for your heart, circulation, and breathing, strengthens your bones, and boosts muscle power and endurance. It lowers high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and reduces your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, and some cancers, and is great for maintaining a healthy weight.

Walking is low impact, it can be done at any time of day, and at your own pace. What's not to like?

It doesn't have to be difficult!

Just 30 minutes of brisk walking per day is a great way to maintain and improve your overall health. "Brisk" walking means you can talk, but not sing, and you may be puffing slightly. If you can't manage 30 minutes, try several shorter walks spread over the

day. As your fitness improves, you can increase your intensity.

The recommended number of daily steps for best results is 10,000, so download a free pedometer app on your phone to see how close you can get. There are many little ways to get closer to 10K steps: try taking the stairs instead of the lift, get off public transport one stop early, and hoof it to the shops instead of driving.

For best results, do your walking at the time that's most convenient for you.

Being safe

Moderate activities like walking pose few health risks, but check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program, particularly if you are over 40, are overweight, or haven't exercised in a long time.

It's a good idea to warm up by starting slowly, taking light steps, and walking heel-first. When possible, walk on grass rather than concrete to help absorb the impact. Afterwards, gently stretch your legs to prevent stiffness and injury. If you feel pain, stop!

Also, slip, slop and slap to avoid sunburn, and drink plenty of fluids before, during and after your walk. Wear loose, comfortable clothing, and wear shoes that offer sufficient heel and arch support to avoid blisters and shin splints.

Make it fun!

Exercising with others makes it more enjoyable, and easier to stick to.

If you want more encouragement, dogs are awesome company, and their regular need for walkies is great motivation to get out and pound the pavement! Always keep Fido on a leash, only walk them where allowed, and always collect their Number Twos. And if you don't own a woofie, perhaps offer to walk the neighbour's dog?

Your local council can fill you in about walking groups, walking tracks and parks. Pay attention to the sights and sounds of nature, and enjoy the world!

SOURCE:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/walking-for-good-health>

Flourish Australia Expands to a Whole New State!

What does our Adelaide service have to offer?

By Amie Verrel

Amie Verrall, Regional Manager of Flourish Australia's first ever service in South Australia, and **George Kellis**, the first Peer Worker there, have been hard at work setting up a new Adelaide office. Here's what they've been up to...



"George and I have been very active in getting ready to support people at our service once it opens," said Amie. "We attended our first NDIS provider expo, Positive Futures, back in May, then took part in the Reconciliation in the West event in June where we learned a lot about how to support people with lived experience of mental health issues who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Some of the artworks we're showing in our office space were co-created with people we met at that event."

"Our site will be a part of the ACDC Project, which is about inviting people to have a meaningful and respectful conversation about their mental health and wellbeing, as well as that of their friends, loved ones, and the wider community."

"TheMHS Conference was located here in Adelaide this year, and Flourish Australia had multiple presenters from all walks of life taking part and giving talks, covering plenty of different topics. I was a part of the Flourish Australia paper, "Leaders of New Mental Health and Wellbeing Communities: New Leaders, New Services, New Attitudes and New Outcomes," along with Community Advisory Council Members Rania Omar and Ayesha Khan, and Flourish Australia's General Manager Inclusion Fay Jackson."

"George and I also attended the *International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia* event held by the South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance, which included the launch

of the Rainbow Realities video. Our Adelaide office has agreed to be a member of ACON's Welcome Here project, to support LGBTQIA+ communities to feel welcome in our office and with our services."

"Finally, we will be providing Support Coordination and Psychosocial Recovery Coach services to people who come and see us for support. Like all Flourish Australia services, we'll have a no-wrong door policy, so we can connect people with the support they need, so people are welcome to come and visit us to see what we're about."

ABOVE: Amie Verrel and George Kellis, getting ready for business! PHOTO BY GEORGE

YOUR JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT

Every year **1 in 5** Australians will experience **some form of mental health issue.**

Flourish Australia provides mental health specialised disability employment services (DES) supporting people living with a mental health issue to access sustainable employment.

Flourish Australia DES locations:

Bankstown • Broken Hill • Caringbah • Cessnock • Harris Park
Hornsby • Liverpool • Maitland • Penrith • Seven Hills

To see if you qualify for our free service, please call us for a confidential discussion or visit our website for more information.

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