

abilityworks

AUSTRALIA

Purpose Through Employment

December 2024 Newsletter

In this issue:

A note from the CEO	2
Important dates	4
Employee shoutouts	7
Customised Employment	8
Inclusive Design	12
Around the building	19
Payment by outcomes trial	21
Celebrating 60 years	22
Holiday crossword	23
Photo gallery	24

A note from the CEO

As we approach the festive season, I'd like to extend my thanks to our employees, families, and carers for your support and contributions throughout the year.

This year, we celebrate the impressive progress made by our Inclusive Design Team headed by Natalie Collins, with incredible support from Bri Norton, Dom, Shen and more recently, Morgan. Their dedication to accessibility is transforming how we communicate; ensuring that our digital platforms, like our website and social media, meet the highest standards of inclusivity. They are working towards meeting Level AAA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). From updating key pages to creating an Inclusive Insights Platform, their efforts demonstrate our commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

One of the year's highlights is our collaboration with White Box Enterprises, which involved the Ability Works team helping to improve the accessibility of a financial wellbeing program. The program is now not only inclusive but also available for our own use, thanks to the wonderful insights from our employees, Ruby, Ebony, Billy, Kylan, Diane and Warrick, with the assistance of Nia, and the Inclusive Design team. Our employees will commence training in the program from December 2024.

Our impact extends beyond digital inclusion. Ability Works' research codesigned with communities in the City of Greater Dandenong, for our potential

additional facility, was featured by RMIT University at a global conference on Social Work and Sustainability, showcasing our commitment to community partnerships and co-creation on an international stage.

We also celebrate the success of the Payment by Outcomes trial, (more on page 21) which confirms the incredible impact social enterprises like ours have in creating meaningful, sustainable employment.

As we prepare for the holidays, we will reflect on our achievements and look forward to a new year filled with opportunity, growth, and collaboration.

Wishing you all a safe, joyful, and restful holiday season.



Image: Sue is wearing glasses and a dark blue blazer. She is smiling.

Warm regards,

Sue Boyce

Important dates

An unforgettable holiday celebration!

This year, we're turning up the excitement at our end of year party with a show-stopping performance by the incredible **Asanti Dance Theatre**.

Experience the vibrant energy of West African **drumming, dance, and jaw-dropping acrobatics** that will leave you amazed and inspired. And that's not all – you'll have the chance to join in the fun with their interactive, audience-participation performance.

Whether you want to dance along, try your hand at drumming, or just soak up the electric atmosphere, this is an experience you won't want to miss.

This event is for **ALL EMPLOYEES**, even if it is not your regular scheduled day, so save the date and get ready to celebrate the festive season.

Please let us know if you have any special dietary needs as lunch will be provided.

When: Thursday, 19 December 2024

Where: Ability Works Australia, 1 Yarra Boulevard, Kew.

Time: 8:30am - 2:00pm

RSVP: Friday, 6 December 2024

Email: support@abilityworks.com.au

ASANTI DANCE THEATRE WEST AFRICAN DRUM, DANCE & AFROBATICS

AVAILABLE FOR
FESTIVALS
PARTIES
CORPORATE
TEAM BUILDING
SCHOOLS
CHILDCARE

ALL ENQUIRIES
0407 819 816



@asantidancetheatre



Image: A man is happily drumming, wearing colourful clothes against a yellow background. The text reads: "Asanti Dance Theatre. West African drum, dance and afrobatics. Available for festivals, parties, corporate, team building, schools, childcare. All enquires 0407819816. Social media is @asantidancetheatre

Add these dates to your calendar:

Thursday 19 December 2024 - End of year party

Friday 20 December 2024 - Is a regular work day

Monday 23 December 2024 - Is a regular work day

Tuesday 24 December 2024 - Is an RDO

Wednesday 25 December 2024 - Is a holiday

Thursday 26 December 2024 - Is a holiday

Take your annual leave Friday 27 December 2024 to Friday 3 January 2025.

Monday 6 January 2025 - Ability Works will resume with a skeleton crew

Monday 20 January 2025 - Full operations will resume

Monday 27 January 2025 - Holiday

Employee shoutouts



Erik

We're acknowledging Erik for his outstanding quality and attention to detail on the screw cap brushes in the manufacturing department.



Kathryn

We're acknowledging Kathryn for her all-round fantastic work. She has really been stepping up and using her initiative to keep going with work. She has also been excelling with her Transurban E-tag testing.



Luke

We're giving Luke an honourable mention for making more of an effort to stay focused on his jobs, staying at his workstation and completing excellent work.

3 Images show Erik, Kathryn and Luke around the Ability Works building, all wearing orange hi-vis and smiling.

Customised Employment

We're sure many of you have noticed some new faces wandering around Ability Works, and we'd like to introduce you to some of them. Over the next few issues of our newsletter we hope to introduce you to the full Customised Employment team and explain their role within the company.

Customised Employment is a person centered approach to helping those experiencing barriers to mainstream employment to find the role that's perfect for them and their circumstances.

The specially trained team meet with individuals and their support systems on a regular basis to get to know the persons interests and skills so they can better understand their strengths and limitations.



3 Images show Customised Employment participants working in the food industry; cutting lemons, making pizza and pouring coffee.



Image: Jon is wearing a grey sweater with a blue collar showing, he is smiling.

Introducing Jon, Customised Employment Manager

Many of you probably already know Jon as he's been with Ability Works for some time now. Jon is passionate about impacting employment outcomes for people with a disability or barriers to finding meaningful employment in the community. His background

is in health promotion, community health, Local Government and the not for profit; which has driven him to focus on employment outcomes at an individual level through Customised Employment.

Introducing Annaliese, Engagement Coordinator

Annaliese is based in the Inner-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, although she has quite a few connections in the Western suburbs after growing up there. Annaliese has such a kind and compassionate manner that makes her a joy to talk to. She loves putting in the time and effort required to get to know people and uncover their interests, allowing her clients to pursue career pathways based on their passions.



Image: Annaliese is smiling. She is wearing pink glasses and a collared shirt.

Introducing Mia, Engagement and Service Coordinator

Another familiar face, Mia, has moved on from her role in Supported Employment and has become a motivated Engagement Coordinator.

She has recently supported a Customised Employment client into mainstream employment, who is now thriving in his new job in an industry he's always wanted to work in. Mia had built a strong relationship with the employer, who has said they love having our client on their team!

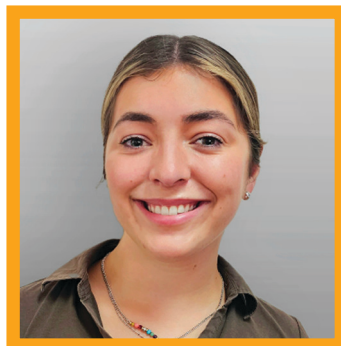


Image: Mia is wearing a brown collared shirt and smiling.



Image: Clare is smiling, she is wearing a black and white striped sweater.

Introducing Clare, Counselling Coordinator

Much like Jon, Clare has been with Ability Works for some time now, and has made many contributions to make the service what it is today. Clare is based in the South-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne with 4 years of experience delivering Customised Employment. She is passionate about building self-determination and self-advocacy skills with her clients and seeing therapeutic outcomes like improved confidence and independence.

More introductions to come next quarter!

If you or someone you know might be interested in Customised Employment there are many ways you can reach out:

- Let our staff know
- Check out our website www.abilityworks.com.au
- Call us on 03 9853 7080
- Send an email to info@abilityworks.com.au

Inclusive Design

Perth web accessibility meet-up

Natalie Collins, Dominique Loulie and Brigitta Norton shared the journey of training and mentoring employees in the Inclusive Design team during a recent web accessibility meet-up, hosted online. They shared how Ability Works Australia is embedding digital accessibility understanding across the organisation and building a framework for other businesses to learn to become an inclusive and accessible workplace for people with disability.



Image: The Perth Web Accessibility Meetup moderated a panel on the topic of Digital Accessible Stories, featuring Brigitta Norton (Ability Works), Dominique Loulie (Ability Works) and Natalie Collins (Ability Works).

Zero emissions bus and accessibility roundtable

The Department of Transport and Planning invited the Inclusive Design team to Victoria's Zero Emission Bus Drive Day. Our team—Mark, Ruby, Jimmy, and Dominique—tested some of the accessibility features of the new zero-emission buses alongside other members of the Victorian Government, bus operators, and industry leaders to help Victoria transition to zero-emission buses. This included participating in an Accessibility Roundtable chaired by the Department of Transport and Planning's Chief Accessibility Advocate, Tricia Malowney.



Image: Mark, who uses an electric wheelchair, is testing the new zero-emission bus by using the ramp.

Swinburne University students design an accessible tap

Swinburne University students worked with Ability Works employees to design an accessible tap. They started with sketches and created clay prototypes, solving real-life challenges together. By working closely with people with disabilities, the students learned about inclusive design and how to make practical solutions for different needs. Feedback from Ability Works employees helped improve the designs, making them easier to use. The students presented their final designs to their professor and classmates, impressing everyone with their thoughtful work. The project showed how teamwork and different perspectives can create better designs. This experience inspired the students to work on more projects like this, focusing on creating designs that are useful and accessible for all.



Image: A Swinburne University student and Ability Works employees are sitting around a table, proudly showing their final accessible tap model.

Image: The tap is printed in a gold or brass colour and it has a rather natural shape with lots of curves, mimicking leaves. The handle has brail to indicate temperature and has a simple lever mechanism to start/stop the water flow. There is a leaf shaped structure below the faucet to assist the water to flow closer to the user. The basin is a natural grey colour, it appears to be made of stone and has a smooth, irregular shape as if it were real stone naturally eroded by water over time.

Building digital skills program

Ability Works has received a grant to provide digital skills training to at least 17 employees aged 50 and over. The training will use the Capture IT system and Be Connected short courses. The first topic will cover internet safety, how to find information, and how to search for things online. The goal is to help employees learn new digital skills, create a program that the Support Team and volunteers can deliver, and help employees explore other work opportunities, like web usability testing. This program will also help older Australians and people with disabilities build basic digital skills and confidence. Ability Works wants to give participants the skills they need to confidently use the internet and find new opportunities.

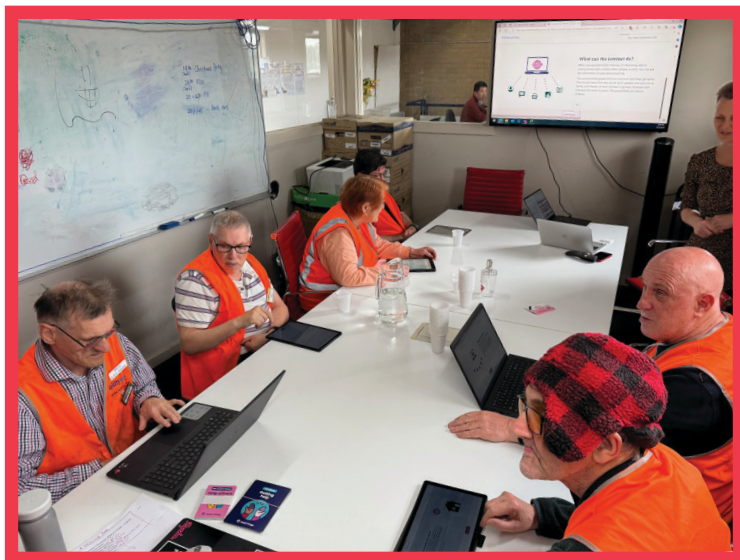


Image: Ability Works employees are seated around the meeting table, participating in digital training.

John Holland Group workplace accessibility assessment

The Ability Works Inclusive Design team did a Workplace Accessibility Assessment to check if John Holland Group offices are easy to access, and to find ways to make them better for people with disabilities. We looked at things like building entry, office spaces, meeting rooms, toilets, kitchens, parking, and help for service animals. We checked things like colours, signs, noise, lighting and space to move around. We also looked at access to public transport, lifts, emergency exits and digital systems like visitor check-in and room bookings. This will help John Holland Group make offices more accessible and create a better guide for workplace inclusion.



Image: Ability Works and John Holland Group staff are sitting at a table to talk about the walkthrough in their office.

Get online week

Ability Works supported 'Get Online Week' from 14 to 18 October 2024. We helped employees aged 50 and over to improve their digital skills so they feel safer and more confident online. We received the 'Get Online Week' marketing pack and used it to promote the event. We put up posters, flyers and bunting around the workplace. Every morning, we informed staff and employees about the event during toolbox meetings. We also hosted events with tasty lunches and gave out merchandise to encourage employees aged 50 and over to join in. Many staff and employees of all ages showed interest in the digital training. Having 'Get Online Week' support was a great opportunity for everyone to improve their digital skills and feel more confident using the internet.



Image: Four happy Ability Works employees standing under the advertisement banners, holding up 'Get Online Week' flyers.

Around the building

Lift update

We are still awaiting confirmation from JobAccess and the Department of Social Services (DSS) regarding funding for our new lift. They've reached out with additional questions, and we've provided the necessary information. We're hopeful for a positive outcome and will keep you updated on any progress.

Exciting recycling initiatives at Ability Works!

We're thrilled to announce a major new recycling project is coming to Ability Works in 2024! More information will be shared in the New Year—stay tuned for details in the next newsletter.

New equipment: cardboard bundling machine

To boost our recycling capabilities, we've recently acquired a cardboard bundling machine! This state-of-the-art equipment compacts and straps cardboard for a more efficient and eco-friendly recycling process. It's an exciting step forward for our sustainability goals.

New work: Minesco bolt project

We're now tackling a challenging project for Minesco, processing tamper-proof dome bolts. Our team is meticulously cleaning the threads of 13,000 bolts to ensure they meet Minesco's high standards. This project is well underway—great work, team!

Completed work: COS project

Our Packing and Assembly team recently wrapped up an important project with COS, reworking recycled paper reams. This included assembling boxes, packing the paper, and stacking 60 boxes per pallet for wrapping and shipping. Thanks to the team's incredible speed and precision, we've already successfully processed a full delivery. Well done!



4 images show parts of the jobs' process. Someone is applying stickers to the paper, another is packing the paper into a box. Someone is putting lids on the boxes, and the boxes are stacked onto a pallet to be wrapped.

Payment by outcomes trial

We celebrate the success of the Payment by Outcomes trial, a groundbreaking initiative designed to measure the effectiveness of jobs-focused social enterprises in creating meaningful, sustainable employment for people facing significant barriers to work. The trial, which Ability Works proudly participated in, tracked employment outcomes for individuals who had been out of work for at least nine of the previous 12 months.

The results, now nearly two years into the trial, are compelling. Social enterprises like ours have proven to be significantly more effective than traditional models, such as Disability Employment Services (DES), in achieving long-term employment outcomes. Key findings highlight better retention rates, higher individual earnings, and substantial cost savings to government programs. Ability Works played an essential role in these results, by employing six people, demonstrating how our tailored approach and commitment to inclusion make a real difference. Through our Customised Employment program, participants are equipped with skills, experience, and confidence to transition into mainstream employment, creating lasting change in their lives.

This success underscores the transformative power of social enterprises in addressing systemic challenges in employment and sets a benchmark for how inclusive and supportive workplaces can drive positive outcomes at both individual and societal levels.

Celebrating 60 years

After many challenges, our 60-year celebration book is finally going to the printer! The project turned out to be bigger than we thought, but thanks to our hardworking Inclusive Design Team and Support staff, we hope to have physical copies ready before Christmas. We're also working on a digitally accessible version for those using assistive technology, and we aim to have it available by Christmas too.

The newsletter team wants to thank everyone who helped create this tribute to our 60-year milestone. We can't wait to see it in print!



Image: An AI generated image of a blue and white cake. There are lit candles in the shape of a six and a zero standing on the top.

Photo gallery



Image: Edward being silly with the donation pails to make Lynette laugh for a photo.

Image: Lynette laughing at Edward being silly.



Image: Group photo of Greg, Serena, Warrick and Billy in the manufacturing department.



Image: George working hard on the robot in the Transurban mail room.

Image: Jared proudly showing off a bowling trophy and medal.



Image: Mario opening mail in the Transurban mail room.



Image: Nadia is inspecting a tap design for Swinburne University students.

Image: Philip is skillfully crafting wooden frames in manufacturing.



Image: Tracey working with a smile as she makes brushes in manufacturing.





Image: Robin working his favourite job - the robot - in the Transurban mail room.

Image: Stephen sorting E-tags in the Transurban mail room.



Image: Susie flashes a smile in manufacturing.

Holiday crossword

O G Y H S Y A D I L O H A M F
 Y Y I R D W I E L U Y U Y R R
 S D H H A S U I Y L I M A F F
 Y C A F S E F R I E N D S O H
 I I N Y L R D H M G O I O I E
 F A U D O O F K A I N G Y D F
 W I K N T N E A S F F W C I T
 U S K E K I S O K T D A A H H
 Z U A W R I E A N S Z P Z I D
 O S H Y R R Y Y U A S A Y E Y
 R N I E R I L A W I D R P T U
 K K T A K W A N Z A A T A E E
 S L W R K T O L W D A Y I T S
 Y S Z S I G F U E U F F D N W
 R C H R I S T M A S K E A A N

Holidays

Gifts

Yule

Family

Party

Diwali

Friends

Christmas

Kwanzaa

Food

Hanukkah

New Years

