



Knoxbrooke

Talk

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Summer/Autumn
EDITION

CEO Report



I'm delighted to be writing my first Knoxbrooke Talk article and introducing myself to everyone I haven't yet met.

Over these first two months since I started in March, it's been a time of getting to understand all the very different business areas that make up Knoxbrooke and meet the fabulous people in these teams. And from every team I meet, the passion and commitment for what we're doing, and for doing it really well, is simply outstanding – I feel very privileged to have joined an organisation that is as exceptional as this.

There is great work happening every where across Knoxbrooke and something I'm extremely excited to see being established is

the Client Council. The Client Council (although when they start, this group might choose another name for themselves) is being set up to ensure that across the organisation we're hearing what's important to the people we support, and making sure that they have a say in what we do and how we do it. Our very experienced and fabulous Support Options Manager, Fiona Sammut is leading the development and setting up of the Client Council, and in taking on the responsibility of Co-Chair, will have a key role in ensuring it's integrated across the organisation and steering what we do.

We're also starting to work on how we can be bringing all the business areas of Knoxbrooke closer together, sharing what's happening and celebrating everyone's successes better. In an organisation of our size, this will take a little bit of time to make happen really well, but I'm confident we're all committed to getting this right. I expect to have more to share around this in the next edition of Knoxbrooke Talk.

As I settle into my role, many across Knoxbrooke are starting to know me and understand what I think is important. One of these things is that I think a great organisation is made up of very different people, so it's very important that we take pride in that, recognise that people often learn or operate differently and work respectfully with each other. I also believe that every role in an organisation is important, no matter what the role is. Which brings me to Teamwork... It's something I'm very passionate about, and I look forward to working with everyone to build on the great teamwork I've already seen at each Knoxbrooke location.

Thanks for making me so welcome in these first two months!

Annie Revell
CEO

Social Enterprises



Yarra View Bushland

By Knoxbrooke

How nice has this Autumn weather been? It's my favorite time of year, with crisp, foggy mornings leading to gorgeous sunny afternoons. It's a good time to get yourselves prepared for the winter months, with warmer clothes and maybe even a beanie! Those 1 degree mornings are not too far away.

Our annual peak production season has now been completed with over 500,000 plants potted during the short production season. Focus across all nursery sites is now stock maintenance and despatch. Our stock this year is some of the best I have seen in my time at YVB and is a credit to all our production staff.

On the sales front we have had a relatively slow start to the financial year, predominantly due to cost of living pressures impacting on consumer spend. All sales channels within the retail sector have been affected. It's an industry wide challenge, and our sales team are working hard to find those active pockets and keep sales ticking along. Through this process some new customers have come onboard, expanding our distribution into Sydney and Brisbane!

Early in the 2024 year we completed deliveries to a number of large commercial projects including the Mont Albert Level Crossing Removal, 3 large public housing projects and the Healesville – Koo Wee Rupp Road upgrade. We are currently in production mode for several projects to be delivered later in the year including the Waurin Ponds rail upgrade, Croydon Level Crossing Removal and 2 Melbourne Data Centre sites.

In March we had a team head into the Melbourne International Garden Show to assist with setting up. This was a great opportunity for those involved to experience a large scale event set up, work alongside some of the leading landscapers in the country and also see some of Yarra View Bushland's finest stock



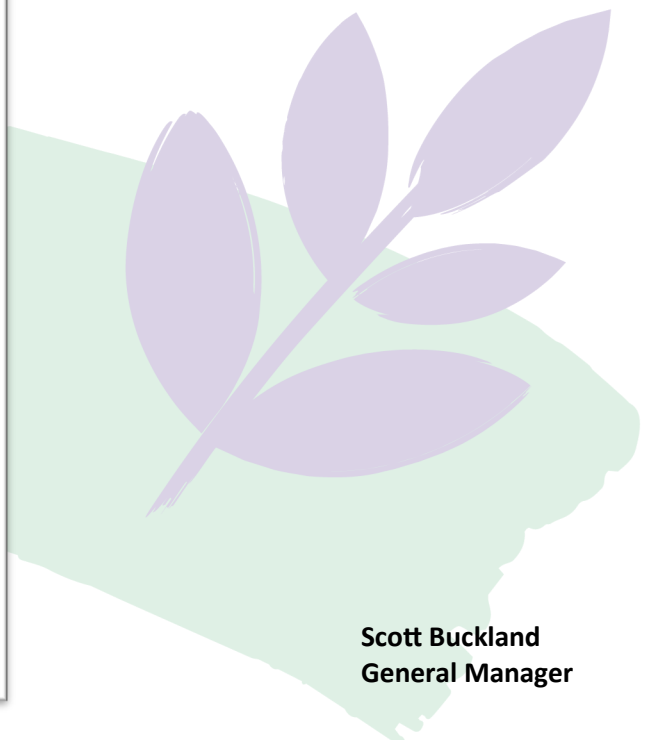
being planted into a number of show gardens.

In May, the first deliveries for large contracts held with local councils commenced. Our orders this year are the largest for many years, which is credit to our stock quality, production management and co-ordination of the programs.

Yarra View Garden Centre has also had a challenging few months, again affected by the general slowing of retail demand. In April we attended the Yarra Valley Plant Fair for the first time with great success and we are already planning how we can make a bigger footprint at the November fair. Early May saw our huge 'Carpark sale' take place. Being only the second time we have ran this it was a great success and is already getting great reviews and people asking when is the next one. The sale provides an opportunity for YVB to clear some excessive stock and for the public to engage with the business. The preparations and running of the sale saw all YVB and YVGC teams come together to plan and implement. I am immensely proud of the 'working together' spirit shown.



Our 2025 budget is currently being finalised and it does include future growth for the business. This includes an increase in our Supported Employees and as a result we are currently recruiting for all 3 of the nursery sites. We would love to speak to anybody who may be keen to consider joining the amazing YVB team.



Scott Buckland
General Manager



Outsource

By Knoxbrooke

It has been 8 months (3 beautiful seasons) since our last edition of “Knoxbrooke Talk” including the latest news for the Outsource. The Board and Leadership Team recently re-set the organisations new 2024 – 2026 Strategy which has 3 main focuses including, 1. Client Centric, 2. Organisational Unification and 3. Financial Sustainability. This strategy realignment has created some major changes in our Enterprises businesses to set us up for future growth.



Outer East

What a huge past 8 months it has been for our Outsource business. Knoxbrooke made its largest ever investment in our Outsource business which saw us move from our small Mt Evelyn site to a new modern and much larger warehouse in Bayswater on October 3rd 2023. The move has been positive for all our Staff and Supported Employees (SE's) as well as our customers. Outsource now has so much space in both our packing and warehouse areas that will allow us to achieve our growth strategy (Please contact us if you would like to organise a tour of our new facility). Since moving to Bayswater, we

have increased our Supported Employee numbers by 13 and we are actively trying to recruit more to create more meaningful employment opportunities. Our move to Bayswater did however see us temporarily lose some of our sales as we stopped doing work with Dollar Sweets and the Firewood products (after many years) but we have gradually replaced these jobs by picking up new work with new customers in the Automotive, Cosmetics, Confectionary, Industrial Hardware and Printing industries. The move to our new facility allowed us to win a couple of large quantity jobs that we have previously not been able to be considered for.

With the Growth strategy, it did require us to re-structure our Outsource Team so that we can focus on process improvements and improved policies and procedures for the future.. We now have a new Outsource Team led by Mazin Bashir (our new site Operations Manager) Kyle, Sue, Michael, Luke, Curtis, Larissa, and Nikita.

In September 2023 we also introduced our own SES (Supported Employment Services) Team at Outsource and led by Sally Fantulin (SES Manager) the SES Team (Osama, Donna & Ben) have done a great job supporting every single one of supported employee's. Outsource also re-qualified for our ISO9001:2015 Australian Standards Quality Accreditation in October 2023 which is important for dealing with the larger corporate organisations.

West Gippsland (Formerly Jigsaw)

The past 18 months have been tough for our old Jigsaw Woodworking and Packaging business in Warragul. 18 months ago, we lost our only packaging customer and had not been able to replace them, sales for our timber products dropped, and the cost of timber increased. We introduced our own new product packing the environmental sandbags, but after 4 months of strong sales, the orders dried up. In February 2024 after 8 months of limited work and slow sales, Knoxbrooke made the decision to close our Jigsaw business. We are pleased to announce that none of the Supported employee's or staff lost their employment, and everyone was redeployed into our other Warragul social enterprises..



Outsource Warragul (Formerly Waratah Gardening)

The team have done a good job servicing all of our customers over the past 8 months, which include a mix of Schools, Corporate businesses and domestic customers. We are currently on track to achieve higher sales than our budget. We have recently purchased some new industrial mowers to add to our fleet.

In early May, our business moved to a new site at 21 June Crt Warragul (just down the road from Vintage Vibes)

We are looking to grow our gardening business and so we are looking for at least 4 more Supported Employees to join our team. Please contact our People & Culture Team if you know of anyone that is interested.



Yarra View Horticulture

Our Yarra View Horticulture team have had a challenging time over the past 8 months as our largest customer has made several changes that have impacted on the volume of work for our business but we are continuing to look at ways to diversify our business and partner with new customers.

Abdul Bakhach
General Manager



We are so excited to share some fantastic news with you all! Vintage Vibes has been growing, and we couldn't be happier. We recently welcomed five amazing new team members: Josh, Destiny, Jake, Sam and Callum, They have already made such a positive impact on our team, and we feel incredibly lucky to have them on board.

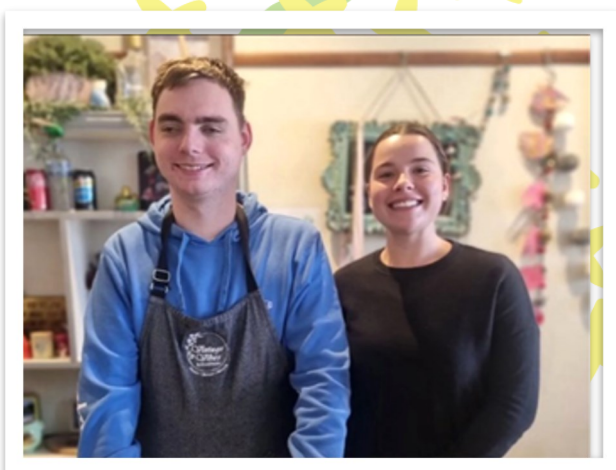
We are excited to introduce Ella, our new Employment Coach, who will work with Vintage and Coffee Vibes. Ella's role is to provide individualised skill development and support to help our employees succeed. We are thrilled to have her on board, as she brings a wealth of knowledge and positivity to the team! Our supported employees have been making incredible strides lately. They are learning new skills, gaining independence, and building daily confidence. It is truly heart-warming to witness their growth and progress.

In addition to our team, we are thrilled to have students from our local special schools join us for work experience twice a week. This program, which we have been running for the past year, gives these 10 students a glimpse into the working world as they prepare for the next chapter in their education. They are assigned to different departments based on their interests and skills, and they get to work alongside our team members, learning and contributing to our daily operations. We are honoured to be part of their journey and support them in any way we can.

The generosity of our community constantly amazes us. Your quality donations, overwhelming support, and eagerness to be involved in our mission mean the world to us, and we are incredibly grateful for your continued support.

And a massive shout out to our amazing volunteers! Your generosity makes a considerable difference to Vintage Vibes and the community. Thank you for everything you do.

Thank you all for being a part of our journey. Vintage Vibes is thriving, all thanks to every one involved.





We are pleased to announce the addition of Josh, our newest team member. In the coming weeks, we look forward to welcoming two more talented individuals who will enhance our team and contribute to our success.

As we approach our first anniversary, we are proud of the growth and development seen within our team. From overcoming challenges to building confidence,

our team members have shown remarkable progress, reflecting the supportive environment we have nurtured. We would like to recognise the outstanding contributions of Kelly, Paula, and Michael. Their dedication and hard work have exceeded expectations and garnered praise from our valued patrons, showcasing the collective success of our team.



In addition to our commitment to exceptional food, coffee, and customer service, we are dedicated to inclusivity and empowerment by providing meaningful employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities, enriching our workforce and promoting a more inclusive society. This commitment has been recognised amongst the local community as the reason why they support the Café, its genuine and people are proud of what its achieving.

We sincerely thank our partners, supporters, and stakeholders for your ongoing support and collaboration. Your encouragement drives our pursuit

of excellence and motivates us to strive for improvement continually.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to upholding the values of Coffee Vibes - inclusivity, excellence, and community engagement. We will continue our journey of growth and innovation as we continue to serve our community with distinction and empower our employees to achieve their goals.



Claire Cutler
Manger Strategic Planning & Partnership

Client Services



Building Confidence and Empowering Futures

Transitioning from the structured environment of school to the dynamic world of adulthood can be daunting, especially for young adults with disabilities. At Achieve by Knoxbrooke, we understand the unique challenges young adults face, and we're here to provide the support and guidance they need to navigate this exciting journey.

One of the core principles of Achieve is fostering confidence and self-belief. We believe that every individual has unique talents and abilities waiting to be discovered, and our courses are designed to help them uncover and develop these strengths. Through a combination of hands-on activities, vocational training, and personalised support, we empower our participants to embrace their potential and pursue their goals with confidence.

Our approach goes beyond just building resumes and interview skills – it's about organic growth and personal development. We create opportunities for our people to take on new challenges, try new things, and learn from their experiences. Whether it's mastering a new skill in the kitchen, conquering a fear of public speaking, or navigating the complexities of workplace dynamics, Achieve provides a safe and supportive environment for

Recipe for the Perfect Winter Support Worker

In the frosty embrace of winter, crafting the ideal support worker is akin to baking a delicious treat—requiring just the right balance of ingredients and a sprinkle of magic. So, let's embark on this culinary adventure and whip up the recipe for the perfect winter support worker!

First and foremost, let's add a generous helping of empathy. Someone who not only listens but truly understands the feelings and experiences of those they support. They're like a mug of hot chocolate on a cold winter's night, providing comfort and reassurance with every sip.

Next, let's sprinkle in a dash of respect. A great support worker treats everyone with dignity and kindness, celebrating the uniqueness of each individual's journey. It's about recognizing and valuing the inherent worth of every person they encounter.

Now, let's stir in effective communication. Clear and compassionate communication is key for building trust and rapport with those we support. Our ideal support worker is a skilled communicator, able to convey information with clarity and warmth, like a steaming bowl of soup on a chilly winter's day.

Adaptability is another essential ingredient. In the

growth and discovery.

Socialisation is another key aspect of the Achieve experience. We recognise the importance of building strong peer networks and fostering social connections, which is why our courses incorporate opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. From group activities and outings to team-building exercises and networking events, we encourage individuals to connect with others, share experiences, and form meaningful relationships.

We challenge the notion that disability equals inability. Instead, we celebrate diversity and champion inclusivity, recognising that everyone has something valuable to contribute. By promoting a culture of acceptance and understanding, we empower our participants to embrace their differences, celebrate their strengths, and pursue their goals with passion and determination.

As we continue to support the journey of our Achievers, we remain committed to providing innovative experiences, personalized support, and endless opportunities for growth and success. Together, we're building a brighter, more inclusive future where every individual not only lives, but thrives.

ever-changing landscape of support work, our Winter support worker must be flexible and open-minded, ready to adjust their approach to meet the evolving needs of those they serve.

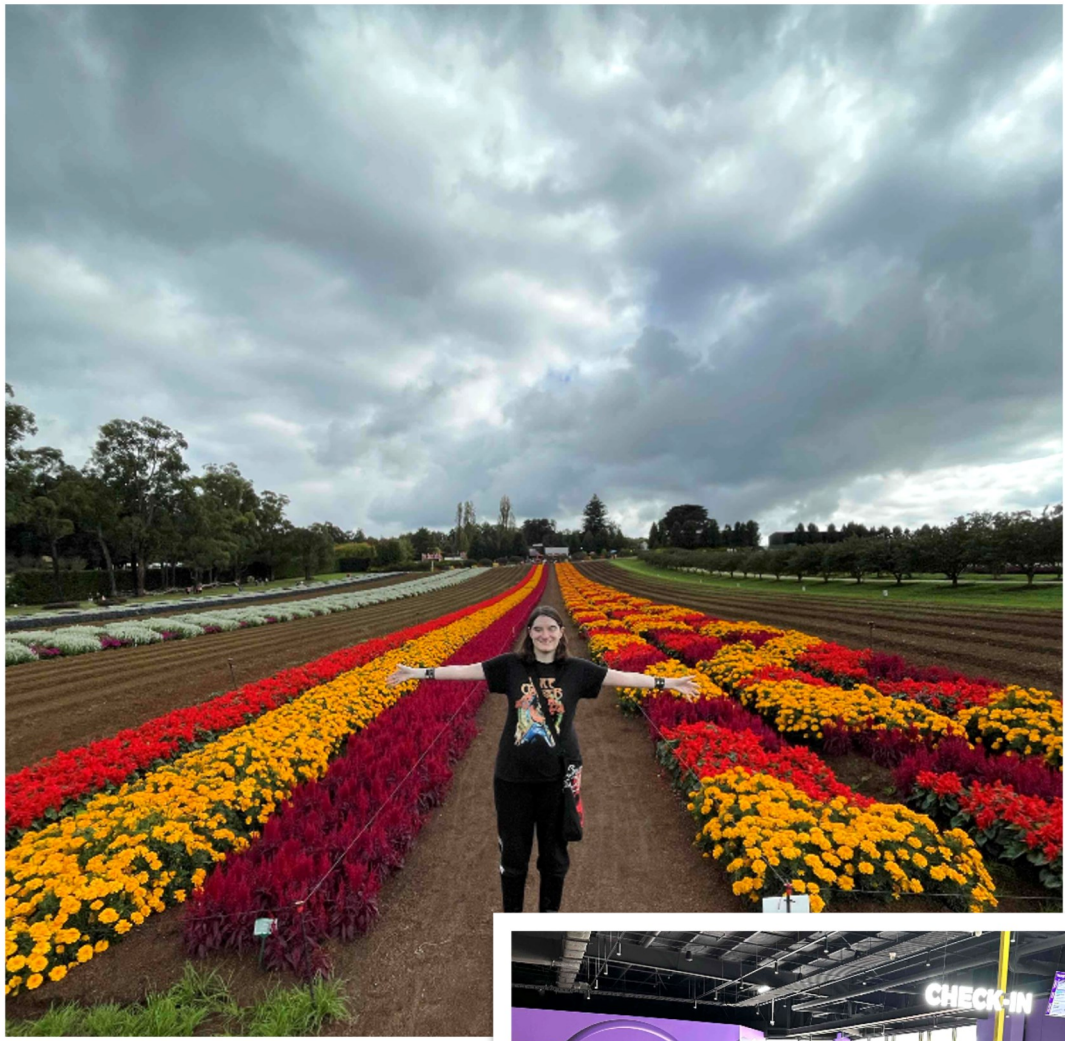
Of course, no recipe would be complete without a sprinkle of patience. Times can be tough, but our winter support worker remains calm and composed, guiding and nurturing with unwavering patience and understanding.

Last but certainly not least, let's add a large helping of empowerment into the mix. Our perfect support worker not only provides assistance but also empowers others to take control of their own lives and futures. They're like a beacon of light on a dark winter's day, inspiring and uplifting those around them.

So, there you have it folks—the recipe for crafting the perfect winter support worker. With empathy, respect, communication, adaptability, patience, and empowerment as our guiding principles, our support workers are ready to spread warmth and joy to all they encounter this winter season.



Michael Beavis
Manager—Achieve & 365





Our team continues to provide meaningful activities to ensure the people attending Mawarra services have opportunities to experience and learn new things and contribute to our community.

VALID (Advocacy) Conference:

Seven clients, supported by three team members, enjoyed attending the VALID conference in Geelong in February. They joined Supported Employees from our Enterprise services, sharing accommodation and getting to socialise with them and meet new people throughout the advocacy conference.

Feedback from attendees included:

- “I loved volunteering and helping people”,
- “I liked meeting new friends, the disco and the food”,
- “I loved making new friends and the Red Faces competition”.

The staff enjoyed supporting our clients to attend and said the event was well organised and they felt it was a great opportunity for all to meet new people in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

A big shout out to Fiona Sammut, Manager of Support Options, and Liz Piner, West Gippsland Administration Officer, for all their work to arrange our participation in this event.

Going Green:

With a generous grant of \$5,000 from Baw Baw Council, the Growing Green group have been setting up Mawarra to be as environmentally sustainable as possible. We have purchased recycling bins for use throughout the facility, purchased and set up a chicken coop and propagating seeds to be planted in a vegetable patch. We are getting ready for our chickens; their eggs will be used at our Coffee Vibes Café and food scraps from Mawarra and Coffee Vibes will be composted or used in chicken feed.



Woodwork:

Our Woodwork group have made their own toolboxes, each personalised and demonstrating their creative flair. They have purchased their tools and protective gear and are now undertaking their own projects, from wooden name plaques with decorative mosaic tiles through to fixing things they have brought in from their home, ensuring that we are reducing waste.



Music:

Our music group are practicing for a show that will be held at the Warragul Art Centre mid-year, the details are all a bit “hush hush”, although not too quiet, so we await with great anticipation to the event. More on this next newsletter!



Extras:

Our Extras activities have included going to the Warragul Show, dinner and movies out and a recent highlight has been to see Jessica Mauboy at the Art Centre. We even met Jessica as she was out and about the day of her concert!

Support Options

Client Council Launch

We are very pleased to advise that a Client Council is being formed for clients/supported employees to provide feedback and input into the operations and future of Knoxbrooke. The new council will be made up of representatives "Advocates" from each Knoxbrooke service and meet monthly. Feedback from client council meetings will be reported to the Knoxbrooke Leadership Team and Board.

Advocates roles and responsibilities will include:

- Representing services and peers in relation to thoughts and issues,
- Ensuring that problems are heard and addressed,
- Sharing ideas about what would be good for Knoxbrooke to do more of or differently,
- Provide feedback about their experiences at Knoxbrooke.

Expressions of Interest forms are available at each service .

NDIA

The NDIA landscape has changed with internal modifications changing the way NDIS plans are processed. Please see below new terminology and processes in place to be aware of:

Rollovers- The NDIS send letters to participants advising that if current plans are covering their support needs, they can rollover the plan without requiring a planning meeting.

Pros- Convenience of not having to meet and NDIS planner or representative.

Cons- Clients profiles and goals are not updated, the funding amount

is not adjusted for increases in the price guide thus funding in plans may be short.

Extensions- If new plans are not implemented before a plan end date plans may be automatically extended.

Pros- Current funding automatically continues until your new plan can be finalised so there are no gaps in funding or supports.

Cons- If you require funding in a new category in your plan such as allied health supports you will have to wait for the new plan to be implemented. Service Providers will need to prepare short term service agreements until new plans are implemented.



Reassessments

When/if the NDIS call to ask you how your plan is going, be prepared to request a meeting if you:

- anticipate that you will use all your current funding,
- would like an increase in supports in the next 12-24 months, this could mean increasing your days of work, volunteering, attending more group social events, engaging with 1:1 support for help at home or accessing the community, engaging allied health providers like occupational or speech therapists.

It is advisable to ensure the NDIA are aware of all your potential support needs at this time as applying for funding once the plan has rolled over, takes longer and requires significantly more evidence.

Meeting Formats

Meetings can be held over the phone, online via MS team or in person. The NDIA will not necessarily give you an option so please express your preference. When a planner/LAC meet a participant, they have an opportunity to establish what is important to them and what aspects of their life they need help in. When a planner/LAC meets participants in person, they

are hearing their voice and visualising them when preparing plans, it has a greater impact than a phone call. This invariably results in plans being more appropriately funded.

Depleted Funding

Although the NDIA state that they monitor funding we have many clients where this process has not occurred, and funding has run out as a result. Many providers will stop supporting clients when funding is depleted, please be assured that Knoxbrooke do not currently cease support in this situation but to claim a payment we need to manually apply to NDIA provider payments with no guarantee of being imbursement. The risk of not being paid or waiting months for payment is becoming more and more of a challenge.

The NDIS are currently 3-5 months behind in implementing plans and this has a flow on effect of increased claims made via provider payments and at some point, providers such as Knoxbrooke may have to make the decision to cease supports to remain viable.



To avoid this situation, it is important that you are aware of your plan budgets and the means in which increases, or funding can be maintained.

Contact the Support Options Team

Please advise the Support Options Team when you are contacted by the NDIA in relation to plan rollovers, reassessments, or extensions.

We can assist with:

- assessing if a rollover will cover the funding required for support needs.
- funding proposals for consideration at reassessments.
- progress reports and data for consideration at reassessments.
- general NDIA advice and support.
- support at reassessment meetings.

Fiona Sammut

0429 075 478

Di McAleese

0429 105 854

Glennis Wiggett

0429 060 974



Fiona Sammut
Manager Support Options

Knoxbrooke Support Options

With you all the way

CUSTOMIZED

Your Journey

- Accessing the NDIS
- Understanding NDIS plans
- Liaising with the NDIA
- Attending NDIS planning meetings
- Funding proposals for NDIS plan reassessments
- Progress reports for NDIS plan reassessments



LIAISE WITH

- Clients and families to assess support requirements
- Internal services to engage supports
- NDIA and support coordinators
- External providers to engage any additional support required





MANAGE


Your Pathway

- Intake process into all Knoxbrooke services
- Preparation of service agreements
- Monitoring of client funding
- The data integrity of funding charged for every support delivered by a Knoxbrooke service



 ndis@knoxbrooke.com.au

 03 9758 3666

 www.knoxbrooke.com.au



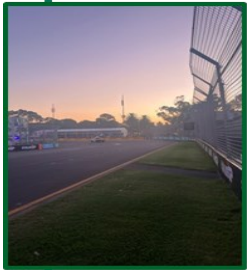
Spotlight

Awesome People Doing Interesting Things



Robbie Wilson, from our Yarra View Bushland Nursery (YVBN) team, is the 'go to man' when it comes to anything sport.

Not only does Robbie have amazing sporting knowledge he is also a super talented bowler! At the recent Mount Evelyn Cricket Club presentation night, Robbie was inducted as a life member of the club and also awarded the bowling award for getting the most wickets for the season—**25 in total!!!** Robbie is very proud and honoured to be a life member.



By day, Andrew Ermel can be found in the very busy Despatch Team at YVBN (York Road), but what some of you may not know is that Andrew is also a long standing member of the Country Fire Authority (Coldstream Brigade) and has also volunteered as a fire marshal at the Melbourne Grand Prix. Thanks for these fantastic pictures Andrew.



Andrew will also be participating in the Melbourne Fire-fighter Stair Climb, Andrew has completed in this annual charity event before but is hoping this year to achieve a personal best time of 7 minutes. If you are interested in donating to this worthy cause, details are available on Page 14.



Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting from dawn to dusk.

Michael Basri, a member of the team at YVBN York Road, attended his local mosque for Bayram which marks the end of Ramadan.

Thanks for sharing this great photo Michael.

Donate to Knoxbrooke

We value your support.

Your generous contributions help us to:

- Enhance our service offerings
- Help send members of our Knoxbrooke Client Council to the annual VALID 'Having a Say Conference'
- Purchase materials and equipment
- Improve facilities for our supported employees

If you can assist with a tax-deductible donation or would like to leave a bequest, please give us a call on 03 9758 3666

Respectful images policy

Knoxbrooke is wholly committed to a 'respectful images' policy that ensures that all photos of service users and their families that are presented in Knoxbrooke social media, website, newsletters, reports and flyers are respectful, dignified and fit for purpose.



Knoxbrooke has a wonderfully positive story to tell and we are keen to share our activities with family and friends of Knoxbrooke.

If for any reason you do not wish for your loved one to be included in photographs that may appear in publication or our social media page, or you would like a copy of our policy, please let us know.

Leadership Team

Annie Revell

Chief Executive Officer

Trevor Norman

Chief Financial Controller

Scott Buckland

General Manager
Yarra View Bushland

Abdul Bakhach

General Manager
Outsource

Teresa McClelland

General Manager
Client Services



Registered NDIS Provider





Head Office

31/885 Mountain Highway, Bayswater
03 9758 3666

Our Locations

Achieve

31/885 Mountain Highway, Bayswater
03 9758 3666

Outsource by Knoxbrooke

31/885 Mountain Highway, Bayswater
Outer East— 03 9736 4984

West Gippsland - 03 5624 3437

Mawarra

7 Percy Street, Warragul
03 5624 3400

Vintage Vibes

14 June Court, Warragul
03 5624 3400

Waratah Gardening

21 June Court, Warragul
03 5624 3437

Yarra View Bushland Nursery

136 York Road, Mount Evelyn
03 9737 0400

Yarra View Garden Centre

136 York Road, Mount Evelyn
03 9737 00400

Mawarra Opportunity Shop

40 Palmerston Street, Warragul
03 5624 3492

Coffee Vibes

West Gippsland Arts Centre
Corner of Smith and Albert Streets,
1 Civic Pl, Warragul
0448 352 946