



afford news

February 2023



The Australian Foundation for Disability acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community.

The Australian Foundation for Disability (Afford) provides essential services in accommodation, lifestyle and recreation, and employment for people who have a disability.

Afford's mission is to provide innovative, flexible and high-quality support to enhance lifestyle, learning and vocational opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers. Our vision is to be the partner of choice, supporting people with disability to shape their own lives.

Everything we do is underpinned by the values of integrity, cooperation, empathy, respect and excellence.

This magazine is published to tell stories of interest to our community, to share news and information, and to celebrate our people – including our clients, our clients' families and friends, and our employees.

If you have any questions or want to suggest a story contact b&e@afford.com.au

Inside

02 From the CEO

03 A goal fulfilled...

Seeing Elton John live

04 Rainbow Champions of Sydney World Pride

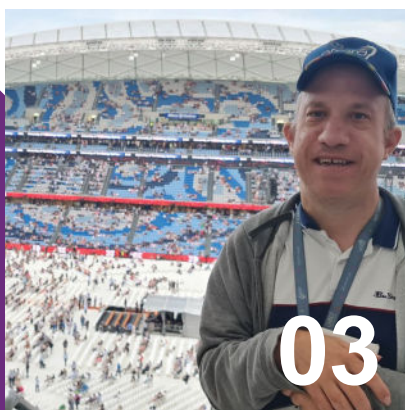
05 Five things to know about...

Being a learning organisation

07 Five things to know about...

Your right to vote

09 News



On the cover:

Rudy Jean Rigg (they/them), one of Sydney WorldPride's Rainbow Champions. Read more in our story on page 4.

Photo credit: Jaimi Joy

From the CEO



I have written in previous editions that 2023 will be our year of Rediscovery. We've wasted no time in the early months of this year and we're taking our first big steps on that journey.

We recently published our new Code of Conduct, which really reflects our values in action at Afford. We will also soon be launching our Learning and Development Strategy. This strategy bakes in our commitment to continuous improvement, innovation, and vision for excellence.

It has never been more important for all providers of service to people with disability to be committed to continuous improvement and excellence. Especially at Afford. We have been one of numerous case studies at the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and have attended a second hearing this week. We have communicated with our clients, their families, and our community about this hearing. We recognise and respect the aims, findings and desired outcomes of the Royal Commission and the future focus at Afford is to ensure that we are rights-led and that service to clients is always our paramount consideration in everything we do.

On page 3 of this edition of Afford News you can read a wonderful story about our client, Mark Tassaker, who fulfilled a life-long dream to see Elton John perform in concert.

In March, we will be celebrating diversity at Afford and the diversity of our community. We are so looking forward to seeing Sydney play host to WorldPride and we are sharing a terrific story about the Rainbow Champions being honoured this year, including five champions who identify as people living with disability. March is a big month for diversity, and we'll be celebrating the cultural diversity of our people, our clients, and families with Harmony Week.

I hope you enjoy the latest edition of Afford News and have a great month ahead.

Jo Toohey

Chief Executive Officer



A goal fulfilled: Seeing Elton John live

Afford client, Mark Tassaker, has been a fan of Elton John for many years. Recently, he was able to achieve his goal of attending some live concerts – including the realisation of his dream to see his favourite artist, Elton John, live in concert.

Mark lives in an Afford supported accommodation home in Penrith, New South Wales. He has been an Elton John fan for a long time.

One of Mark's goals is to get out in his community, including at live concerts.

So, when Mark learned about the famous musician's planned world tour, including a stop in Australia, he got excited. Then, when he learned it was the 70-year-old musician's last ever tour before retirement, he knew he had to go!

The tour is named Farewell Yellow Brick Road. The tour started in September 2018 and will finish in July 2023. It consists of more than 300 concerts worldwide, including concerts in Sydney and Melbourne.

Mark was able to attend the concert in Sydney on Wednesday 18 January 2023. It was held at Allianz Stadium. Mark went to the concert with an Afford lifestyle assistant, Nancy. They had dinner at a restaurant before the show, and Mark bought official Elton John merchandise at the concert.

Mark had a great experience at the concert. He got upgraded seats at no cost, had a brilliant view, and loved singing along to the music. Mark said it was "ten out of ten!" 🙌



"I heard on the Today Show that some concerts got cancelled but we got to see him. I love all the songs he sang and I liked the photos on screens of him playing the piano. He's good at playing the piano and he's very loud."

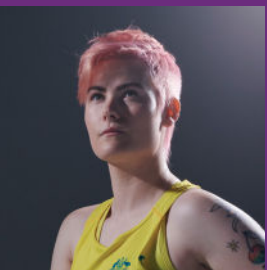
Mark Tassaker

Find out more about the lifestyle, learning, and vocational services Afford provides at: afford.com.au/services

Meet the Rainbow Champions of Sydney WorldPride

Sydney WorldPride has named 45 Rainbow Champions, in honour of the 45th anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. These influential people from Australia's diverse LGBTQIA+ family contribute to its community and culture. Meet the five Rainbow Champions who identify as people with disability!

LGBTQIA+ is an acronym. Its letters stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. The plus symbol at the end acknowledges any sexualities, sexes, and genders that aren't captured in the letters.



Robyn Lambird (*they/them*) is a Paralympian bronze medallist, content creator, model, and disability advocate. As a content creator with cerebral palsy, Robyn sets out to challenge negative perceptions of disability.

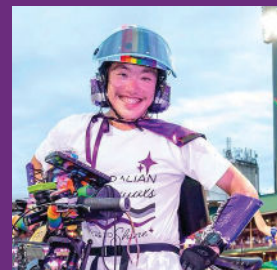


Rudy Jean Rigg (*they/them*) is an autistic and non-binary transgender host, creator, advocate, educator, and pop-culture fiend. They were named a Top Ten online creator at the 2022 British LGBT+ Awards, and AiMCO's 2021 Best Creator on TikTok for Rainbow History Class.



Caroline Bowditch (*she/her*) is the Chief Executive Officer/Artistic Director of Arts Access Victoria and the Creative Lead of the Alter State Festival. Her career includes performance making, and she is a regular consultant on accessibility and inclusive practice.

Kerry Chin (*he/him*) is an aromantic, asexual, autistic, and transgender beacon of visibility. He has represented the asexual community on Triple J Hack, You Can't Ask That, Abbie Chats, and in English and Chinese interviews.



Daniel McDonald (*he/him*) is a Gadigal and Wonnarua man who represents Aboriginal art through 'Deadly Hand Talk.' He is dedicated to amplifying the voices of people with disability in the arts and culture sectors.



You can find out more about the full line-up of Rainbow Champions here: sydneyworldpride.com/rainbow-champions

WorldPride is a global LGBTQIA+ festival. Sydney was chosen to host WorldPride in 2023. Sydney WorldPride is on from 17 February to 5 March. We are excited! You can learn more at: sydneyworldpride.com 🏳️‍🌈

Rudy Jean Rigg photo credit: Jaimi Joy



5 things to
know about...

Being a learning organisation

Amanda Loh, Director – Learning & Development, Afford

Have you ever heard someone say that it's never too late to learn something new? Well, here at Afford, we're 100 per cent behind that! This year is going to be filled with positive change and transformation at Afford – which is why we've called it our year of Rediscovery.

We acknowledge our desire to do and be better for our clients and our employees. One of the ways we're going to achieve this is by transforming ourselves into a learning organisation. Here's what that means.

1 A learning organisation is constantly seeking ways to do and be better

A learning organisation is one where all individuals, teams, and the organisation itself adopt a model of thinking that encourages learning new things, continuing to be good at what you do, and delivering excellence for clients. It provides its people with opportunities to grow and develop, and supports this with systems and processes and time. And it celebrates achievements!

2 Afford's new campaign, Change Heroes, is all about learning

As Afford works towards a brighter future in 2023, we will all be change heroes that champion progress. To support this, our Learning and Development (L&D) team is building an online Change Hero Headquarters, where employees will be able to access the tools, knowledge, and skills they'll need for the adventure ahead.


3 We will continue to support our clients to keep learning too

By putting learning at the centre of everything we do, Afford will be able to keep supporting clients with their learning and individual goals, such as enhancing life skills, making social connections, and working toward fulfilling their hopes and dreams.

4 Our learning journey isn't 'one size fits all'

People learn in different ways. Some people are visual learners – they like to watch videos or live demonstrations. Others learn through reading or listening. Some people need to hear or see something many times to learn it. We'll make space for people to learn in the classroom and online, through storytelling, and from each other.

5 Learning at Afford includes consultation

We will be asking our clients about the skills, knowledge and learning they think employees need to have to support them to achieve their goals. We want to think about what we can do differently – or better – guided by the voices of the people who matter the most. 



5 things to
know about...

Your right to vote

Everyone who is an Australian citizen and is aged over 18 has the right to vote. Australia is a democracy, which means that its citizens have a say in who makes up the government.

When you exercise your right to vote, you have a say in how Australia as a country, or each of its states and territories, or how your local council is run.

1 Voting is done at elections

One of the ways citizens can have their say is by voting in federal, state, or local elections. Federal elections are about the whole of Australia. State elections are about the state you live in (like New South Wales or Victoria). Local elections are about your local area (like North Sydney or Preston). When you vote in an election, you fill out a form to show which local candidate or political party you think will do the best job. The candidate or party that gets the most votes is the winner.

2 There is a law about who can and can't vote

The Electoral Roll is a list of everyone in Australia who can vote. The law says you must enrol to be on the Roll and vote if you are an Australian citizen and aged over 18 years. There is an old-fashioned part of the law that has been used to stop some people with intellectual or psychosocial disability from voting, but advocates are working hard to change this.

3 How to check if you are on the Electoral Roll


It is easy to see if you are on the Electoral Roll. You can do it online. Visit check.aec.gov.au and enter the details it asks you for: your given names, family name, postcode, suburb or locality, and street name. There is also a verification code to enter. You can ask a support worker to help you fill out the online form.

4 How to apply to be on the Electoral Roll

You can put your name on the Electoral Roll when you turn 18. Once you're on the Roll, you must vote. If you don't vote, you might have to pay a fine. If you have been stopped from being on the Roll, you can apply to vote again by filling out a new enrolment form and getting your doctor to give you a certificate saying you understand voting.

5 You can vote in person at a polling booth, or from home by post

If you can vote in person, you will need to visit a polling booth (the place where voting happens) on election day. If you can't get to a polling booth, you can apply to do a postal vote. If you choose this option, the Australian Electoral Commission or the electoral commission for your state will post voting forms to you. You will need someone to be a witness for you. It is also okay to get someone to help you fill out the form. There is a reply paid envelope to put the form into, then you put it in the post box.

Afford supports your right to vote. To learn more about voting and your rights, talk to your support worker or visit the Australian Electoral Commission's Easy Read information at: aec.gov.au 

Save the date for Harmony Week

Harmony Week is coming up! Held from Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March, Harmony Week celebrates multiculturalism in Australia. Multiculturalism means people of diverse cultures, races, and ethnicities living together in harmony.

Some of the ways you can take part in Harmony Week are by wearing its signature colour, orange, by talking with people about being inclusive, or by attending special Harmony Week events in your area.

Afford supports inclusivity and harmony in our homes and communities. Learn more about Harmony Week by talking to your support worker, or visiting the Harmony Week website at: harmony.gov.au 



How the new disability employment pilot could impact you

The Government and the Business Council of Australia have signed an agreement to create a new disability employment pilot.

A pilot is a project that is used to explore and test an idea. If the pilot goes well, the project will be able to grow bigger and continue. The agreement comes after a \$3.3 million investment from the Government in the pilot.


The pilot aims to improve employment outcomes for people with disability. It will also test new ways to create change and opportunity in organisations like businesses.

Just over half (53.4%) of the 2.1 million Australians with disability who are of working age are in the workforce.

Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth is the Government spokesperson for the pilot. She said that 93% of people with disability face difficulties finding work due to the lack of suitable employment and perceived limitations of their disability.

“This new employment pilot seeks to address this and provide significant benefits to people with disability, employers and businesses, the economy and the broader community,” Minister Rishworth also said.

It’s important to include people with lived experience in projects about them, so the Government and the Business Council of Australia will work closely with people living with disability throughout the pilot.

Afford thinks the pilot is a good thing. Over time, it could impact Afford clients by creating new job opportunities and making it easier to get into the workforce. It could help you to start or advance your career, learn new skills, and reach your full potential. 




NDIA visiting rural and regional locations

Between 17 January and 5 April, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and partner organisations will be visiting rural and regional New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia in a Services Australia Mobile Service Centre.

No bookings are required, you can just pop in and see someone to talk about things like:

- > understanding the NDIS including early childhood and local area coordination services.
- > applying to access the NDIS for funded supports.
- > options for managing your funding.
- > requesting services with an approved plan.

To find out when a Mobile Service Centre will be visiting a location near you, visit: servicesaustralia.gov.au 




Voting in the NSW State election

An important New South Wales (NSW) State election is coming up on Saturday 25 March 2023. It is an opportunity for all people who live in NSW, are aged over 18, and are enrolled to vote to have their say in how NSW is run.

NSW is divided into 93 state electoral districts. Voters in each district will elect one person to represent their district in the Legislative Assembly. Voters will also elect 21 of the 42 members of the Legislative Council. Which electoral district you are voting in will depend on where in NSW you live.

If you are enrolled to vote, you can vote in person on election day. If you can't get to a voting centre on election day, you can vote in person before the election, do a postal vote, or vote over the telephone.

If you need help casting your vote, you can take a friend or relative with you, or you can seek assistance from an election official at the voting centre (polling booth).

You can learn more in the *'5 things to know about your right to vote'* article on page 7 of this issue of Afford News. You can also find support for people with disability who want to vote on the NSW Electoral Commission website at: elections.nsw.gov.au 

NDIS Code of Conduct


Afford is committed to delivering our services and working with the community in accordance with the NDIS Code of Conduct. This commitment ensures we:

- > act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
- > respect the privacy of people with disability
- > provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
- > act with integrity, honesty, and transparency
- > promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability
- > take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of people with disability
- > take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

Feedback & Complaints

Afford is committed to continuous improvement and client-centred service, so we welcome open feedback and complaints. If you want to share your feedback with Afford, or you have a complaint, please visit our website or speak to our Service Delivery Directors in your region. afford.com.au/feedback/



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