IMAGINING BETTER

" Our immediate challenge is a human one and means we need to imagine how our vision, mission and values are defined and expressed during the COVID-19 emergency. At Araluen, we will focus our efforts on keeping our participants and staff healthy and connected. We will fulfill the expectation of our community and the NDIS that we meet the immediate needs of participants. Your support in these ambitions is greatly appreciated ".

Tamara Cattach
CEO - Araluen

ARALUEN

April 2020

A message from our Chair

To the Araluen Community,

Over the past few weeks we have all witnessed a rapidly changing world as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is unprecedented in our lifetimes and creates enormous challenges for all of us. The restrictions in place put a lot of pressure on individuals, families and businesses. We at Araluen are not immune from these very difficult times.

Unfortunately not all disability service providers will survive. We have heard stories recently of organisations already in the process of closing down or greatly reducing their presence in the community.

Araluen believes that it will come through this difficult period, looking a bit different to how we are today, but nevertheless providing a range of options that participants want, and deserve to have.

Day Supports were closed from the week of the 23 March after the Prime Minister and Premier announced severe restrictions on individuals, community and business activities. Araluen has been spending time working through the complex issues of complying with the restrictions but also working how to best provide services, not only for the coming weeks and months, but for the future as well.

I sat in a planning meeting with the CEO (Tamara Cattach) and the senior managers from all areas of our operations. Firstly, I was impressed with their positive and team-based approach that we can get through this. Achieving this will require ingenuity and clever thinking. The managers' skill, dedication, enthusiasm and commitment will make this happen.

The second major observation was the overriding level of concern for participants and families. Staff have been ringing families to check on them and to understand their needs. This helped us form a 'return to work' plan based around staff availability and participant needs.

Many of the activities that we took for granted only weeks ago are now not available. Not all service requests can be accommodated, but nevertheless we are listening and trying our best to deliver in these much changed times. Supports will re-commence gradually as we have had the opportunity to plan and implement adapted options that comply with Government infection control recommendations. We will keep you informed about changes to our operations.

There will likely be new and more severe restrictions in the days ahead. Araluen will comply with all requirements to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and participants. We will be working hard to maintain as many services as possible for our participants and preserve the long-term job security for our skilled and dedicated workforce .

And finally, please observe the health warnings and stay safe and well.

Bruce Martyn
Chair – Araluen Centre

A message from our CEO

To participants, families, carers, staff and supporters,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and taking note of the current restrictions so we can try to slow down the spread of Coronavirus and keep each other safe.

By now you will have heard and read much about the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges it creates and the subsequent health, financial and social risks we all face.

At Araluen, this has been a challenge unlike any we have seen before and its impact has been vast. However, we stand strongly by our mission to support people to imagine and achieve better lives. Now is the time to live our values – people first, integrity and passion for what we do - with intense determination and a united sense of purpose.

As daily events continue to change within our community and our personal lives, Araluen has spent that past two weeks planning and rebuilding our support options. We want to offer our participants the support, engagement and continued learning they need throughout these difficult times. No matter what the circumstances.

Our aim is and must be long-term sustainability and success. This involves taking into account all the challenges of ensuring our valuable staff remain employed and that we not only survive through this crisis but come out the other end well set up for the future. Our financial position, for now, is solid. However, we must not take this for granted as we, like everyone else, are operating in unknown and uncertain territory.

Many providers have closed, at least for now. Araluen is facing the challenges thrown at us in this unprecedented time by fighting. We're working hard to continue supporting the community that relies on us with a range of new options.

I am proud of the workforce that I lead. Araluen's staff have continued to demonstrate dedication and genuine care for the well-being of participants while their own lives and families are greatly impacted. Thank you.

The safety and well-being of our community is top priority. Thank you for your patience as we've altered our services day by day to limit the health risk to our community. We've always tried to make the best decisions we could at the time as circumstances changed rapidly around us. We will continue to do so.

Araluen has reimagined what we offer you and how we deliver it. We intend to evolve and we intend to be here for our community as we go through this together. Stay safe and speak up if there's anything you need.

Tamara Cattach
CEO – Araluen CEO

listening to you

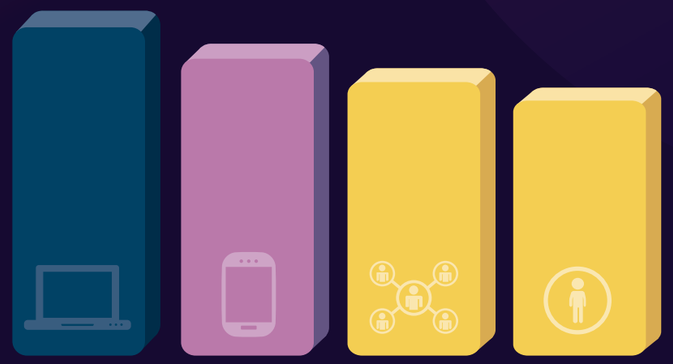
reaching out to learn what you need now and in the future

Everyone needs to have connection and purpose in their lives. Araluen surveyed as many staff and participants (or their families or carers) as possible to better understand how we can respond effectively to the changes happening in everyones lives. Thank you to everyone who took the time to answer our questions. We now have a clear picture of what Araluen's future direction should be and are planning support options accordingly.

What you told us...

Participant Survey

Of new support options that we can currently offer, these are the most in demand:



166 participants were surveyed

There was a strong demand for virtual support with most of our participants having access to IT/internet.

Araluen staff

Araluen values our committed and skilled workforce. We have put strict hygiene and social distancing practises into place throughout the organisation to limit the health risks to everyone. At present, staff who are able to work at home are doing so and only essential staff are on our sites.

We have made a commitment to our permanent staff to pay wages for the foreseeable future. The Government's Jobkeeper subsidy is a positive announcement that will strengthen our ability to pay and retain our staff for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

our future starts here

Araluen supports - coming now!

We know that many people we support are potentialy vulnerable to social isolation, or could suffer in other ways, and that families and carers may struggle when the services they rely on become unavailable. We've used our time wisely while some supports have been suspended. We're back with new and adapted options that mean you can continue to work towards your NDIS-funded goals.

Launching from 6th April

Araluen will gradually roll out new supports from the 6th of April. We expect to experiment, learn and improve as we go. Our aim is to develop an overall support picture that will eventually look like this – with a few refinements thrown in along the way:

Virtual Support

Live-streaming of new and exisiting supports so that participants can connect with people and continue to learn over the web, without leaving home. We'll provide technical help to get you started.

Your Neighbourhood

Support delivered to eligible participants in your local area that complies with Government recommendations aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing and hygiene practises.

Support & Information Line

Telephone support service that can advise you what supports we can offer you or connect you to staff if you want keep in touch.

Centre Based Support

Araluen will resume Day Supports when Government restrictions are lifted and we can offer these safely. This includes supports offered at our various sites – Milley Lodge, Chancez Cafes and RecScape.

Options for Community Living & Support Coordination

Managers - Jenny Tomlin and Sharen Aitchison
Including Araluen group homes. **Email: sharena@araluen.org**
Our specialist Support Coordination teams can help you find a new home and the services included in your NDIS Plan. **Email: jennyt2@araluen.org**

For information about supports, please contact our Support & Information line. **Ph: 9438 2944**

our actions

keeping you as safe as possible

We have a duty of care towards you and a wider social responsibility to do all we can to limit the health risk posed by the COVID-19 virus. The following supports have been impacted as described.

Suspension of Day Supports, RecScape and Chancez Cafe

To protect the health of all of our community, Araluen has suspended all centre and group-based supports for now. We are reorganising our staff teams and how we operate so we can gradually offer new, safer options.

See page 5 and keep an eye on our website for upates about our supports

Options for Community Living - Araluen Group Homes

Our group homes are an essential service. They are still operating, subject to Government health recommendations. Residents continue to receive supportive and compassionate care from our dedicated staff in their homes.

To protect the vulnerable people we support, residents can only leave the home for essential reasons. All non-essential and social visits to our houses are cancelled to limit the risk of infection to residents, staff and their families. We encourage all family members and friends to keep in touch with their loved ones via phone or video link. Our staff will be happy to walk you through how to do this.
Contact: Trish: 0428 605 662 or **Chris: 0428 497 747**

Options for Community Living - Support Coordination

All Araluen Support Coordination services are operating but we are not holding face-to-face meetings. You can contact your Support Coordinator on their regular mobile phone number or email address. If you have an NDIS Plan and need help to find and connect with the supports you need, get in touch.
Contact **Jenny** on **0410 647 359** or see **www.araluen.org/ndis**

Family and Carers Network

This meeting provides community members with an opportunity to be informed about our supports and operations and give feedback. We will resume our regular meetings in due course. Regular attendees will be notified in advance. Keep an eye on our website and our social media too.

something uplifting

‘See me’ - art by and featuring Araluen artists

Araluen exists to support people to live a great life. So let’s continue to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our community members and create positive ways to connect where we can.

Together with photographer, Peter Tarasiuk, and the City of Manningham, Araluen recently opened our latest art exhibition, ‘See Me’. The Manningham Art Gallery has subsequently closed due to the public health risk posed by COVID-19.

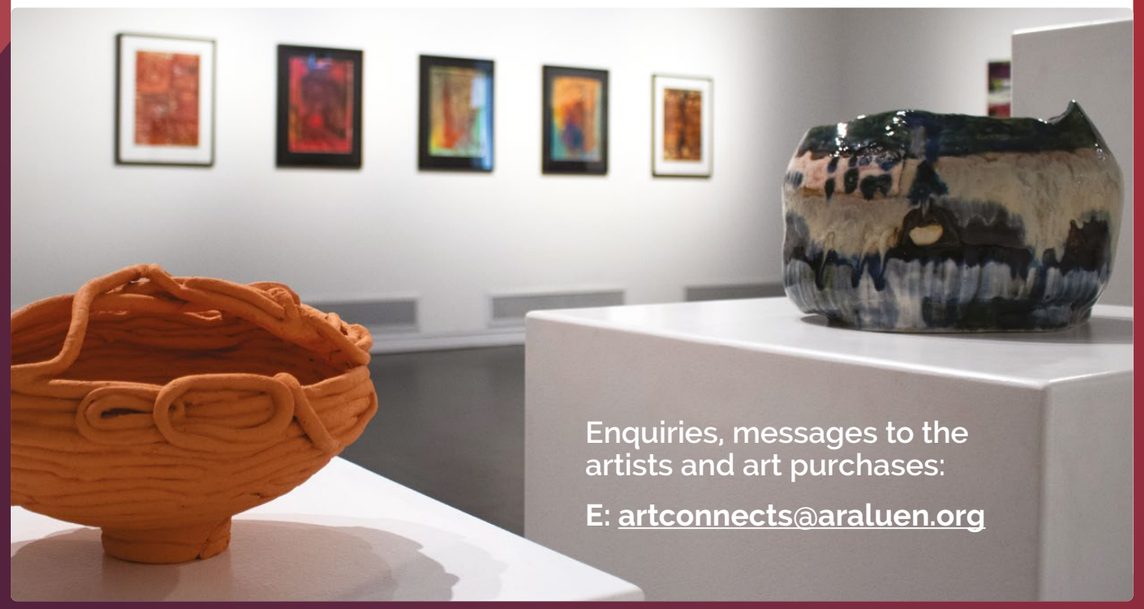
We invite you to view and share our latest exhibition, ‘See me’ online at:

www.araluen.org/art-connects-gallery

The artists and all those who worked on this project would appreciate your feedback. Please leave or email a comment and share the exhibition link widely.

Featuring art in a variety of mediums alongside photographic portraits of the artists by Peter, the exhibition asks viewers to really ‘see’ the identity and story of the person behind the artwork. More broadly, ‘See Me’ looks at ongoing issues around social inclusion and representation of people with intellectual disabilities in the community.

We congratulate the artists – **Brady Freeman**, **Melissa Kent**, **Tony Allan**, **Kate Steart**, **Jason Horton**, **Tim McCall** and **Shane Williams**, as well as our art team. Our thanks to Peter, the City of Manningham and Format Framing.



Enquiries, messages to the artists and art purchases:

E: artconnects@araluen.org

Photographic portrait of artist, Tim McCall, by Peter Tarasiuk > From the exhibition, ‘See Me’

Keep in touch

www.araluen.org

Please keep an eye on our website for the latest information about changes to supports at Araluen.

Please keep your contact details up-to-date by going to our website or phoning 9439 2805.

ARALUEN

Imagining and achieving better lives

NDIS