

# Imagining Better

News Spring 2022



MEET ANDREA

ARALUEN

## TAMARA CATTACH



*We are so proud of the imagination and passion our staff draw upon when creating opportunities for participants to shine.*

### PASSION FOR OUR WORK

Last week we opened our second art exhibition for 2022, titled HOME. The exhibition beautifully showcases the fantastic talent of so many Araluen participants and the staff who support them behind the scenes. The outcome is a dazzling display of people's interpretation of 'Home'. So please make the time to visit, enjoy and purchase yourself a piece of artwork from this current collection.

The opportunity has also arisen to increase our presence at the [Diamond Creek Rotary Tram Café](#), meaning more people can benefit from this valuable opportunity to gain hospitality and customer service skills. We have been managing the café from Tuesday to Thursday and will take on Fridays from 2nd September. Our thanks to Diamond Creek Rotary Club. Please come down and have a cuppa with us now that Spring has sprung.

### ENGAGING COMMUNITY

A significant focus for Araluen recently has been implementing new steps to increase community engagement. We aim to keep you better informed about the changes happening as we reshape

services and establish more direct feedback mechanisms. We have been facilitating monthly online Participant, Families and Carers meetings to update our community on the issues we currently face and allow you to ask questions or have your say. We would love to see you at the next meeting.

### ADVOCACY

We believe effecting positive change for our community is one of our fundamental responsibilities. So we've been busy on the advocacy trail recently, meeting with Kate Thwaites (Federal MP for Jagajaga), Hon Colin Brookes (State Minister for Disability) and Vicki Ward (State MP for Eltham) to talk through the issues affecting Araluen and the broader disability sector. As requested by several families, we have also developed some advocacy letter templates addressed to several politicians that you can use to tell your story. We will continue advocating to all levels of government for better outcomes for our community. Please see the link in the side panel to download the letters.



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## TELL OUR LEADERS WHY DAY SERVICES MATTER

Have your say about how the underfunding of Day Services impacts you! We've made it easier for you to get in touch with several MP's. Simply fill in your details on these readymade letters.



[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

*At Chancez, people have an opportunity to learn a wide range of hospitality and customer service skills that can be a step towards employment. For Andrea, a newfound sense of achievement and confidence are resulting in positive changes in her life now - and everyone is noticing!*

Since joining Chancez, Andrea has become a valued part of the team, quickly and enthusiastically embracing many cafe tasks. In addition, Andrea has done a great job learning so many new skills in the time that she's attended.

Andrea looks forward to her time at Chancez so much that she's decided to take on a second day because the support she receives is helping Andrea shape a new vision for her future -

**"I love it all! One day I want to work at Coles. Now I think I will"**

However, Andrea's rapid personal growth has surprised many people in her life and at Araluen.

Andrea's family are thrilled to hear her talk proudly about her many achievements and to

witness these in action. Mum, Janine, notes that time behind the counter at Chancez has improved Andrea's willingness to communicate, improved her money-handling skills and numeracy and, for the first time, given Andrea the confidence to look at people (and our camera!) in the eye.

According to external Support Coordinator Dianne, "Andrea has become more responsible and more independent. At a recent social day out, Andrea was the person who took it upon herself to help another person with a disability who needed a hand. We just stood back shaking our heads at just how responsive and helpful she was. The confidence Andrea has developed is nothing short of breathtaking. Incredible!"

Like Andrea, we're confident that her dreams are possible!



## LOADS OF OPPORTUNITY

Participants who are not interested in customer service or hospitality roles will soon have an opportunity for meaningful involvement with the popular Diamond Creek Rotary Tram Cafe when Araluen takes over responsibility to meet the cafe's laundering needs.

Araluen Diamond Creek's new "laundry service" will provide an opportunity for participants to develop some important independent living skills while they manage as many of the day-to-day operational and planning functions of the program as possible so people experience a greater level of responsibility and gain more confidence in their decision-making, problem-solving and leadership abilities.

Thanks to Nillumbik Shire Council for funding towards a new energy efficient clothes dryer!



# RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

## WATTLE THEY DO NEXT!

Now that Spring has sprung, many participants are making the most of the warmer weather and the chance to get out and have some fun.

Carolyn (pictured right) and her housemates enjoyed a day at the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival. Highlights included a performance by the Hurstbridge Jazz Band, yummy food, sunshine and chatting with many other attendees.

Araluen's residential staff don't just support people inside their homes - they ensure opportunities for proactive and positive support in the community too, so that people can participate in social and recreational activities of their choice.

As we reconnect with a COVID-normal world, our residential team are working with participants to ensure they receive the support they need to put many new or long-awaited goals and ideas into action. We foresee exciting times ahead!



## OPERATIONS

### LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Recently, we had an energy audit undertaken at our Diamond Creek site and in response to the recommendations, we're exceptionally grateful to receive a substantial donation from the Araluen Foundation to install solar panels. Work on the installation of rooftop solar at Diamond Creek will start in the next few months.

When the recommendations from the audit are fully implemented the following enhancements will be made:

-  **93% of energy needs from solar**
-  **93% reduction in the use of fossil fuel generated electricity**
-  **Savings of 26 tons/yr of CO<sub>2</sub>**
-  **Equivalent of 563 long haul flights**
-  **Savings of \$4,166 per year**
-  **Lifetime bill savings of \$99,358**

Araluen thanks the Federal Government's Sustainable Communities initiative, and Member for Jagajaga, Kate Thwaites, for providing \$5,000 in funding to conduct the energy audit at Diamond Creek.

### BUSINESS UPGRADES

The last six months has seen our Finance team busy upgrading our business software. After a detailed search we decided to purchase Microsoft Business Central (BC) which provides high level security and far greater functionality than our previous software.

## REGISTRATION MATTERS

To remain registered as an NDIS provider, Araluen undergoes an audit cycle every 3 years which includes a full audit and a mid-term audit. These audits are in place to demonstrate that Araluen can meet the NDIS practice standards of quality and safety in the services we provide. Our Quality team spend hundreds of hours to prepare for audits. They also conduct regular internal audits at all our sites.

Audits mean we are constantly reviewing and improving what we do, leading to better, safer supports and services.

Unregistered providers do not need to be audited, cannot provide some services, do not have to report back to the NDIA and may not be insured. While Araluen is all for NDIS participants having access to a wider range of options, we recommend that you choose carefully and ask questions before enlisting a non-registered provider.

Registration is important because quality, accountability and your safety matter!

2022 has been a rollercoaster for Araluen's People & Culture team as we've sought to introduce improvements that will make working at Araluen a better experience while dealing with the challenges that COVID-19 and other factors continue to impose on many workplaces. Pleasingly, positive change continues to happen. Some major projects so far this year include:



**Araluen's new Enterprise Agreement 2021** received comfortable majority support from staff before it was endorsed by Fair Work Australia in July.

All Araluen employees are now covered by a single EA which frees staff to work in day and residential services. Not only will this create more opportunity for staff, but it will give Araluen greater rostering flexibility and provide participants with more consistent support.

The new EA preserves the entitlements of all current staff while providing a range of improved conditions.



We have introduced a **new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) platform called Araluen People**. Araluen People is the home to all employee information (no more paper forms!) and HR processes throughout the employee life-cycle at Araluen.

It is now much easier for staff to access information and learning and development resources as well as perform different HR-related functions, anytime, anywhere.

We thank staff for making the time to test and use Araluen People, and for your valuable feedback as we continue to add new features.

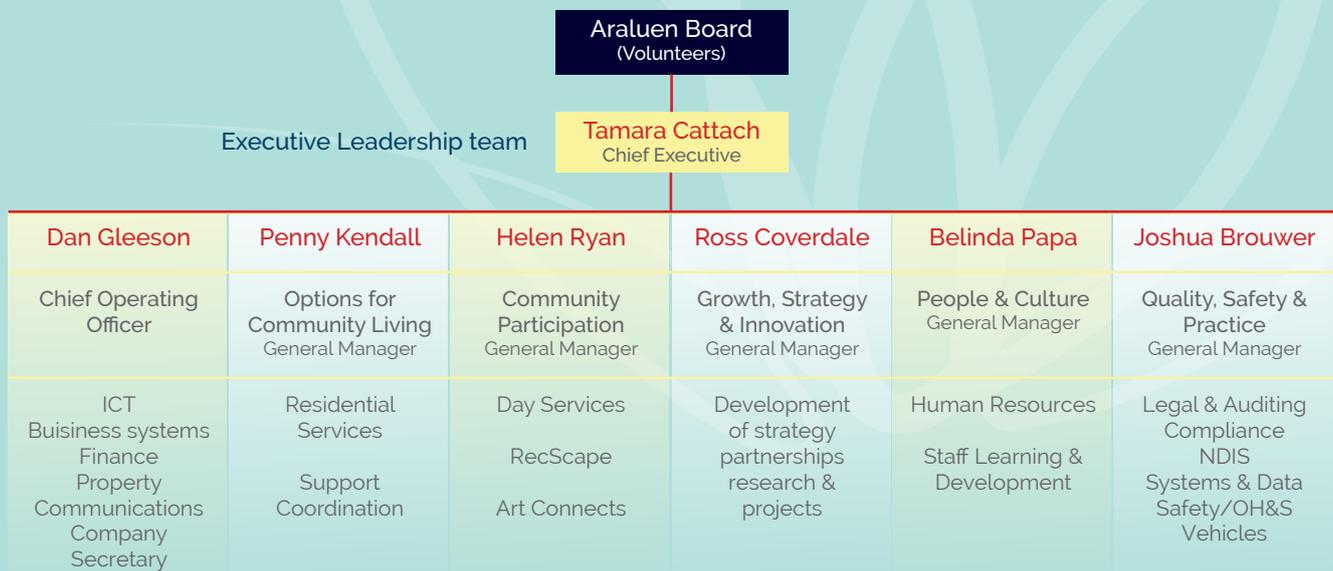


Following a **review of our workforce management process and systems**, and a subsequent independent audit completed by a third party of all payments made to present and past employees over the last six years, we discovered that some staff did not receive correct payment of some entitlements.

Araluen has apologised to everyone affected and made back payments inclusive of superannuation and interest. We are updating our payroll systems so we have the right controls in place going forward.

## LEADERSHIP

Araluen's Executive Leadership team (ELT), led by Tamara Cattach, is responsible for managing Araluen's business, planning and delivering services that are consistent with our mission and vision and achieving the goals set by our Board in our Strategic Direction. Here's a snapshot of who's who in our ELT and their key responsibilities.





## Home

Araluen group art exhibition **at Montsalvat**  
7 Hillcrest Ave, Eltham 3095  
**until 18th September 2022**

Open - 10am - 4pm, Thursday - Sunday  
Exhibition is free, charges may apply to enter grounds



[www.montsalvat.com.au](http://www.montsalvat.com.au)



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*vimeo*



Araluen acknowledges the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging



# ARALUEN

Imagining and achieving better lives