

# Imagining Better

News Spring 2023



A R A L U E N

DONNA'S HOME NOW

## TAMARA CATTACH



*As we emerge out of the winter rut, Araluen is feeling colourful and alive. And there's plenty happening.*

After an almost twelve-month wait, the NDIS approved Araluen's accreditation to provide Positive Behaviour Support and Art Therapy. We can now take our first exciting step towards introducing new types of in-demand support. New services create new career pathways, too. Learn how some staff are embracing new opportunities on page 4.

What does home mean to you? To me, home is a safe haven and a comfort zone - a place to build memories, and somewhere I can truly be myself. Donna's story is about her journey to create the home that she loves. We are proud to be able to support her on this journey (page 3).

We are also very excited about

our new Values and Behaviours framework. Our new Values reflect the strengths, needs and shared aspirations voiced in over 1000 statements. We heard from across Araluen, from participants and families to the Board room and staff. The feedback is exciting and motivating.

Our new Values will form the basis of how we all work together and treat each other. Look out for the launch later in the year - we can't wait to share this important work with you (page 5).

I hope you all enjoy the sunshine as much as we at Araluen. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

**Tam Cattach**  
Chief Executive, Araluen



## SAVE THE DATE



### Araluen participants, families & carers meeting

Join Araluen board members and executive leaders for a service update and question time. Look out for your invite by email or SMS

Thursday 12 October - 12pm  
@Araluen, Lower Plenty  
Thursday 12 October - 7pm  
online



Araluen AGM 2023  
Tuesday 28th November  
@Araluen, Lower Plenty  
(more info to come)

## WITH OUR GRATITUDE:

Thanks to **WA's Individualised Services (WAIS)** for providing extensive communications and educational resources for our Residential Services, plus \$10,000 to support Araluen's People & Culture initiatives.

Artists, like Clare, and all of us are thankful for the support of **Eltham Rotary Club** for the generous donation of \$2,000 towards our Art Connects program. (right).

**Nillumbik Shire Council** is supporting Araluen to showcase a wide range of artistic talents with a \$1,000 grant towards the Diamond Creek/Hurstbridge Drama production. Thank you



## Donna's home, Donna's way

*There are many paths people can take to achieve their independent living dream. Donna's new home is a secure, peaceful, base where she can grow and flourish in her own space.*

Donna, is 51-years-old and diagnosed with Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder. She had always lived at home with her mother, Denise. In 2022, the family took a monumental step forward by purchasing a home, envisioning a life of possibility and fulfillment for Donna. To realise this dream, they turned to Araluen, to provide in-home support (SIL), believing in the organisation's strong values and commitment to high standards.

September 2022 marked the beginning of Donna's new chapter as she moved into her new home, accompanied by her mother. Araluen's support began with a deliberate approach, facilitating a smooth transition through shadow shifts in her home. This allowed Donna to establish trust and rapport with her new support staff, a vital foundation for her journey ahead.

Donna's challenges were complex. Apart from adapting to the many changes of a new environment and routine, issues arose with Donna's day service provider - group activities were proving detrimental to Donna's wellbeing. Additionally, another provider's unreliability added strain. The effects of these changes on Donna and Denise were significant, prompting the need for a comprehensive solution. In November 2022, Donna's day service agreed to restructure her support, foregoing centre-based activities in favour of home and community-based support, thanks to the collaborative efforts of Araluen and the provider.

Constant communication between Araluen and the support network played a pivotal role. This open dialogue ensured that Donna's successes, strengths, preferences, dislikes, and triggers were shared, enabling a holistic understanding of her needs. As time went on, Donna started engaging in the community, conquering anxieties related to public spaces. She took on activities including grocery shopping, using public transport, and visiting places of interest.

By February 2023, Donna's progress was remarkable. She had fully settled into her new home, with her mother gradually stepping back from direct support as the staff team became more established. Araluen now provides Donna with SIL and 25 hours of Core support across four days, and her transformation is evident. Activities that once triggered high anxiety were now part of her routine, like swimming, bowling, and enjoying music.

Donna's mother, Denise, is effusive in her praise for Araluen, acknowledging the positive impact on both their lives. Staff from her day service also marvelled at Donna's newfound engagement, calm demeanour, and happiness. Complex behaviours of concern have markedly reduced, and Donna's journey toward greater independence continues.

As Donna embarks on the next stage of her life, the last year stands as a testament to her resilience, the power of comprehensive support, and the potential that lies within every individual, given the right support.



SAVE THE DATE:

### THE HURSTBRIDGE/DC ARTS CELEBRATION IS BACK

with revived pep, lots of sequins and a chainsaw

Friday 8th December - Eltham Little Theatre  
Evening & matinee performance plus art market

Drama production: 11am and 6.30pm

Art Market: 4.30pm - 6.30pm

Tickets required for evening show. More info to come.

# NEW INITIATIVES

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

### Unlocking opportunities to transform support and careers

*In August, Araluen received long-awaited accreditation to provide Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). We're excited to congratulate Kim Batchelor and Kathleen Hanlon, our first team members studying to achieve PBS practitioner qualifications in readiness. Kim writes here about her goal to provide deeper and more impactful support. Congratulations to Kim and Kathleen.*

"It's been a unique and rare opportunity to be part of the Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner trainee program. With guidance and supervision, my goal is to support individuals with challenging behaviours or behaviours of protest, positively change the quality of their life.

Challenging behaviours can include self-harm or lashing out at others. Therefore, the most important outcome is to reduce risks, improve physical safety and essentially foster the wellbeing of people receiving the support - the definition of this outcome can only be defined by the person.

I have learnt that foundationally, the person is unequivocally the centre of this values-based approach. PBS separates the challenging behaviour from the person. I aim to successfully discover the meaning behind the behaviours and find the best possible strategies to enable positive, achievable changes for the individuals who are trying to express wants and desires. Challenges do not come without barriers, however, collaborating with teams of supports are essential aspects to consider in the development and implementation of positive behaviour support plans.

Moreover, I hope to expand the open-mindedness of the 'community of supports' for individuals and reinforce the concept that all behaviours happen for a reason and importantly, that the behaviours do not define who the individual uniquely is.

**Kim Batchelor (right)**  
Core PBS Practitioner  
Trainee & Support  
Worker



**Kathleen Hanlon (right)**  
Core PBS Practitioner  
Trainee & Support  
Worker

## PROGRAMS OF SUPPORT

### Smashing it!

About a dozen people are enjoying the benefits, challenge and fun of learning tennis in a supportive and inclusive way.

Montmorency Tennis Club, with funding from Tennis Victoria, is hosting free social tennis and coaching for Araluen participants during a new 12 week POS.

Participants practice serving and basic shots and take part in a range of games and training drills to improve on-court mobility and coordination.

We thank Monty Tennis Club for making tennis an accessible and enriching experience for everyone involved.



## Our team

### Focussing on what we value to make us stronger

An important project is happening behind the scenes for the remainder of 2023 that aims to review and renew Araluen's long-standing values. We want to make sure that the beliefs at the heart of Araluen which guide our work are relevant to who we are today and shared across the organisation. This will make us stronger and more united in how we go about supporting people to achieve great lives.

#### What's happening

During June and July, we listened to our community as participants, staff, parents and carers generously shared their insight and ideas about what matters most about being at Araluen.

The most common themes drawn from everyone's feedback will form a set of values that make a difference. We hope to create a positive, connected, purposeful and achieving environment where everyone at Araluen can thrive.

We thank everyone who took part for your truly meaningful input.

#### What you told us

We received the most feedback in Araluen's history with 92 people responding to a survey and 127 people joining 19 focus groups.

People should feel valued, respected and excited about learning in a friendly, safe and creative environment.  
(parent)

Give me space when I need it.  
(participant)

Offer relevant, useful programs that stretch people to grow and are measurable.  
(parent)

Be compassionate, industrious and switched on.  
(parent)

Know me and what will bring me joy.  
(participant)

Ensure participants and staff have pathways to achieve their goals and potential  
(staff)

Help me get better at the things I can do.  
(participant)

Quality staff. Clear, regular communication.  
(parent)

Participants are the reason we are support workers. We should learn off them how to best support them.  
(staff)

### And the winners are.....

The Shine Awards are a new way to celebrate and honour remarkable achievement and unwavering commitment demonstrated by Araluen staff.

Every three months, we will invite participants, families, carers, and colleagues to nominate the individual whose outstanding efforts have notably and positively impacted Araluen and the people we support. At the end of the year, we will announce the overall winner.



Congratulations to the winners of the first Shine Awards, Peta Nudelman (left) & Vanessa Paskilidis (above). Both are Practice Leaders in Araluen's residential services.



Would you like to nominate an Araluen team member who excels at what they do? [CLICK HERE](#)

## GET INVOLVED

### We need your help

In 2023, we'll be undertaking some exciting new projects to drive Araluen forward and create connection across the organisation. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to be involved and make a meaningful and practical contribution. We are inviting expressions of interest for the following activities.



#### Happy Birthday to us

Araluen was founded in the 1960's in a Kew garage by a group of parents who wanted somewhere for their children to belong, be safe and learn outside their home. 2024 will mark 50 years since the opening of Orana and Fraser House at Lower Plenty.

#### Do you have historical photos or memorabilia you'd be willing to share?

We're creating an archive of materials that demonstrate our rich history that we will unveil over the year. So if you have photos, old news articles, newsletters or anything connected to our past and heritage that you think would be of interest, please let us know.

#### How should we commemorate this milestone?

We'd like to hear! If you have ideas or would like to volunteer to be part of our 50th Anniversary group, please let us know by email (below).



EMAIL US

[Birthday@araluen.org](mailto:Birthday@araluen.org)



#### Fundraising

Araluen is getting ready to boost fundraising efforts. To start with, we're pleased to announce an upcoming partnership with GiveNow, a low-cost and Australian-based website that supports not-for-profit-organisations increase and manage financial contributions.

We are committed to exploring new ways to approach fundraising in 2024 and are inviting expressions of interest from people who'd like to be part of a proposed volunteer fundraising group.

The group could help us develop a fundraising strategy and provide assistance with activities so that more of what we raise can be directed towards services, specific projects or operating expenses. Your time and support can make a much-appreciated difference.

If you have relevant skills, knowledge and experience or are brimming with energy, enthusiasm and ideas, we'd love to hear from you. Your support in all forms is always appreciated.



CLICK  
HERE

- if you'd like to share your ideas or learn more about our fundraising group
- if you have a few minutes to complete a quick survey about fundraising



Long-time participant and resident, Sue (left), reflects on her lifelong connection with Araluen. Sue is pictured as a child with Dame Pattie Menzies, wife of PM Sir Robert Menzies, at an early Araluen event. Help us bring our rich history to life by sharing your photos and memories.

## BE INFORMED

### Disability Matters

The Disability Sector is changing. Many factors, like government decisions and policies, especially about the NDIS, and the Disability Royal Commission's findings, have far-reaching effects on Araluen, our work and our whole sector. This selection of articles and reports shine a light on the issues and trends that are reshaping our sector and impacting the lives of the people we support, families, carers and our workforce, now.



#### The Disability Royal Commission Final Report is out now

After 32 public hearings with 837 witnesses and 7,944 submissions (58% from people with disability and 29% from family members), the Royal Commission has made 222 sweeping recommendations aimed at creating a more inclusive and just society.

[CLICK TO READ THE REPORT](#)



#### The Disability Royal Commission Final Report main takeaways

Read the ABC's summary of Australia's biggest investigation into the abuse and exploitation of people with disability. The Commission has handed down its findings, and they make for sobering reading.

[CLICK TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



#### Disability Royal Commission releases testimony of 1586 voices

The RC have released deidentified narratives, provided in private sessions and submissions between 2019 and 2022 by people with disability, their families, and supporters.

[CLICK TO GO TO WEBSITE](#)



#### Are disability providers in trouble?

The Ability Roundtable offers service providers the chance to see how they are doing compared with other providers across Australia. In Financial Year 2021-22, 68% of providers in the sample reported a loss.

[CLICK TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

[CLICK TO READ THE REPORT](#)



### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & FEEDBACK

We value your feedback. If you have something to say or a question to ask, scan the QR code with your phone to go to our new feedback and complaints form. You can use this form anonymously if you like.

You can also give us a call or send us an email.



1300 020 625

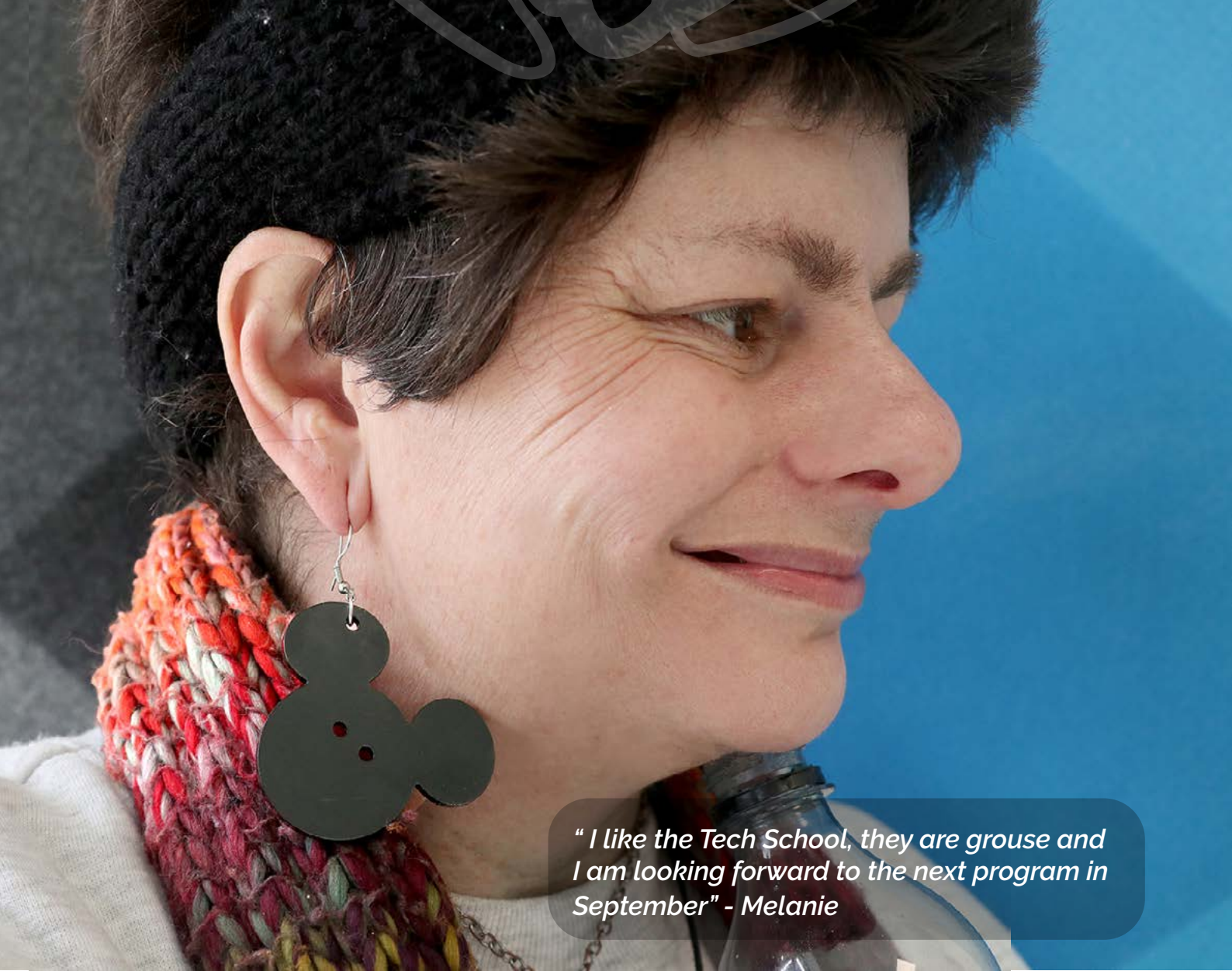


admin@araluen.org



[www.araluen.org/contact-araluen](http://www.araluen.org/contact-araluen)





*"I like the Tech School, they are grouse and I am looking forward to the next program in September" - Melanie*

Araluen Primed is fortunate to have access to the Banyule Nillumbik Tech school at Melbourne Polytechnic during school holidays. The Primed Women's group collaborated with Tech School staff to create jewelry using a laser cutter, involving designing, printing, attaching hooks, and sanding Perspex earrings and keyrings, resulting in a valuable and enjoyable learning experience.



1300 020 625



[www.araluen.org](http://www.araluen.org)



[admin@araluen.org](mailto:admin@araluen.org)



[vimeo](#)



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



# ARALUEN

Imagining and achieving better lives