

Imagining Better

araluen.org



We pick up 2026 right where we ended 2025 - supporting people to follow what they love and creating more opportunities for people to thrive!
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A R A L U E N

Imagining and achieving better lives

FEBRUARY 2026

Looking outward to grow stronger.

Dear friends of Araluen,

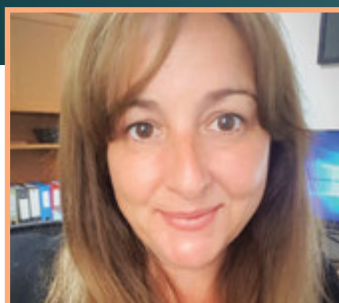
Welcome to 2026 - what promises to be another year of momentum, evolution and connection for our community. As we take our first steps into the year ahead, I want to pause and reflect on the powerful work already underway across Araluen, and the exciting opportunities that are emerging for the people we support.

This year begins with a renewed sense of purpose. We've extended our *Strategic Plan* to support the vital work of our *Road to Recovery*. Together, these guideposts keep us focused on what matters most: deepening community connections to deliver impactful supports while improving sustainability.

Across our services, change is taking shape:

Chancez Cafés are preparing for their next chapter, including new partners and solid plans for growth and better employment pathways.

Home & Living continues to evolve, shaping homes that offer safety, stability, and the chance



to thrive. Stay tuned for more information about our refreshed Housing Network - we're excited to provide this platform for people to connect and imagine, explore, and achieve housing choices they may never have thought possible.

Positive Behaviour Support has expanded with new expertise and a wider reach, enabling us to support more people, including children, with tailored, evidence-based practice.

Community Participation is exploring new ways for people to engage, socialise, learn, and contribute, ensuring everyone has opportunities to connect in ways that feel meaningful.

The heart of all this work is our commitment to people: participants, families, our staff, partners, and the local communities that welcome and support us. Our goal this year is simple but powerful - to ensure that everyone who walks through Araluen's doors feels seen, heard, respected, inspired, and empowered. Thank you for your trust and collaboration - I look forward to all we can achieve together in 2026.

Tamara Cattach
CEO - Araluen



Upcoming events and important dates

Day services closed:

Labour Day public holiday
Monday 9th March 2026

Day services closed:

Easter public holidays
Friday 3rd April and Monday 6th April

ANZAC Day

Saturday 25th April 2026

Note: As ANZAC Day falls on a Saturday, Day Services will operate as usual (no scheduled closure)



Our current SIL residential vacancies

A home should feel secure, connected and truly your own. We have vacancies in welcoming spaces in great neighbourhoods that balance independence with the right support.

Lilydale

[CLICK HERE](#)

Montmorency

[CLICK HERE](#)

Mulgrave

[CLICK HERE](#)



housing@araluen.org



"I've learned customer service skills, and I can enter orders into the system and take payments by myself. The staff guided me - giving me reminders and encouragement. I practiced each step until I could do the things on my own. I'm proud and happy. Active Support has made me feel good about working in the future".

Laura



Where everyone has their chances to thrive

At Chancez Café customer service training is more than learning tasks - it's about building confidence and independence.

Laura's experience shows how *Active Support*, a proven, evidence-based approach used across all Araluen services, helps people learn by doing. It focuses on breaking tasks into achievable steps, offering just-right support, and creating opportunities for choice, control, and participation in everyday moments.

When Laura first started at Chancez, entering orders and taking payments felt confusing. Instead of taking over, staff used *Active Support* to guide each part of the process - offering reminders, encouragement, and the level of help Laura needed to succeed without losing control. As she practiced, the team adjusted their support so she stayed

in charge, built confidence, and became more capable with every shift. Laura's story is just one example of how Chancez Café creates meaningful learning opportunities. Every order, every conversation, and every visit helps build skills that lead to greater inclusion and future employment pathways.









Have you visited Chancez recently - or would you like to? Tell us about it!

We're making some updates at Chancez. We'd love to know what food, drinks or experiences you'd love most. **[CLICK HERE](#)** or scan the QR code to complete a short survey. Your input helps shape what comes next. Thank you!



Off and running in 2026

Exciting things are underway. The year has started with real progress on a range of projects that advance our *Road to Recovery* priorities, driving service improvement and growth. We've also extended our Strategic Plan (page 5). This means we can build on the work already begun to deliver better services while addressing financial challenges and strengthening long-term sustainability.

<p>Chancez Cafes</p> 	<p>New partners. A new role. New opportunities.</p> <p>Big things are on the horizon starting in 2026! With generous co-funding of \$30,000 from the City of Banyule and East Ivanhoe Community Bank, we're set to significantly strengthen our employment pathways.</p> <p>This investment will support the creation of a new role dedicated to building stronger connections between our participants and local businesses. A key focus will be supporting and educating employers in a wide range of industries - not only hospitality and retail - on inclusive employment practices. This includes highlighting the benefits, practical steps, and real opportunities that come with hiring people with disability. We thank our valued partners for this game changing support.</p> <p>We are currently recruiting for this role  apply: CLICK HERE</p>
<p>Home & Living</p> 	<p>Introducing Jessica</p> <p>Finding a happy, safe, well-supported home that's the right fit can be hard, especially if you have to navigate the NDIS. Luckily, Jessica, Araluen's new housing options expert, has arrived! Jess is here to help people to achieve good housing outcomes is currently meeting with our day service participants and families about future housing goals. She will also refresh and reintroduce Araluen's Housing Network later in the year. So please get in touch if you have questions or would like to chat.</p> <p> GET IN TOUCH</p>
<p>Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)</p> 	<p>New places, younger faces</p> <p>Did you know that Araluen's PBS service is expanding it's reach to cover a greater area of Melbourne with the appointment of our second PBS practitioner? We warmly welcome Natalie to the team. We are also now offering this service to children from nine years of age and older. We have immediate vacancies available for Araluen participants.</p> <p> info: CLICK HERE  ENQUIRE</p>
<p>Community Participation</p> 	<p>Imagining fresh ways to support you</p> <p>This year we're exploring fresh ideas for more flexible support. We're currently looking into whether late-day/early evening art sessions at Diamond Creek could work. Watch this space!</p>



ONWARD

Our path to a connected, sustainable future

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2027

ARALUEN WILL DELIVER CONNECTED AND IMPACTFUL SUPPORTS, WHILE IMPLEMENTING OUR **ROAD TO RECOVERY PLAN** FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING FUTURE



Participants, families & community

- Determine, monitor and implement the quality services that our diverse community demands and that we can sustain
- Continue connecting with our community to shape the future of our organisation
- Evaluate participants' experience and outcomes to continually improve services
- Build our investment in and development of our Home & Living service



Partnerships & advocacy

- Explore current and future partnerships that will assist us to meet our goals and enhance our social impact
- Be bold on behalf of and alongside participants and their families to help drive positive change



People & culture

- Develop our people and build leadership capability across Araluen to enable delivery of the strategic plan
- Develop a clear direction on workforce needs aligned to what families and participants want
- Define and build an inclusive, high-performing workplace culture, in which our values are enacted and celebrated



Growth & financial governance

- Responsibly steward our properties and assets to support our strategic goals
- Implement a robust financial strategy and framework to ensure we meet our goals
- Streamline systems, processes, and structure to optimise our operations.
- Be proactive in exploring opportunities for growth, including diverse housing options for people living with disability
- Explore alternative funding options for our future sustainability

above: Araluen's Board has extended our Strategic Plan to steer us toward truly modern, responsive and accountable services - creating a pathway to the supports people want, need and deserve.

Fun and celebrations all round



Above: DC/Hurstbridge martial arts group delivered an impressive demonstration at our AGM.



Above & below: The team at Primed danced away the year at their Christmas party, with DJ Andrew turning up the energy as he builds his budding music career.



Looking snazzy

Great news! Following our major 2025 fundraising campaign, our first new bus is officially on the road. And thanks to the generosity of our community - including an incredible \$37,000 grant from East Ivanhoe Community Bank - we've now raised enough to replace not just one, but two vehicles!

Our next bus will hit the road around mid-year. A huge thank you to everyone who supported the appeal to keep people travelling where they want and need to go - reliably, safely, and comfortably.

image (above): Mat from East Ivanhoe Community Bank checks out our new wheels with happy passenger, Mark.



What does your perfect day look like?

- ✓ **Bunnings**
- ✓ **Recycling**
- ✓ **Cappuccino**




Trevor (*above*) looks forward to his one-on-one support time. Living in a group home shouldn't mean missing out on the things you enjoy - one-on-one support gives you the flexibility to build your day your way. For Trevor, that can mean a quick trip to Bunnings, returning bottles at the recycling station, and finishing with a well-earned cookie and cappuccino. He doesn't always have to follow anyone else's routine; he gets to choose and do what matters to him.

Onemda therapies

If you're looking for therapies - such as physiotherapy, allied health services, or group-based programs - Onemda offers a range of options that might suit your needs.

image (right): Araluen has a long-standing, positive relationship with Onemda. We do not receive payment to promote services or for referrals. We're simply happy to share information about opportunities that may be of interest to our community for further investigation.




Physio n Friends

returns for 2026!
Group Physiotherapy Program

2 programs to choose from:


Steady Steps: Improve Balance & Reduce Risk of Falls

Power Up: Enhance Strength & Conditioning



- Small group sessions (1 physio to 4 participants)
- A low-cost way to access physio

- Functional, NDIS-aligned outcomes
- 10-Week Program



Register Your Interest Now

Scan the QR Code or Contact Rahul Vase - Therapy Manager
P: 03 9842 1955 E: rvase@onemda.com.au

Need help with funding or unsure if you're eligible?
We'll support you through the process.

Service Begins Early February

Contact us



Lee has spent months working with staff at home using Active Support to develop recipes and create a cookbook filled with her favourite tried, tested and tasted dishes. The approach allowed Lee to make all the decisions and ensure the cookbook truly reflects her creativity and

passion. This is an independent project - all about Lee's hard work and love for cooking and sharing.

Get your copy of *Lee's Amazing Cookbook* at Araluen Lower Plenty reception (\$10)

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Support us
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(CLICK OR
SCAN)

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