

Imagining Better

araluen.org



Art Connects continues to stun – getting stronger, better. And now, we have a big announcement!

(More: page 6)

MAY 2026

ARALUEN

Imagining and achieving better lives

Planning ahead to deliver what matters most



Dear friends of Araluen,

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter, where we're proud to share the stories, partnerships and progress shaping our community and strengthening our future.

Across these pages, you'll see a clear focus on what matters most - creating genuine opportunities for people with disability to live, work, create and belong. From meaningful employment pathways to Chancez Café's evolution as a true social enterprise, and new initiatives that expand housing knowledge and choice, our commitment remains the same: supporting you to build a life of independence, connection and purpose.

A key highlight is new our Art Connects initiative. For almost two decades, we've supported artists to produce work of exceptional quality and originality. Now, we're excited to take the next step - establishing a dedicated gallery and online platform to create real, sustainable pathways for artists to showcase and sell their work. And we can't do it without you!

This EOFY, our Art Connects crowdfunding campaign will create visibility, recognition, and equity. We invite you to help bring this vision to life - please donate, share the campaign, or get involved to help us reach our minimum \$10,000 goal (see page 6)

You'll also read about the relaunch of **our NDIS Housing Network**, alongside our **continued focus and increased investment on employment pathways** that open doors and challenge barriers.

At the same time, recent **Federal Budget announcements regarding changes to the NDIS** may be causing confusion or concern. We understand how important clarity and stability are. In this edition, we begin to unpack these changes might mean, with more information to come. Please know we are closely monitoring developments, planning accordingly, and are here to support you.

Thank you for your continued trust and connection. Together, we are building a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable future.

Tamara Cattach
CEO - Araluen



There's no place like a real home

For more than fifty years, Fraser House has been more than just a place to live - it has been a place to belong.

Over time, the house has evolved, continuing to support people to live with dignity and care. Recently, something began to shift. Small but thoughtful changes were made - new flooring underfoot, fresh paint on the walls, new furniture to gather around, and touches of greenery to soften the space.

Most importantly, the people who lived there helped shape these changes, choosing what felt right to them.

Slowly, the house began to feel different. Where once rooms were used out of routine, shared spaces started to fill with life. People

began spending more time together, choosing where to sit, what to do, and how to spend their day. A former office - once closed off and rarely used - was transformed into a calm, creative space. Now, it is a place for quiet focus and craft.

Elsewhere, familiar comforts took on new meaning. A new couch has become a place to relax and unwind. TV screens now flicker in shared spaces instead of behind closed doors. There is movement, choice, and connection.

These changes may seem simple, but their impact has been profound. The house feels warmer, more open, more personal.

It is a reminder that when environments are shaped with care and intention, they do more than change spaces - they change lives.

Upcoming events and important dates

Support Araluen vision for our own gallery at **Banyule Pitch for Good**
Tuesday 16th June - 6pm
Banyule Council Offices - Greensborough

Cheer for Araluen at **2026 City of Whittlesea Business Awards**
Tuesday 25th June - 6.30pm
Plenty Ranges Art & Convention Centre

Day Services closed
Kings Birthday public holiday
Monday 8th June

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Chancez means business

Chancez continues to grow in both ambition and visibility, and we are seeing continued steps forward in its evolution as a social enterprise.

A key driver of this progress is our **partnership with Melbourne Business School**, which is helping us reframe Chancez - not as a disability support program, but as a market-ready enterprise with purpose. This collaboration is challenging and strengthening our approach, opening up new ways to grow sustainably while staying true to our mission.

That momentum has been recognised, with **Chancez Mill Park named a finalist in the 2026 Whittlesea Business Awards**. It's a proud moment and a testament to the team's commitment to delivering quality customer service every day.

Importantly, this recognition is for Chancez as a business - not a disability service, highlighting the capability of our people and the value of inclusive workplace practises. The winners will be announced on 25 June.

At the same time, practical upgrades are enhancing learning, operations and customer experience on the ground.

This includes the installation of a new coffee machine at Mill Park, made possible through the generous support of Scott from **Arthurs Creek Coffee Co**, who has joined as a welcome new partner with Chancez Cafés.

A **grant from City of Whittlesea City** is also enabling upgrades to the Chancez Mill Park Library's point-of-sale system, improving efficiency and customer experience while giving participants hands-on experience with modernised, widely used café technology.

Together, these steps point to a clear direction: building a business that is inclusive, visible, and sustainable - with strengthened, genuine, real-world employment outcomes.



FINALIST
Diversity and Inclusion

A chance that changed everything

Growing up, Ruby found school challenging. Later, she had trouble getting a job and difficulty retaining verbal information in a busy work environment.

In 2017, everything began to change when Ruby joined the Chancez Café program. With the opportunity to learn at her own pace and in a supportive environment, she developed practical hospitality and business skills that opened new opportunities.

At Chancez Café, Ruby's confidence grew and she felt safe. The support staff adapted tasks and provided visual and goal-setting tools that Ruby still uses today. She learnt how to deal with customers, handle money and prepare food - and became connected to a community and a network of supporters.

Ruby now works four days a week and has moved out of home. Her next goals are to learn to drive and keep broadening her skills.



"If you saw me on the street you wouldn't know anything was wrong," says Ruby (above). "But I learn differently to other people. I have been knocked back so many times. There is a stigma around people with disability, most employers don't give you a chance."

Building new pathways to meaningful work

For many people with disability who want long-term employment, ability is not the issue - access to opportunity is. So, we are taking bold steps to change that by rethinking how real employment pathways are created and supported.

A positive step forward is the introduction of a **dedicated Employment Pathway Lead role**, strengthening connections between supported learning and real-world job opportunities.

This exciting position is possible thanks to Banyule City Council and East Ivanhoe Community Bank (Bendigo Bank).



We're delighted to welcome Natarla Reid.

Natarla will connect participants and local businesses to expand opportunities and help build more inclusive workplaces.

pathways@araluen.org



Real opportunities for real talent

\$10,000 will bring our gallery and web platform to life



Sydney Harbour by Glen Forsyth

Help us reach \$10,000 to make this happen

so artists can be seen, sell and thrive. Donate now by phone or online from 5 June

For almost 20 years, Art Connects has supported hundreds of people to create works of exceptional quality, originality and relevance.

Now, we're opening up new permanent sales pathways - through our own gallery and online platform, giving artists greater opportunities to showcase and sell their work.

What we're building

Your support can help start something big. We'll transform part of Lower Plenty's Orana building into a dedicated community gallery. And if funds allow, begin developing an online platform to expand reach beyond the local area. The more we raise, the more we can deliver.

Why this matters now

Talented artists with disability deserve a greater presence in the mainstream. Access to exhibitions and sales opportunities - with real ownership and control - is still limited. Together, we can change that.

Help make this possible

This is where it begins. We need at least \$10,000 this EOFY to kick start these plans - and we can't start without it.

Every donation helps Araluen build lasting opportunities for artists to earn income, grow their audience and be recognised as professional-standard contemporary artists.



Donate Now or online
Ph: 1300 020 625 from 5th



Spread the word
Share our emails and socials



Banyule Pitch for Good
Join us on the night (see page 7)
CLICK for tickets



www.araluen.org/eofy26/

Back Art Connects at Banyule Pitch for Good

Araluen is proud to be one of only six changemakers selected from across all Melbourne's northern local government areas for this year's Banyule Pitch for Good.

Banyule Pitch for Good is a live event where local organisations share their ideas for social impact - and the audience decides what gets funded.

Your \$30 ticket becomes your vote, with funds going directly to the project you choose to support. Araluen will use the occasion to raise funds towards our new Art Connects gallery.

It's a great chance to hear inspiring local stories, be part of something positive, and back projects creating real change in our community.

Join us at Banyule Pitch for Good for a fun, catered night out while supporting Art Connects

Tuesday 16th June, 6 - 9pm
Greensborough



[Book via Humantix HERE](#)



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](#)
- Watsonia [CLICK HERE](#)

housing@araluen.org



Looking to find the path home? **Here's HOUSE you do it with Araluen!**

Araluen has relaunched our NDIS Housing Network - creating a more connected and supportive way for any person with disability to explore their housing options.

At the centre is **Here's HOUSE you do it**, a practical, step-by-step tool designed for network members to use with their support coordinators and families. Instead of starting with limited options, it starts with the person - their goals, lifestyle and what "home" really means to them. It supports people to imagine their future, explore housing options, understand systems like the NDIS, make informed decisions, and plan for living independently over the long term.

The refreshed Housing Network brings this to life by connecting people, families and supporters to share experiences and learn from each other, alongside practical guidance they can use every day. You do not have to attend Araluen to join in.

Together, it's about building confidence, expanding what feels possible, and helping people create a home that's right for them.



[CLICK HERE](#) or scan the QR code to register and receive an invite to our next network meeting. All welcome!

NDIS funding changes: our response and advice

We are committed to keeping you informed and supported as the NDIS evolves. The Australian Government is introducing significant changes to how funding is allocated, however details are not fully available yet.

What we do know is that funding is expected to become tighter. We want to help you understand what this could mean for you and your supports, while continuing to focus on providing high-quality, consistent services.

What's changing with the NDIS

From October 2026, NDIS plans for Community Participation (Day Services) and capacity building supports will begin to be reset as part of broader reforms. Average funding levels in these areas are expected to reduce from approximately \$31,000 per participant to around \$26,000.

What this could mean for you

These changes will have a real and practical impact. In short, with less funding available, plans will need to stretch further than before. So participants and families will need to plan more carefully, and work together with providers, to ensure supports last for their intended duration.

Araluen's reponse

We will respond responsibly so we continue to focus on quality, while adapting in a way that is sustainable in the future.


While the full details about funding changes are still emerging, we are actively planning ahead. This includes exploring different ways to structure and bill for supports within our day services, with the aim of helping to ease some of the funding pressures we expect.

Watch this space - and talk to us!

We will provide further information shortly and are here to support you. We encourage every participant, family or carer to get in touch and speak with us about their funding, as working with us is the best way to make sure your supports with us remain as stable as possible. If you have any concerns, we advise you to talk to us ASAP.



Participants and Araluen must work together, using plans carefully and responsibly. This shared approach helps ensure supports remain consistent, sustainable, and focused on what matters most to you.



Under the NDIS's new PACE system, Araluen cannot view your NDIS plan. So we can no longer check if your spending is within budget or predict any shortfalls early. It is vital that you keep an eye on how you're tracking, share your plan with us and raise any funding issues or questions.

Speak with our NDIS Planning and Intake team for help.
 information: ndisplanning@araluen.org



Book it in!

Our popular Preloved Book Sale will be back later in the year, and we're aiming to make it bigger, better, and bursting with bargains!

 **Preloved book sale weekend: 10th and 11th October**

Collection dates are coming soon and we're adding new drop-off locations, making it easier to donate when you're having a clear-out. We welcome good-quality items suitable for resale:

- Books - for adults and children
- Complete jigsaw puzzles
- CDs & DVDs

Make change for good - and win!

Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme is once again offering you the chance to Win A Million... cents! That's \$10,000!!!!

There are five prizes to be won, with one winner also scoring an additional million cents to give to a registered CDS Vic donation partner of their choice (may we suggest us!!)

All you need to do is return 50 or more eligible drink containers in one transaction by 14th June, grab your proof of return and head to: winamillioncents.com.au to enter.

And while winners are grinners, don't forget that you can donate your refund to Araluen and feel good at any time when you return your eligible containers to a Visy operated collection point in the Northern Zone. Just remember to scan our barcode (left).

 [Click to learn more about how on our website](#)





Our people, our values

At Araluen, our people are at the heart of what we do.

Across our services, our teams bring our values to life every day - respect, inspiration, kindness, empowerment and working together.

We're currently running a broad ranging **Values Engagement Survey** to better understand our teams' experience and find ways to keep improving.

The insights will help shape **a new Culture Committee** and keep our values front and centre. We look forward to sharing the results.

By supporting our people, we're strengthening outcomes for everyone we support - and the wider community.



Celebrating shining staff

It's that time again! You can nominate any Araluen team member who you think is doing an outstanding job for an Araluen Shine Award.

There are two categories:

 **Outstanding achiever: Light Up Award**

 **Leadership Excellence Award**

Simply email our People & Culture team with the name of the staff member and the reason you think they should be celebrated.

 [CLICK HERE TO NOMINATE](#)



Flora
By Julie Potamianos



Did you know?

Araluen Positive Behaviour Support is now helping people from age 9.

Available across Melbourne, we partner with people to build positive behaviour outcomes and support meaningful, lasting change. So if you're looking for something better, let's chat! There's no obligation - just a supportive conversation.



araluen.org/positive_behaviour_support/



info@araluen.org

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(CLICK OR
SCAN)



www.araluen.org



info@araluen.org



Ph: 1300 020 625

