

SEEDS

SPECIALIST EDUCATION AND EVOLVING DISABILITY SERVICES

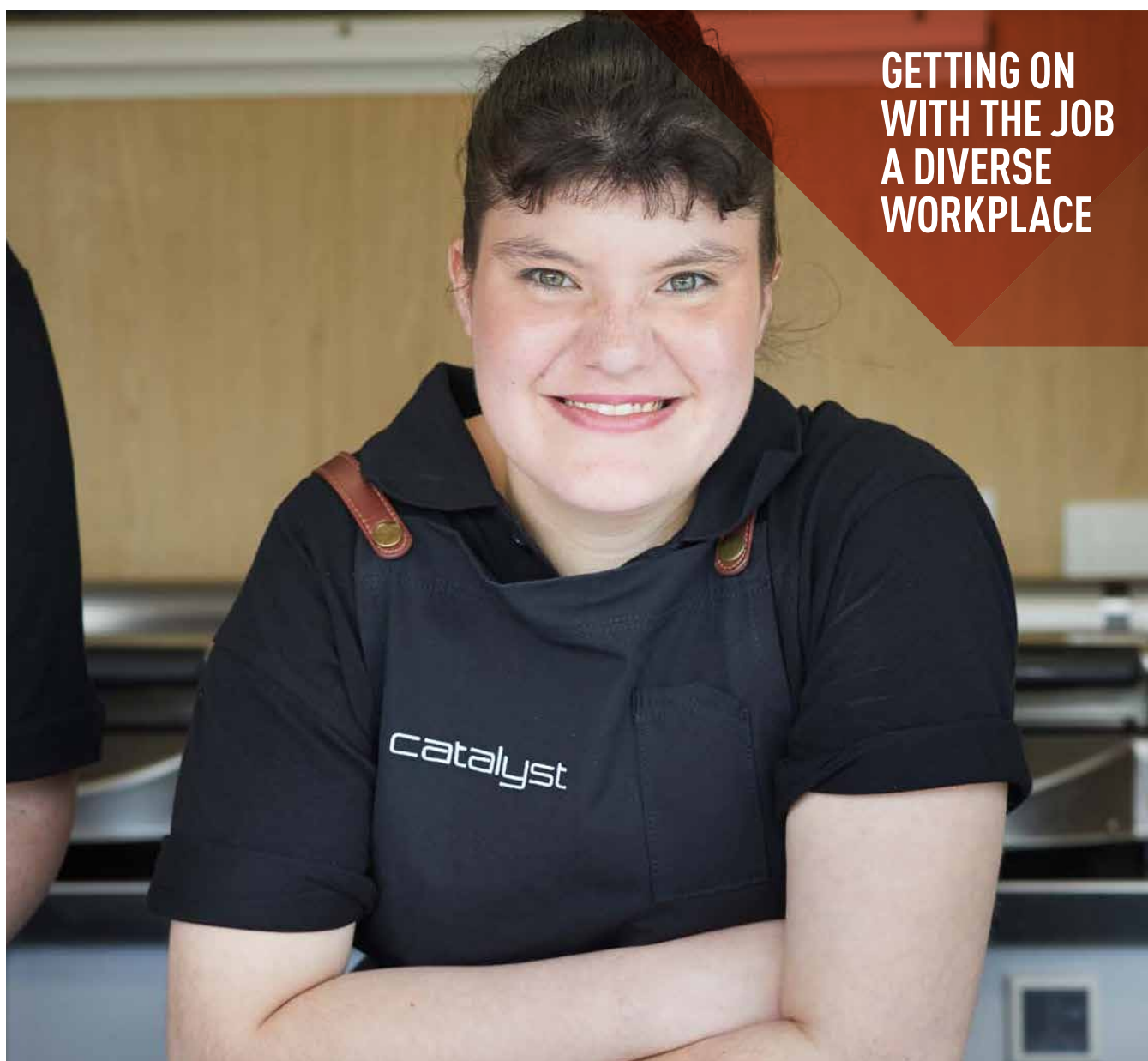
ISSUE **06**

A school
for the future

It's more than
just a job

NDIS and support
coordination with
VMCH

News from
around VMCH



**GETTING ON
WITH THE JOB
A DIVERSE
WORKPLACE**

04



When workplaces are inclusive, the benefits are far-reaching.

06



VMCH welcomes new St Paul's College Principal, Timothy Hemphill.

CONTENTS

03

A word from SEEDS
General Manager

04/05

It's more than just a job

06/07

A school for
the future

St Paul's College
welcomes new principal

08/09

NDIS planning and
support coordination

Robert helps map
the way to a better
customer experience

10/11

News from
around VMCH

12

Support VMCH

SEEDS

We welcome your feedback and
contributions to SEEDS.

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03

A WORD FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Australia has one of the first world's poorest records when it comes to employment rates for people with a disability

That's why VMCH welcomes the NDIS' focus on changing that and helping people with a disability who want to work receive the support they need to achieve that goal.

This month, the SEEDS magazine shares stories about individuals we support like Nathan, who has an acquired brain injury, and has recently started working one day a week at a plant nursery.

It was also great to see VMCH students taking part in work experience in a food van making gourmet toasties. You can read more about their experience and the way VMCH supports people gain work skills on page 4.

VMCH also has some news about specialist school, St Paul's College - it is moving to a new, modern and more accessible site in Balwyn. At its helm will be its new principal, Timothy Hemphill, who is looking forward to taking the school to new and exciting places.

The July edition of SEEDS magazine also offers a picture of our wide range of services. Whether it is NDIS pre-planning, support co-ordination or direct support services - our NDIS team can help you achieve your goals.

With more than 100 years' experience providing services and support to people with a disability - we are proud to continue to offer innovative and inclusive services for people of all ages and abilities.

David Williamson
General Manager
Community and Disability Services.



Monique, as featured on the cover, is one of the VMCH students who did a wonderful job recently working on a Gourmet Toastie Van.



Nathan Hoare selling plants at a community market.

MORE THAN JUST A JOB

Nathan Hoare wears a wide smile when he returns from his weekly shift at a Richmond plant nursery and he enjoys showing his support workers the cash he has earned that day.

Nathan, 31, lives at Villa Maria Catholic Homes' Austin Street, Victoria's first purpose-built residence for 10 young people with acquired brain injuries who may otherwise live in nursing homes.

Nathan's passion is horticulture and one of his goals since arriving at Austin Street eight years ago has been finding paid employment.

"Before Nathan's accident he was a plumber's apprentice and one of the things he missed was the mateship with his co-workers. So he loves that now," Austin Street Manager, Jo Herbert, said.

The journey to this goal started with Austin Street staff and other supporters fundraising more than \$20,000 for Nathan to purchase a standing wheelchair that would allow him to stand up to work in his garden, sell his plants at local markets and interact with customers face-to-face when talking to them.

His VMCH support team also worked closely with Nathan to help him set up his own business selling his plants at community markets on weekends. His occupational therapist contacted nurseries in the local area asking them to consider Nathan for a job until one day she found the suitable place for him. He now works at Richmond nursery, Glasshaus once a week and a VMCH support worker

accompanies him to the shift.

With support and thanks to Nathan's can-do attitude, he has been able to achieve something that is out of reach for many people with disability – a job.

About 50 per cent of people with a disability are employed compared to 83 per cent of the general population.

One of the major goals of the NDIS is to assist people with disability who want to work to have the resources and support to do that.

Increased employment participation of 370,000 Australians with a disability by 2050 is expected to lead to an additional \$50 billion in the Australian economy. That is why NDIS advocates say it is not only a socially responsible policy - it pays for itself.

VMCH Senior Manager NDIS, Community and Disability Services, Ben Spooner, says there are many ways individuals can access supports that can help them gain new skills and eventually enter the workforce.

"At VMCH we provide supports to help people access employment and make sure that they can make a good go of it and be successful," he said.

"People who want to find meaningful work should specifically ask for Support Coordination at their NDIS planning meeting to help with their employment. VMCH offers this service."

"It might be something like a support worker going with them to their workplace and providing some

personal support during the day. It may be help with social skills and integration into the workplace. We also provide allied health services that can help assess physical environments and help modify those environments."

VMCH also offers students with a disability the chance to develop the skills they need to pursue paid and volunteer work.

A Certificate 1 Work & Education is offered at VMCH's Wantirna Community Hub and aims to build the skills and self-confidence of students who want to enter the workforce or volunteer.

Students recently got a taste of working in hospitality when they served customers in a gourmet food van. Before their big day their trainers prepared them in the classroom by teaching them about policies around food preparation and handling, social skills, how to operate an EFTPOS and other important skills.

One of the trainers, Deb Roche, said the students got a lot from doing the course and especially the work experience.

"They all looked so happy and overwhelmed that everyone came out to buy their toasties. It was amazing. We snuck a little tip jar out so the students could get a little money. They were all so proud because they had done it."



The Gourmet Toastie crew.



Service with a smile. Student, James C, and Josie from Catalyst Training.

THREE STEPS TO MEANINGFUL WORK WITH VMCH SUPPORT

1

It all starts with a plan.

Call VMCH to learn ways that employment can be included in your NDIS plan.

**Call
1800 798 921**

2

Let's workshop this.

Attend one of VMCH's free NDIS workshops. VMCH runs regular pre-planning workshops and our NDIS experts can help people develop goals and then map out what supports they need in all aspects of their life

3

Teamwork makes the dreams work!

VMCH can help individuals build a team to support them while they are developing skills and at work.

CALL VMCH DISABILITY SERVICES ON 1800 798 921 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

ST PAUL'S COLLEGE IS MOVING

Last year, we were fortunate to celebrate 60 years in the life of St Paul's College, Kew. Founded by Brother Patrick O'Neil on February 12, 1957, the College emerged as a school for vision impaired children. With Brother O'Neill at the helm, the school had a strong purpose to encourage students to strive to pursue their goals.

Without grants and funding at the time, Brother O'Neill was able to establish the school by rallying community support to open St Paul's School for the Blind, in Fernhurst Grove, Kew.

It is time to rally the same support for a move to a new location at 3 Brenbeal Street Balwyn. The new Balwyn site was used as the year 9 campus for Genazzano Convent and presents a more modern, accessible footprint for students. It will also have the added benefit of offering a purpose-built Discovery Centre for the children to learn and enjoy.

St Paul's new principal Timothy Hemphill, shares Brother O'Neill's conviction that students should "aim high" and is keen to provide the best springboard for children at St Paul's. Timothy is passionate about specialist education and delivering innovative methods of learning so that children can excel. In accepting the need to move St Paul's, VMCH offered Timothy the Principal's job which came with the move. Timothy says it was one of the reasons he accepted the role.

"We're not leaving behind the spirit of Brother O'Neill and everything that St Paul's Kew stands for. If anything, that is why we're moving: to ensure we can continue to provide opportunities for our students and to do all that we need to improve the school environment."



A proud history. Brother Patrick O'Neill with St Paul's College students during the early years.

"HE TOLD US THAT WE AS BLIND PEOPLE, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE WHAT WE WANT TO. WE SHOULD AIM FOR THE BEST IN LIFE AND DO THE BEST WE CAN," HE RECALLS.

"IT WAS AMAZING WHAT THOSE TEACHERS AND BROTHER O'NEILL DID. THEY ALWAYS AIMED FOR THE HIGHEST AND THE BEST. HOW LUCKY WERE WE."

While a lot has changed over the years, many things remain the same. Things like wonderful community support, dedicated teachers and innovative programs.

At the 60th anniversary last year, Peter who was eight when he started at St Paul's, recalled Brother O'Neill's words to students on the first day of school.

"He told us that we as blind people, we will be able to achieve what we want to. We should aim for the best in life and do the best we can," he recalls.

"It was amazing what those teachers and Brother O'Neill did. They always aimed for the highest and the best. How lucky were we."

Timothy predicts that initially, it will be very much as it was for Brother O'Neill when he first moved to Kew.

"Everything will be new and particularly for the young students; they will be the pioneers who will create history at St Paul's College, Balwyn."

For more information on the move, contact Timothy.hemphill@vmch.com.au



The future. This year's St Paul's Bridging Program students.

ST PAUL'S WELCOMES NEW PRINCIPAL

St Paul's College welcomed its new principal, Timothy Hemphill, in May.

Timothy, who was previously principal at Insight Education Centre for the Blind and Vision Impaired, kindly agreed to answer a few questions about himself.

What do you love about working in specialist education?

First and foremost, it's something that I share with my family. Both my mother and my sister have been principals at specialist schools so this educational direction seems to have been inherited!

The importance of specialist schools is imperative if all young children, students and adults are to have a fully inclusive life and pursue the options they want, the independence they deserve, and the life skills they need to have.

What are your first impressions of St Paul's College?

I'm delighted by how inclusive the school is. St Paul's is clearly an educational environment that welcomes all students and makes it work. When I first walked into the school I was blown away by that. Whether it's developing independent living skills, having the opportunity to make the most of life, or prepare for supported accommodation, St Paul's provides the means to achieve this for every one of its students.

Even our most vulnerable students are able to receive the best of care, enjoy school life and celebrate their connections with peers and teachers in the classroom no matter how complex their challenges may be.

What are a few of your priorities this year?

I've coined a few phrases. I'm stopping all stations - it's not the express train to Flinders Street. I'm here to get to know the parents, to learn about each child, to be there to listen. That's what this term needs to be about - finding out about the school culture, listening, making connections. It's not about me coming in and saying, 'well I think I know a better way of doing this, or we should do that.'



St Paul's principal Timothy Hemphill

The other priority is staffing. I'm privileged to have a great team to work with, there's an incredible depth of commitment across all staff and that's a real highlight as well. We've got all the ingredients here to do great work which is exciting for me.

What do you love doing outside of work?

I'm a musician and composer, so I've written and directed a number of plays for the schools I've worked in. I have a studio at home, so I play the piano, sing, compose and write.

I love my rescue dog Bob, he's a cross between a Kelpie and a Lab. My wife is Swedish so I have what I describe as three 'Vikings' in the house - identical twin 18-year-old girls and Monica. I need my long walks with Bob who, apart from Sylvester the new kitten, is the only other male in the household.

I'M PRIVILEGED TO HAVE A GREAT TEAM TO WORK WITH, THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE DEPTH OF COMMITMENT ACROSS ALL STAFF ... WE'VE GOT ALL THE INGREDIENTS HERE TO DO GREAT WORK WHICH IS REALLY EXCITING FOR ME.

- TIMOTHY HEMPHILL

ROBERT HELPS MAP THE WAY TO A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Robert Toseland loves making radio. He hosts a radio show once a month on community radio station 3WBC where he interviews people from places including the Yallourn Power Station, the Cat Protection Society and Steamrail Victoria.

With support from a VMCH support worker Robert enjoys getting out in the community and one of his favourite things to do is interview people for his radio program.

“I take the little voice recorder out with me and when I see an interview opportunity I will interview people,” Robert says.

“I love putting programs together and editing them up and tidying them up a bit so that the program is presentable to listen to.”

During his 15 years as part of the VMCH community, Robert has been a member of its Circle Network and Customer Experience Committee.

VMCH Customer Experience Officer, Liz Ellis, says VMCH customers like Robert help her gain an insight on how to improve a wide range of disability services.

“We want to hear people’s personal experience and we want to use it positively. We will provide feedback about services, gather the experience of other service users, give feedback on resources and public material,”

“Customers need a place, or a way to give feedback back to a service provider. Sometimes people have thoughts but they don’t necessarily have anywhere to put them. We want to reflect on what we’re doing well, what we can improve on, and what we can change. This improves someone’s service and changes their experience,” she said.

Robert is a self-taught radio enthusiast and says his interest started when he was a student at the Burwood Blind School in the ‘70s. One of his favourite things to do was talking on the two-way radio to people from around the world.

Robert’s radio program is called Out and About with Robert Toseland and it can be heard on the third Saturday of each month.

Robert is pictured with Liz at VMCH’s Kew Community Hub.



YOUR FEEDBACK MAKES US BETTER

VMCH welcomes feedback and we are committed to continuous improvement. You can contact VMCH’s Customer Experience Officer, Liz Ellis, by calling 1800 798 921.

I HAVE MY NEW NDIS PLAN 6 EASY STEPS TO WHAT’S NEXT

STEP 1: Call us!



Give us a call on **1800 798 921** to let us know you’ve received your plan.

STEP 2: Meet with VMCH to chat about your current and future services.



We’ll make a time to meet with you to ensure you get the most out of the NDIS. Think about your current services, what you would like to continue receiving and what isn’t working for you? We’ll help you get the right services from VMCH now and into the future.

STEP 3: Talk to your Support Coordinator.



Meet with your Support Coordinator to discuss your goals, needs and current services. VMCH have service options and flexibility to meet your needs and personal preferences.

STEP 4: Don’t have a Support Coordinator? VMCH can help.



VMCH provides all Support Coordination services available under the NDIS. We can provide a quote showing how much your services will cost.

STEP 5: Approve your service agreement.



When you have decided on the services you want from VMCH, we will provide you with a **service agreement**. This agreement will include information about you and your responsibilities, how and when you will receive services from VMCH, and our responsibilities in supporting you. Look over the agreement and then you or your guardian need to sign it. Don’t worry about losing your service agreement; we’ll keep it on file.

STEP 6: You’re ready to begin!



Now the agreement’s signed, VMCH can start providing services that match your goals and needs. You can change your services at any time by talking to your VMCH contact person (listed on the front page of your service agreement).

**SPECIALIST EDUCATION AND
EVOLVING DISABILITY SERVICES**

NEWS FROM AROUND VMCH

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

When Will Harvey suffered an acquired brain injury after a fall, his large group of close friends wanted to show their love and support for him by fundraising.

Leading the charge were his friends who worked with him at the Croydon McDonald's Restaurant, Ally Mott, Ryan Young and Ben Harriss. They aimed to raise \$5,000 to buy special equipment to help make his life a bit easier.

They organised an event at the Croydon McDonald's last September and were overwhelmed by the response. Hundreds of Will's friends and family came along and they raised more than \$17,000 – smashing their target.

The theme was Bright Night and people were encouraged to dress in colourful clothes and dig deep to support Will. Ryan and Ben shaved their heads to raise most of the money – attracting donations of up to \$500 from some supporters. Wonga Park Cricket Club, where Will played cricket, also fundraised thousands of dollars for Will and donated the money to the fundraiser.

Ally said the highlight was seeing Will's reaction when he saw hundreds of people coming along to support him.



Ally, Ben, Will and Ryan at last year's fundraiser.

OUR SON WAS HERE FOR JUST A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME: BUT, THE WORK DONE HERE AND THE STAFF ARE AMAZING.

"It was great to have Will come along. You could tell he was really moved to see everyone there."

The owners of the Croydon McDonald's Restaurant also donated \$1 for every person who went through the drive-through that day.

Tragically, Will passed away before he was able to benefit from the fundraising. He lived for a short time at VMCH's residence for young people with an acquired brain injury Austin Street, in Alphington.

Will's parents, Kathryn and Tony kindly donated the money raised to Austin Street and recently visited its residents to deliver them the news. They are pictured during the recent visit to Austin Street (from left, Kathryn, Ben, Ally, Ryan and Tony).

"Our son was here for just a relatively short time; but, the work done here and the staff are amazing. It's a very, very special place," Kathryn said when she returned to Austin Street to deliver the \$17,000 cheque.

The family want the money to be used to help the young people living at Austin Street enjoy things like live concerts, the theatre the movies and fun trips live visiting the snow – one of Will's passions.



Will Harvey Fundraiser



SALUTING OUR VOLUNTEERS

VMCH volunteers donated almost 97,000 hours of their time in 2017 to help us support people in disability services, aged care, at our Op Shops, our wonderful school St Paul's College and in so many other invaluable ways.

It was great to see more than 300 of them come along to our annual Volunteer Luncheon in May

where they mingled with VMCH staff and enjoyed lunch and some great entertainment at Caulfield Racecourse.

Here are a few photos from the event.

STUDENTS ENJOY VISIT TO XAVIER COLLEGE



VMCH specialist school, St Paul's College staff and students were recently invited to Xavier College, in Kew, to watch the school's production of Son of Pinocchio.

St Paul's College Principal, Tim Hemphill, said everyone really enjoyed the performance and thanked Xavier College students for putting on such a great show for them.





WHETHER THROUGH A ONE-OFF CONTRIBUTION OR ONGOING DONATION, YOUR GENEROSITY WILL HELP PUT A SMILE ON THE FACES OF SOME OF THE ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN THE VMCH COMMUNITY.

I PLEDGE TO DONATE \$

You can make a huge difference to the lives of others by supporting Villa Maria Catholic Homes.

Full Name:

Address:

Postcode: Phone:

Email:

DONATIONS OF \$2 AND OVER ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

Cash Cheque (made payable to Villa Maria Catholic Homes)

Please debit my (tick one) Visa Mastercard

Cardholder's Full Name:

Credit Card Number: _____/_____/_____/_____

Expiry: _____/_____

Cardholder's Signature:

Yes, I would like to receive more information about the VMCH and the people it supports.

VMCH BANKING DETAILS
ACCOUNT NAME: VMCH OPERATING ACCOUNT
BANK: NAB
BSB: 083-125
ACCOUNT NO: 515 620 356
vmch.com.au



GENERATIONS OF CARE

VMCH supports people with a disability, their families, and carers through every stage of their life.

NDIS AND SPECIALTY SERVICES

- NDIS support coordination and plan management
- Allied health services, speech & occupational therapy, physiotherapy
- Support in the home and community

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Early Childhood Intervention Services, music & play therapy
- Supported inclusion into mainstream schools
- Specialist education school, ages 5-18
- After-hours school care, school holiday programs & camping weekends
- Short-term accommodation (respite)

ADULT

- Group-based activities
- Day activity programs to develop social and life skills
- Camping weekends
- Short-term accommodation (respite)

CALL US

We can help you make the most of your NDIS plan.

T: 1800 798 921

E: seeds.response@vmch.com.au