

SEEDS

SPECIALIST EDUCATION AND EVOLVING DISABILITY SERVICES

ISSUE **03**

Support coordination
explained

The pursuit
of excellence

More than just
child's play

Support delivered
your way



**THE NDIS
IN ACTION
DARIO REACHES
NEW HEIGHTS**

04



NDIS participant, Dario, visits his local gym with VMCH support worker, Jessica. Read about Dario's new world of opportunity thanks to his first NDIS plan on page 4.

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Play is vital for children of all abilities. Our story on page 8 offers playtime tips for children with special needs.

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The pursuit of excellence
in disability services

SEEDS

We welcome your feedback and
contributions to SEEDS.

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A WORD FROM THE SEEDS GENERAL MANAGER

Welcome to the latest edition of the SEEDS magazine.

The mission and values of VMCH SEEDS drives us to ensure that the people we support feel included, respected and safe.

To achieve this our organisation strives to deliver excellent services. We are proud that SEEDS recently received a three-year Human Service Standards accreditation following an external review of our compliance of its requirements. The standards promote the rights of people with disability, their wellbeing and safety.

VMCH SEEDS is not stopping there when it comes to quality and safety. We have adopted a “Zero Tolerance Initiative” developed by our peak body, National Disability Services.

This framework aims to develop best practices when it comes to safeguarding the rights and safety of the people we support. Please read our story on page 6 to learn more about what we are doing to ensure we provide excellent services.

Another important way we support our clients is through our specialist resources and I am pleased to tell you about a campaign to raise \$100,000 for new play and gym equipment, toys and digital devices for our Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS). On page 8, we have a story about the important role that play and toys have in young children’s development. You can also learn how you can support our fundraising campaign, called ‘Teach and Tumble.’

The National Disability Insurance Scheme continues to roll-out throughout Australia. Melbourne’s inner east is starting to transition into the scheme. VMCH provides a range of important services to children and adults with disability living in this area and we look forward to helping them make the most out of their NDIS plan.



Please support our ‘Teach and Tumble’ campaign to raise money for new toys and equipment for our Early Childhood Intervention Services.

We have supported a significant number of people already through the NDIS planning process. Dario’s story, on page 4, is just one example of how with the right support coordination, the NDIS can open up a completely new world of opportunity for people.

I urge you to utilise our resources during your pre-planning journey and get in touch with our NDIS team to learn more about how we can help you get the most out of the NDIS.

I hope you enjoy reading all the articles in this edition of SEEDS.

David Williamson
General Manager SEEDS
Specialist Education and Evolving
Disability Services



NDIS OPENS UP A NEW WORLD FOR DARIO

Dario lifts the exercise ball at his local gym as his SEEDS support worker, Jessica, (pictured) encourages him and counts his repetitions. She says he has come a long way since he first started visiting the gym.

In the future, Dario dreams of reaching even greater heights – to move out of his parents' home, travel independently and to get a job.

Going to the gym, let alone his other goals, were out of his reach until recently because there was not enough support available to help him achieve them.

When Dario turned to SEEDS for **support coordination**, we were able to help him get the most out of his first NDIS plan. The outcome has opened up a whole new world of opportunity for Dario.

WHEN DARIO TURNED TO SEEDS FOR SUPPORT COORDINATION, WE WERE ABLE TO HELP HIM GET THE MOST OUT OF HIS FIRST NDIS PLAN. THE OUTCOME HAS OPENED UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY FOR DARIO.

SEEDS is a registered support coordination provider for the NDIS. We help our clients implement all their supports in their NDIS plan so they can achieve their goals.

Dario is 53, he speaks fluent Italian, enjoys getting out into the community for a coffee and walking. He has a moderate intellectual disability and requires support to enjoy these activities.

BEFORE HE GOT HIS NDIS PACKAGE DARIO RECEIVED ONLY A FEW HOURS OF SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY EACH WEEK.

HE NOW ENJOYS WEEKLY VISITS TO THE GYM, GETTING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY FOR THINGS LIKE COFFEE AT LOCAL CAFÉS AND WALKS IN THE PARK. HE ENJOYS THESE THINGS WITH THE HELP OF SUPPORT WORKERS LIKE JESSICA.



Before he got his NDIS package Dario received only a few hours of support in the community each week.

He now enjoys weekly visits to the gym, getting out into the community for things like coffee at local cafés and walks in the park. He enjoys these things with the help of support workers like Jessica.

Jessica says an occupational therapist has created an exercise program to help Dario get fitter and stronger. She attends the gym with Dario to help him complete the workout.

His SEEDS support coordinator, Laila, is also working with him to achieve his other goals. Laila is investigating learning opportunities for Dario to prepare him for a supported work place or any other course he may choose.

He has set goals for himself including moving out of his family home to live independently. He wants to get a job and dreams of going on holidays independently.

Dario says his big dream is to travel to Italy and visit his favourite city, Florence.

SUPPORT COORDINATION EXPLAINED

SEEDS SPECIALIST EDUCATION AND EVOLVING DISABILITY SERVICES

VMCH is a registered support coordination provider for the NDIS. Our support coordinators can work with you and your family to help you exercise choice and control and achieve your goals.

Our support coordinators can help you establish and organise the services that you choose as they appear in your approved NDIS plan. We will assist you to find the right service providers, maximise the value for money you receive for supports, coordinate all your supports and help you if issues arise.

For more information call us on 1800 798 921 or email: seeds.response@vmch.com.au

WOULD YOU LIKE SUPPORT TO ENJOY ACTIVITIES OUT IN THE COMMUNITY?

SEEDS offers one-on-one supports and personal care when and where you need it.

We can help you access activities of your choice in the community including recreational, leisure, education, skill development and social opportunities.

For more information call: 1800 798 921 or email: seeds.response@vmch.com.au

MORE THAN JUST CHILD'S PLAY

FIVE TIPS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY LEARN AS THEY PLAY

Resilience, communication, making friends, social skills, confidence, problem solving – this all develops when children play. Shh! Don't tell the kids they learn all this during child's play.

We have turned to the experts to understand more about how play and toys help children with disability learn and here's a few tips from them.

Find what interests your child

A great place to start is finding what interests your child.

Whether it is superheroes, books, dolls, Lego or cars – if your child loves it, you have a better chance of maintaining their interest when you use those toys or games when they play.

Think about what excites and interests them, makes them smile and laugh.

Play between children of all abilities helps everyone

Children with disability can learn a lot from their typically developing peers. Children are great teachers of other children. Communication, social skills and appropriate behaviour are all skills that can be learnt effectively from role models like friends and playmates.

RECENT STATISTICS SHOW THAT ONE IN THREE ADULTS WITH DISABILITY DO NOT HAVE FRIENDS OUTSIDE THEIR FAMILY AND CARERS. THIS CAN LEAD TO ISOLATION AND LONELINESS.

Typically developing children also benefit significantly from getting to know children with disability. They learn about diversity. Helping peers who may be finding a task difficult because of a disability is a great way to boost a child's self-esteem.

When children practise play skills with children of varying abilities, they gain confidence and the ability to make friends, hopefully throughout their lives.

Make time for structured and unstructured play

Unstructured play is free play and it is the best type of play for young children.

It is spontaneous and determined by the child's interest at the time. It also allows children to use their imagination, be creative and move at their own pace.

Dressing up, pretend games, running around the backyard or at a playground are all examples of unstructured play.

Adults usually lead **structured play** at a fixed time and in a set space.





Think swimming classes, storytelling groups for toddlers, dance, music and drama classes and sport.

Skills developed during these times include listening, turn-taking, working with others and social skills.

Playtime is not just for the kids

Parents cannot underestimate the value of their attention and time when it comes to learning through play. A parent who can spare a bit of time regularly to play with their child can provide invaluable support to their learning and development.

Remember to have fun, get down to their level and enjoy each other's company. Even if it is only for a few minutes every day – quality and not quantity matters.

When you play with your child, you can role model important skills like taking turns, sharing, using manners and appropriate behaviour. Most of all you are building a connection, having fun together and making them feel important.

What are the best toys for my child to play with?

The experts say that “open-ended” toys are great for learning and development. They are toys that can be used in lots of different ways.

Blocks, balls, cardboard boxes, dress-us, crafts are all “open-ended toys”. They encourage children to use their imagination, problem solve and be creative.

(Sources: Raisingchildren.net.au and National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention)

CHANGE A YOUNG CHILD'S LIFE



Villa Maria Catholic Homes helps more than 150 children with disability and developmental delays through its Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS).

Our **Teach and Tumble** fundraising campaign aims to raise more than \$100,000 to buy much-needed new toys and equipment for this service.

“Specialised equipment and resources are vital in current therapeutic practices,” David Williamson, General Manager of Specialist Education and Evolving Disability Services at VMCH.

“They can make a huge difference to young ones with disabilities and really enhance their development and wellbeing.”

You can donate by calling **1800 036 377** or visiting www.vmch.com.au

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN DISABILITY SERVICES

Villa Maria Catholic Homes has more than 100 years' experience in providing disability support in Victoria. This type of longevity stems from a commitment to person-centred care and excellence.

We believe two essential ingredients will help us continue to deliver top services and they are investing in continuous improvement and listening to the feedback of the people we support.

SEEDS Quality Coordinator, Julie Duke, is fronting the implementation of these objectives.

Can you tell us about your role at VMCH SEEDS?

I commenced my role as Quality Coordinator for SEEDS in early November last year.

I am responsible for promoting an organisational culture of excellence and leading continuous improvements in SEEDS' practices.

Part of my current responsibility is supporting SEEDS to adopt the National Disability Service's Zero Tolerance framework across all services.



“PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ZERO TOLERANCE FRAMEWORK. THERE WILL BE INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORUMS AND INFORMATION ABOUT EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-ADVOCACY” – SEEDS QUALITY COORDINATOR, JULIE DUKE

What is the Zero Tolerance Initiative?

Zero Tolerance is an initiative led by National Disability Services in partnership with the disability sector. It aims to help disability service providers improve practices, which safeguard the rights and safety of people they support.

It has included thorough consultation of people with disability to ensure it meets their needs and expectations.

Why has SEEDS adopted the Zero Tolerance Initiative?

SEEDS leadership have made a commitment to this framework as it clearly mirrors and articulates both the steps we have already taken and the vision we hold for greater safety and empowerment for our participants. It goes beyond minimum standards of compliance and promotes ongoing learning and improvement.

How do you expect it will change the way things are done at SEEDS?

Participant feedback will be an important part of the Zero Tolerance framework. There will be increased opportunities for forums and information about empowerment and self-advocacy.

I am also meeting with staff at local sites to discuss the need to act on behalf of people who are unable to speak up for themselves. Staff have been welcoming of the process to identify gaps in skills and highlight development opportunities.

OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY SERVICES

- VMCH is a Quality Improvement Council (QIC) accredited organisation. QIC has more than 20 years' experience as an Australian Standards development and certification organisation in health and community services.
- VMCH holds a three-year Certification of Compliance with DHHS Standards of Client Care following an independent audit earlier this year.
- Our organisation has adopted the National Disability Service Zero Tolerance Initiative. Its aim is to ensure people with disability are safe and feel safe when they access services.

LIZ MAPS THE WAY TO A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Liz Ellis is the new SEEDS **Customer Experience Officer**.

Her role will see her engage with customers, family members, staff and other stakeholders to understand their customer experience with SEEDS and constantly improve it.

The community at our specialist school, St Paul's College, know her well. She previously helped families at the school navigate disability support services and especially the NDIS.

Liz is a seasoned representative on disability consultation groups. Her involvement stretches to groups like the Victorian Government's Public Transport Access Committee and the Association for Children with a Disability.

"Customers need a place, or a way to give feedback 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," Liz said.

She will head the new SEEDS Customer Experience Committee.

The SEEDS Customer Experience Committee has representatives from service users and family members. Liz would like to see the group providing suggestions back to SEEDS service areas on their own experience.

"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, such as the SEEDS website," she said.

"We want to keep providing great staff who are the best fit and have had quality training. We want to keep offering flexibility to our customers – sometimes this means finding someone to suit specific roles, such as people who are best suited to home environments, or others who are better in community and social or professional environments."



"WE WANT TO HEAR PEOPLE'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ... WE WANT TO REFLECT ON WHAT WE'RE DOING WELL, WHAT WE CAN IMPROVE ON, AND WHAT WE CAN CHANGE." – SEEDS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE OFFICER, LIZ ELLIS.

YOUR FEEDBACK MAKES US EXCELLENT

SEEDS welcomes feedback as we are committed to continuous improvement.

You can do this by filling out a VMCH form, send an email, write a letter, or talk to a manager or staff member. All VMCH staff record feedback, complaints or grievances in a database. Senior staff review the information and respond.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you can refer the matter to the VMCH SEEDS General Manager or VMCH CEO by calling: 1800 036 377 or the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner on: 1800 677 342. You can also learn more about the **SEEDS Customer Experience Committee** by calling 1800 798 921.

NEWS FROM AROUND VMCH



ST PAUL'S CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

Past and present students, teachers and supporters of VMCH specialist school, St Paul's College came together to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

Image above: Past students pictured (from left) Ron McCallum, Bill Jolley, Sheilah Blanchfield, Peter Walsh and founding teacher Bill Holligan. Image right: Founding teacher Bill Holligan and present St Paul's College student Mikey cut the cake to celebrate the 60th.



FLOWER POWER

The kids at our respite services, including Isaac (pictured top) and Liam, created these lovely flowers from plastic bottles. They have added much colour to our timber fences, I'm sure you would agree!

Resident support worker, Kerry Kelleher, is a bit of a craft guru. This is one of the many projects she has organised for the children who attend respite services at VMCH.



A COLOURFUL CREATION

Robert has created this bright and beautiful piece of art. He resides at one of our Shared Supported Accommodation (SSA) units.



A PASSION FOR FOOTY

Bobby is another resident at one of our SSAs. Bobby is the captain of the Sandown Cobras footy team.



WONDERFUL WETLANDS

VMCH SSA resident, Michael, enjoys a weekend outing to the Karkarook Park, Heatherton.





I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION TO THE TEACH & TUMBLE APPEAL.



I PLEDGE TO DONATE \$

My donation will help buy new outdoor and sensory equipment, digital resources and toys for children with a disability or additional needs who access SEEDS Early Childhood Intervention Services.

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 'Teach & Tumble' appeal 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