

# WOLLEMI NEWS

Greystanes Disability Services

## As the year closes, I would like to express my sincere gratitude

to all the people we support, their families, and guardians for allowing Greystanes to be part of your lives and be your support team. It is a privilege to share the connections and relationships that form through this partnership.

This year, we have seen many people we support achieve goals: pursuing study; exploring creative passions; visiting the beach; or enjoying time in nature. While some goals, appear simple, they represent incredible courage, such as maintaining a good life while managing complex health and physical challenges and meeting each day as it arrives.

### Updates

#### Greystanes at the DSC National Conference

In October a Greystanes Board Director, Vanessa Balfour, and I attended the DSC National NDIS Sustainability Conference, which focused on exploring the sustainability of disability services under current NDIS funding. The event offered key insights into how the fee-for-service model affects support services across Australia. As a smaller disability service, Greystanes prioritises forming meaningful relationships with those we support. Rather than expanding rapidly, we have focused on providing high-quality person-centred support, especially for complex needs.

In terms of sustainability, the evidence financially indicates size does matter with smaller organisations tracking better in terms of costs of maintaining organisation, being small allows the ability to adapt quicker to changes and manage services in a deliberate manner rather than viewing scale as the golden ticket, with scale comes cost with over 50% of NDIS services reporting a low with the majority of losses seen in larger NDIS services.

For the report visit: <https://www.abilityroundtable.org/post/white-paper-fy23-financial-and-workforce-benchmarking-results>



### This issue:

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### Our Commitment to Quality and Advocacy

My commitment as CEO is to protect the quality of services we provide, based on the belief that everyone has the right to build a good life. To ensure our resilience amid sector changes, we are engaging in government consultations, including the independent NDIS review and the Department of Social Services' pricing review.

Through participation in consultations, we aim to represent the true costs of delivering quality services and emphasise the importance of investing in people to build a strong cohesive society.

We're also part of the "Pay What It Takes" campaign, advocating for the resources necessary to maintain effective services, including staff training, organisational support, and social housing.

Currently, government funding does not fully cover the true costs of delivering community services, presenting challenges and some people falling through the gaps without any other avenues for support outside of the NDIS.

We continue to advocate for adjustments to better support both our staff and participants.

### Funding Changes in NDIS Plans

We have observed reductions in NDIS funding, particularly in health and allied health supports. While there is an expectation that NSW Health will assist, hospitals often lack resources to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities. Our staff play a critical role in bridging this gap during hospital stays, and we are committed to advocating for participants' funding to better reflect their needs.

### Upcoming Training Platform for Staff

In 2025, we are launching a new online training platform through DSC. This investment in staff development aims to enhance the quality of care we deliver and ensure our team is confident and prepared.

*Amanda*



## DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT



**Hey there,** I'm Kayla and I've recently joined the Disability Advisory Committee. This committee was formed by Amanda Coleman – Watson, our wonderful CEO. The committee meets approximately every 6 weeks and aims to provide participants with a voice to help influence the way they receive their care.

The meetings occur at Greystanes on Grose Street Leura and are chaired by Amanda.

There are 8 committee members who have the firsthand experience of living with a disability and their support workers. Amanda sends us the discussion questions prior to the meeting, which I really like because it gives me a chance to reflect on what I want to say, and how I want to say it.

I've enjoyed contributing my feelings, thoughts and opinions with the committee and feel that it's made a real difference to my life, especially in the way I feel about myself. It has helped me form friendships, opened my eyes to other people's experiences, brought me out of my shell and has made me feel like I've been treated as an adult and respected. When I'm treated as an adult, I feel like what I think, feel and say matter.

Overall, I like the meetings and the only way I can think of it being improved is to have some biscuits on the table! 🍪🍪🍪

Many thanks to the other committee members, Liam, Kimberley, Gina, Brittney, Nicole, Rana and Stuart for their valuable contributions and thank you to Amanda for forming this committee, I've learned a lot.

See you next time, Kayla



## *Welcome and congratulations*

Welcome to new support workers and RN Clare Hawke-Floyd. Congratulations to our new Lamartine Team Leader, Ellen Jackson and Courtney Litchfield as the new Home and Living Manager.



*Ellen Jackson*



*Courtney Litchfield*

We are excited to announce the promotion of Courtney Litchfield from Service Coordinator to Home and Living Services Manager. Since joining Greystanes Disability Services, Courtney has demonstrated dedication, leadership, and a commitment to ensuring the quality of service to the people we support. Her strong work ethic, ability to build positive relationships with participants and staff, and extensive knowledge of our operations have made her a valuable member of our team. In this new role, Courtney is responsible for managing the Home and Living Services (community living and day program) operations working in partnership with Team Leaders and support staff.

## *Catch up with Rana*



Hi everyone! This time I want to tell you all about our Scarecrow competition. It was a lot of fun. We had quite a few entries from our day programs and community living houses. There were miniature scarecrows, a two-headed scarecrow, a scarecrow made with tennis rackets, a scarecrow with a mermaid tail and many more.

The scarecrows all had fun names and they were all very colourful! On the day we used little blocks for people to put into cups and the scarecrow with most blocks won the "Peoples Choice Award".



I think a bit of cheating happened throughout the day because blocks went missing in some cups and appeared in others!!!! Cameron and I were the judges and decided on the overall winner! Have a look at all the great photos! And now I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



# *NDIA Legislation Changes To Music Therapy*

Update from Frauke Petri, Da Capo Music Therapy Services

Dear All,

I finally have some news to share. I assume many of you have already seen the updated statement about funding for art therapy and music therapy on the NDIS website. For now, I am able to continue delivering Music Therapy under the NDIS through Capacity Building - Improved Daily Living category, and we can continue with our current arrangements. Access to art and music therapy and the NDIS pricing arrangements will remain unchanged until approximately mid-March 2025, when the independent review by the NDIA has been completed. The release of the operational guidance clarifying decision-making on therapy supports and any associated price guide changes will also be deferred until 2025. Please see the statement links below.

Dr Stephen Duckett AM is appointed and will undertake this independent review. He is an experienced health economist who has occupied several leadership roles in health services, leading reform and evidence-based innovations in health care. Dr Duckett has already been in contact with the president of AMTA. FYI, the review will assess:

- the evidence of the effectiveness of art and music therapy for people with disability
- qualifications and registration of music and art practitioners
- pricing of art and music support
- where music therapy sits on the continuum of music for health and well-being and how it is different from other music activities

Rest assured that nothing is changing about the way I operate, and I will keep you as my focus. I will do my best to support you by continuing to deliver high-quality therapy sessions and keeping you updated with the latest information. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you all for your ongoing support during this challenging time!

You can read the NDIS media statement here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/.../10530-independent-review-ndis...>

You can read the Australian Music Therapy Association's response here:

<https://www.austmta.org.au/.../amta-responds-to-ndia...>

And the NDIS Independent Review Terms of Reference here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/7365/download?attachment>

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/.../10530-independent-review-ndis...>

Warm regards,

Frauke Petri (Managing Director, RMT)

Da Capo Music Therapy Services Pty Ltd



## *Ginninderra*

Greystanes purchased and began renovating Park Road Woodford in 2019. It is now a lovely home for three people that Greystanes support. It was decided and voted on that they would like to name their home "Ginninderra". A BBQ was held to celebrate the naming of the house. It was a fun day, thank you to families and staff who helped make the day so memorable.



## *Blues Brothers Trivia Night*

Thank you to everyone who could attend our Blues Brothers Trivia Night. The event was to acknowledge the International Day of People with Disability and to fulfil Matthew's long-awaited request for a Blues Brothers night.

Thank you to the Backheath Golf Club for the use of their club house. It was a fun night and we managed to raise just under \$3,000 towards a new Hydrotherapy Spa for the GDS Community Centre at 2 Grose Street Leura.

Special mention to Matthew Eckermann, Edward Balfour for MC-ing, Rozi, Jenny, Amanda, Tory, and Vanessa's family for helping setup. Thank you to the Blue Mountains Chocolate Company, Todarellos, Rozi Starkey, Glenda and John Rankins for auction items.

It was a fun community event and we plan to do another Trivia Night in 2025.

## *Potter 4 Pink Day*

Thank you to Erin for raising funds for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Erin and Karyn worked very hard to create many gifts to raise funds for such a worthy cause.



*Erin collecting donations*



*Dobby minding the gifts*

## End of Year Party 2024

To celebrate the end of 2024, participants, families, friends and staff were invited to be together at 2 Grose Street Leura for a well-deserved party.

Thank you to the Wentworth Falls RFS volunteers for visiting Greystanes. Everyone had the opportunity to look at the fire truck and receive information on how to be prepared for the hot summer ahead.

The pizza truck finally arrived and it was not long before we were all tucking into delicious wood-fired pizza. Luckily we had some food beforehand to keep us from getting too hungry. It was lovely to see everyone together, especially children of staff enjoying themselves.

Thank you to all those that helped make the day happen. I think those that attended will agree that it was a success. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone!

*Vanessa Balfour*



*A real treat  
Russell playing the flute for everyone*



*Stuart spraying the garden with  
an RFS volunteer*



*Mr Matthew Christmas*



*Great shot of Kristie and Brittany*



*Delicious Pizza!*



*Alex enjoying the party*

## Thank you

Our profound thanks and appreciation for our volunteer Greystanes Disability Services Board.

Thank you to our 2024 supporters and donors: Blackheath Golf Club, Blue Mountains Chocolate Company, Blue Mountains Grammar School, Leura Gardens Festival Committee, Margot Egan, Glenda and John Rankins, Gurisik Family, Rozi Starkey, Toddarellos and our anonymous donors.



The generous donation from the **Leura Gardens Festival Committee** was used for a much needed mobile hoist and for defibrillators at 2 Grose Street Leura and our houses in the community. The mobile hoist is used when attending medical appointments and in situations when there are no ceiling hoists. Both are much needed pieces of equipment, that are not covered by NDIS funding.

## Photo gallery



*Jo and Gina*



*Karaoke in the courtyard*



*Melissa and Imogen playing the Hat Game*

If you have any news, stories, photos or useful tips that you would like to share in the next newsletter please contact Vanessa Balfour at [vbalfour@greystanes.org.au](mailto:vbalfour@greystanes.org.au)