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# ISSUE 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

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**NDIS** provider of choice



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Produced and published twice yearly by the Rural Lifestyle Options Australia Marketing and Communications division with contributions from the Board, Staff, Participants, Partners and Volunteers.

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Welcome to the twelveth edition of Rural Lifestyle Options Australia magazine.

As you would be aware Michelle our Chief Executive Officer has been on maternity leave since June taking a well-earned break to introduce her new son to her family.

As Interim Chief Executive Officer it has been my privilege to keep the 'wheels turning' until Michelle returns in January 2020.

Over the past six months there has seen a real focus on collaboration with other providers in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) space. By working with other providers we have been able to deliver a full suite of services that the participant's plan requires in a seamless fashion.

In addition our organisation has provided services in locations that have historically lacked an adequate level of service provision. This has provided employment for local residence within their own communities. This has an enormous positive economic impact for rural and regional areas.

Over the past six months we have some fantastic initiatives undertaken by our organisation. The 1:5 All Abilities Relay was a huge success for the second year in a row which raised enough funds to complete the purchase of a manual hoist for our Short Term Accommodation (STA) residence.

Other fundraising initiatives allowed for the installation of a ceiling hoist system in one of our Supported Independent Living (SIL) houses and the purchase of a dual wheelchair transportation vehicle from one of our supporters Fleet Partners.

Progress is continuing with our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The staff committee has been formed and is implementing stage *Innovate*.

Until I commenced at Interim Chief Executive Officer I did not fully appreciate the contribution that all our staff make to a successful participant outcome and the continued hard work that is required to maintain positive participant experiences.

All our staff should be very proud of what they achieve on a daily basis. As an organisation our very existence is predicated on the people we support, their carer's and the communities in which we operate. A thank you to vou all.

Finally should you like to contribute to our magazines content or you would like to know more about what we do just phone the office on 1300 032 175 or email social@rloa.org.au.

Kind regards,



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### **David Gordon Interim Chief Executive Officer**

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### LIFE OF CHOICE

# Did you know Rural Lifestyle Options Australia can support you or your loved one to live independently in a community of your choice?

If your NDIS plan has Supported Independent Living (SIL) under Capacity Building (CB) supports, we can provide supports to a participant in their home, regardless of property ownership, in a shared or individual arrangement.

The NDIS describe Supported Independent Living (SIL) as:

- Funded individually to each person according to their need
- Shared living arrangements of 2-7 participants
- Assistance with daily life tasks in a group or shared living environment
- Reflective of 24 hour care, 7 days/week
- Three levels of support (at benchmark price)

Cost of support does NOT include rent, board or lodging, day to day usual living expenses such as food and activities, personal care supports when the person is hospitalised, or items covered in other sections of NDIS price guide (e.g. transport costs).

Whether you are looking to live independently or in a shared arrangement, require round the clock support or just want someone to drop in throughout the day, Rural Lifestyle Options Australia can help. We are committed to working with you to ensure that your individual life goals become a reality.

Rural Lifestyle Options Australia have over 25 years experience supporting people with a disability, get in touch if you require support with:

- SIL Arrangements in the Scenic Rim, QLD.
- SIL Arrangements in Logan, QLD.
- SIL Arrangements in Ipswich, QLD.
- SIL Arrangements in Gold Coast, QLD.
- SIL Arrangements in Tweed Heads, NSW.

If you would like to have a discussion about you or your loved ones needs under the NDIS, contact Rural Lifestyle Options Australia on 1300 032 175 today.

> Learn more about this service at: www.rloa.org.au/sil



# **OUR UPDATE ON RECONCILIATION**

As an organisation, we understand that reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

Over the course of the past six months, we have held events interstate to garner a deeper understanding of what is required to create a more just, equitable and reconciled Australia, in the communities in which we operate.

On Thursday 21 March 2019, for the third year running, Rural Lifestyle Options Australia held a morning tea in support of Closing The Gap Day. This day aims to reduce disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement and employment outcomes.

Our Northern Rivers Main Office and Scenic Rim Service Hub were proud to hold events in support of this day, with attendees encouraged to sign a petition which called on the Australian Government to get behind Aboriginal Community Controlled Health. Monday 27 May to Monday 3 June 2019 marked National Reconciliation Week. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long called for a comprehensive process of truth-telling about Australia's colonial history. National Reconciliation Week calls on all Australians to learn about the shared histories, cultures, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.

This year's theme was 'Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage'. To recognise this important week, events were held at both our Northern Rivers Main Office and Scenic Rim Service Hub. Attendees were asked to reflect on what reconciliation meant to them, and asked to share their vision of what a reconciled Australia looked like to them.

As an organisation, we are committed to strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Rural Lifestyle Options Australia aspire to develop and pilot innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the communities in which we operate. We are currently in the process of developing the Innovate phase of our Reconciliation Action Plan, which is overseen by our RAP Working Group, and outlines actions that work toward achieving our organisation's unique vision for reconciliation.

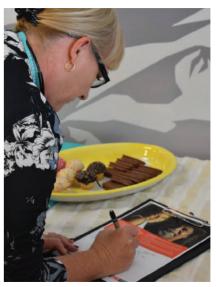
























Read our Reconciliation Action Plan at: www.rloa.org.au/publications



# **ALL ABILITIES RELAY**

# On Saturday, 10 August 2019, we held the second Annual 1:5 All Abilities Relay to raise crucial funds for our Unfunded Projects initiative.

Returning to our venue sponsor, Tamborine Pony Club this year, entrants ran both in teams and individually to show their support for people with a disability in rural and regional communities.

On the day, the Rotary Club of Jimboomba kept the hungry entrants fed, hosting a sausage sizzle with all proceeds supporting Rural Lifestyle Options Australia's Unfunded Projects initiative. Rural Lifestyle Options Australia are proud to announce that thanks to proceeds from this event and our Play For Purpose Charity Raffle we have achieved funding for our 13th Unfunded Project, which entails upgrades to our existing disability equipment at our Short Term Accommodation (STA).

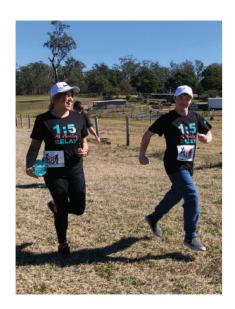
Event Organiser and National Marketing Manager for Rural Lifestyle Options Australia, Nicholas Power commented "With thanks to our event sponsors, and members of the community, we hope to continue to grow this event with the vision to offer it in different locations, to raise awareness and crucial donations for people with a disability in rural and regional communities."

A special thank you to our other event partners Reeves Lawyers and Master Builders Queensland. Without your support this event wouldn't have been possible.



Team Verhoeven (pictured above) set a new time record for the course, completing the 5km distance in a cool 23 minutes and 40 seconds. To view the Official Times from the day visit www.1in5charityrelay.com/results























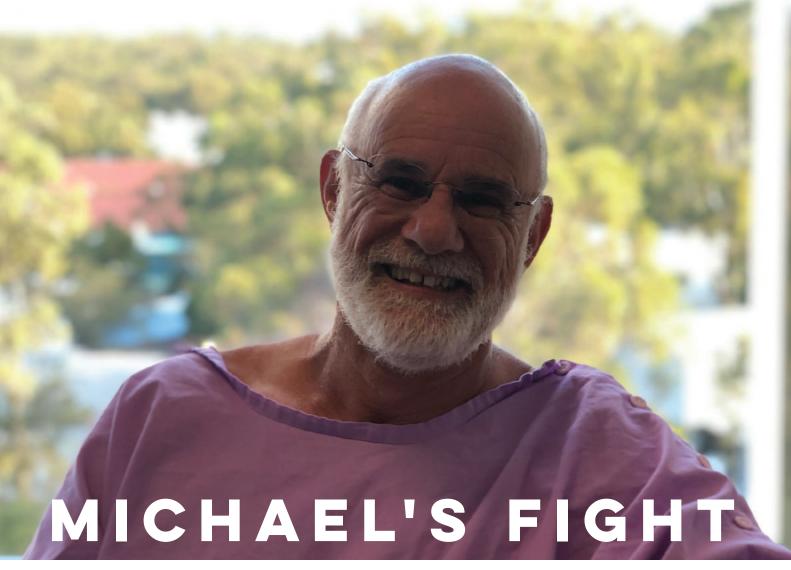








Miss all the action? See more photos at: www.facebook.com/1in5relay



# OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AND EMBRACING CHANGE

From an early age, Michael's goal in life was to never be unemployed and to always be able to provide for his family. A firm believer in continuous education, Michael spent many years of his life investing in his personal learning and development.

He fought to be the top of his field in whatever he set his mind to and his qualifications allowed him to travel extensively, whilst providing a good quality of life for those who were closest to him.

Michael had the world at his feet, until one moment changed his life forever. As Michael was commuting to work on his motorcycle one morning, a truck pulled out in front of him and he went right into the side of it.

Michael describes the accident as "a disaster" with the impact crushing his "hands, arms, legs, shoulders, knees, feet and toes." The next four years would see Michael in the fight of his life. During this period, Michael was in and out of hospital, and as he recalls had "well over 50 general anaesthetic surgeries" to put him back together again.

"At the time, there was no NDIS, there was nothing like that. I went to the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Centre to see if they would help me get better so I could be employable again, but they refused to help me because there was ongoing surgery. So, their stance was come back and see us when the surgeries are finished, and the surgery is still going on today. That was in 1999."

Michael continued to explore avenues to become employable again, but with multiple surgeon reports stating 'home duties only', he had no luck in finding a job provider to help him. After exhausting all options, Michael took it upon himself to find a job, on his own. Despite receiving multiple interviews, Michael couldn't pass any of the medical exams, which put him back at square one.

The next few years would see Michael's family breaking down, and despite receiving a pay out from the Government, his "lawyers and Centrelink ended up taking almost half of it". After the pay out, Michael was put on a 10 year preclusion period which prevented him from claiming any expenses or benefits through the government, which complicated matters further, as he had two children to raise.

"I managed to scrape through with only a few hundred dollars left to my name. By the end of the ten year period, I had nothing left. I went nowhere. I did nothing. I missed out on a lot of things and my mental health declined dramatically. I went to many places seeking help, but couldn't get any assistance, as there was no funding."

"Fortunately, the NDIS came on the scene, and I distinctly remember Julia Gillard standing up and saying "No Australian should have to live a lesser quality of life because of a disability, no matter how they acquired that disability" and I was actually applauding her, that was an amazing statement for me. It took some time to get it up and running, and there were a lot of teething problems as you could well imagine and the reason being that you cannot put disabled people in categories... as every person has a separate disability from the next person."

Prior to moving his NDIS package to Rural Lifestyle Options Australia, Michael had trialed two other NDIS providers, but felt they couldn't offer him the "choice and control" the NDIS had promised.

"They would change carers almost every single day." Nobody cares about your dignity; they just don't worry about it. Through no fault of your own, you have lost control of your life. So, eventually I bailed from them and went to RLOA. They were actually quite amazing to begin with. I couldn't believe the speed at which they worked at. I got to see Vicki and it took her two days to organise everything. I was in tears; I was just stunned."

"There have been a few carers I've had which have just been astounding... Knock, knock on the door and the first thing he does is give you a massive smile. He greets you and shakes your hand before asking "What would you like to do first? What would you like to do today? What can I help you with?""

Over the course of Michael's journey, he has stayed true to his goal of continuous education.

Recently, Michael completed his studies to become a Justice of the Peace and is looking forward to working in practice to give back to the local community.

For the past five years, Michael has been the Manager of the Body Corporate Committee, in the building in which he resides. These days, Michael's fight looks much different, as he fights to achieve the best outcomes for the residents in his complex.

"I've made massive changes. All for the better. I've managed to drop our expenditure by over \$50,000 a year. I'm delighted with that. And as a result of this, the body corporate fees have never risen."

Change has always been welcomed by Michael, who has overcome a lot of adversity in his life.

"People are so frightened of change. Nothing... Nothing... can improve unless you embrace change. Change needs to be embraced. Change is the most amazing thing you can find. Everybody can benefit from change."

As an organisation, we are proud to support Michael in achieving his goals, and hope he continues to go from strength to strength.

Today, Michael has rediscovered love. He has an "incredible relationship with his two children" and is still very passionate about personal learning and development.

"I keep on putting myself in the deep end, and just keep learning."

Rural Lifestyle Options Australia offer our sincere gratitude to Michael for taking the time to share his

Interviewed by Mr Nicholas Power, National Marketing Manager

The struggles that I've gone through my entire life, I now try to alleviate struggles for other people. Because I understand what it's like to be on your own, with no support.

MICHAEL





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our Unfunded Projects initiative has been operating since 2015 and includes any project undertaken by Rural Lifestyle Options Australia which adds value to the lives of the people we support, which we do not receive any funding for.

We are proud to announce that over the past six months, we have secured funding for a number of projects within the initiative. Unfunded Project 10 involved the purchase and installation of a Ceiling Hoist system, designed to facilitate safe, comfortable and dignified transfers of people.

This project has been up and running for a number of months now, and the difference it has made for both the participants, and the staff members has been monumental. Total project cost was \$9,000.

Unfunded Project 11, which involved the cost of material and labour for a newly established, wheelchair accessible, accommodation house has also been achieved. Providing occupants with both a functional and aesthetically pleasing house, they are now happy to call home. Total project cost was \$18,320.

Our twelfth Unfunded Project, saw Rural Lifestyle Options Australia providing emergency Short Term Accommodation (STA) to a young man in 2018/2019 financial year, who at no fault of his own became homeless. Funding under the NDIS was not able to cover the shortfall until permanent supports and accommodation were put in place.

The organisation's commitment was to ensure the young man was not homeless until a permanent housing solution was sourced. Total project cost was \$116,000 and saw the organisation using our own cash reserves to ensure this project was delivered.

Rural Lifestyle Options Australia's thirteenth Unfunded Project involved essential upgrades to our existing disability equipment within our Short Term Accommodation (STA). With thanks to financial donations, revenue raised through our 1:5 All Abilities Relay and Play For Purpose ticket sales, purchases through our Preloved Homewares Op Shop and donations through our Workplace Giving program, the organisation was successful in achieving our financial target of \$8,000 to purchase a new fully automatic hospital bed, manual hoist, and transfer board.

Thank you to our loyal supporters, we are grateful for your contributions in assisting us to fulfil our mission of 'Supporting a life of choice.'



# **UNFUNDED PROJECT 10 DELIVERED**

Our new Ceiling Hoist system provides transfers of people with a disability, between two locations. Our Ceiling Hoist allows the user to comfortably move in a sling from the bedroom...



Along a track through the living room and entertainment area...





Into the shower and bathroom. This system not only provides a safe and dignified transfer of the user, but also alleviates incidence of musculoskeletal injuries and physical stress for Lifestyle Support Workers.





lin a \$250,000 ST PRIZE PACKAGE

Buy a ticket to support Rural Lifestyle Options Australia's Unfunded Projects at: playforpurpose.com.au/rural-lifestyle-options-australia











Use Scheme ID 'C10072058' to donate to Rural Lifestyle Options Australia





Most glass, plastic, aluminium, steel and paper- based cartons between 150mL and 3L.

Visit containersforchange.com.au to find out more



# WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

SUPPORT CONNECTION / SUPPORT COORDINATION / SPECIALIST SUPPORT COORDINATION / PLAN MANAGEMENT









The NDIS introduced us to some new roles and terminology; the one that appears to have confused most of us has been Plan Management and **Supports Coordination.** 

Whilst the titles themselves could be seen as slightly misleading, the expectation of the roles are also often assumed and not accurate.

The key difference between Supports Coordination and Plan Management is the Plan Manager is only able to assist you to manage the financial side of your supports.

They do not manage or organise your supports, they do not negotiate staff with providers; they simply manage and pay invoices from providers on your behalf and budget your NDIS funds.

The benefit of having a plan manager is that it allows you to access services or supports that are not registered with the NDIS, giving you the flexibility to pursue smaller providers or services not typically registered with the NDIS to support yourself or the person in receipt of the NDIS plan.

On the other hand Supports Coordination has three levels of support; Support Connection, Support Coordination and Specialist Support Coordination.

Depending on the complexity of the participant, types of supports required and your needs, you might get none of these supports in your NDIS plan, you might get one or even two of these supports in your plan.

Supports Connection is a light touch support to assist in implementing your plan, connecting you with informal, community and funded supports.

Supports Connection is typically only a few hours per month and therefore once the bulk of the work has been completed by assisting you to connect with your community and funded supports, your Supports Connection supports will decrease to minimal communication with yourself until the end of your plan when they can assist you to prepare for your NDIS review.

Supports Coordination is a more involved support with the primary focus on helping you understand your plan and to build the skills to implement and manage your own NDIS plan in the future. Supports Coordination is typically a few hours per week, with the majority of this time used in the initial set up of your supports.

Once your supports and Service Agreements are in place, the Supports Coordinator will communicate briefly with you from time to time to ensure you are still happy with your supports and to ascertain if there is any additional supports required.

The communication might only be once or twice a month at this stage of your plan. Similar to Supports Connection, at the end of your plan the Supports Coordinator can assist you to prepare for your review, collate any reports from service providers and if desired can attend your NDIS review meeting with you.

Specialist Supports Coordination is the higher level of supports and is used for those more complex situations who might require the coordination of multiple government agencies or services to ensure your goals are being actively pursued.

Specialist Supports Coordination is only required when there is a high level of complexity with Specialist Supports Coordinators needing to have degree qualified skill sets.

Author: Mr Shane Ferguson, Regional Manager



Is there a particular NDIS topic you would like us to cover?

Send your questions and topics to social@rloa.org.au and we will cover it in our next edition!

### WHAT WE OFFER...

### SUPPORT COORDINATION

Through our Support Coordination model, we work creatively with participants to utilise their support budgets to achieve their goals.

Rural Lifestyle Options Australia will assist in implementing all supports in your NDIS plan, including informal, mainstream, community and funded supports. We enable participants to have greater choice and control over their supports and provide greater opportunities for the participant to connect with their community.

## PLAN MANAGEMENT

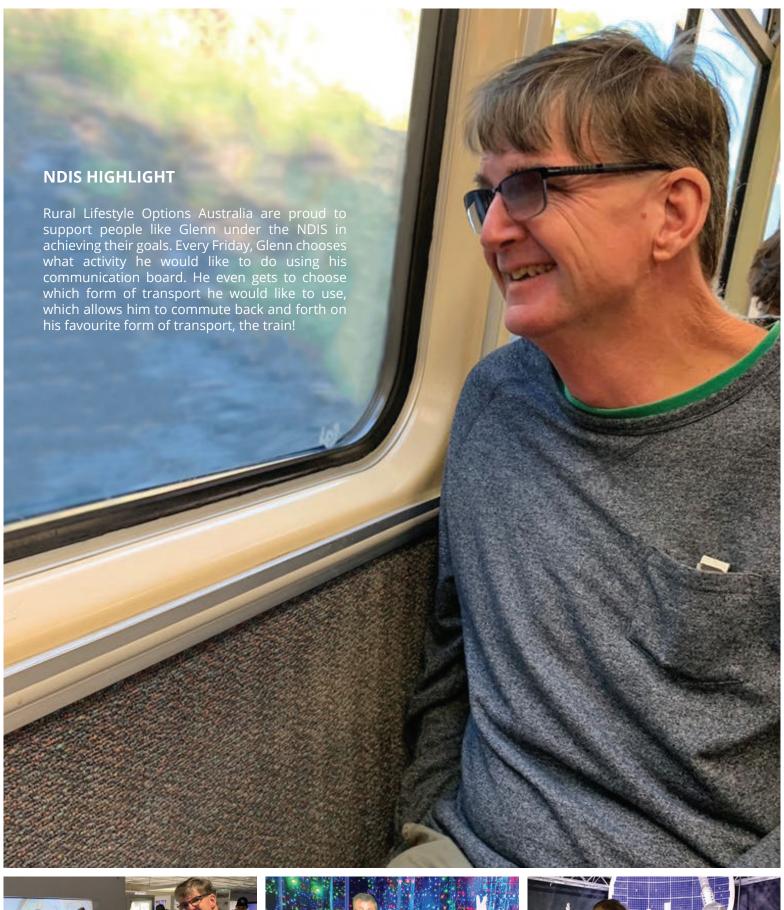
Receiving your NDIS plan can be an exciting time, but you may wonder what to do next...

Through our Plan Management service, you can be assured that we will work with you to determine the best approach to maximise the benefits of your plan.

To learn more about Support Coordination and Plan Management through Rural Lifestyle Options Australia call 1300 032 175.



Visit www.rloa.org.au or call 1300 032 175 to learn more!







































Rural Lifestyle Options Australia were proud to recognise International Women's Day 2019 to celebrate the achievements of women, raise awareness against bias and take action for equality.

**#BalanceforBetter** 



# ENGAGEMENT & CULTURE

WHAT WE DO IS JUST AS **IMPORTANT AS** HOW WE DO IT. Nominations for the Above and Beyond Award are submitted by peers to the Rural Lifestyle Options Australia Management Group who assess nominees against a set of criteria.

Where exceptional practice has been demonstrated and the nomination is supported, the staff member is presented with a framed certificate by the CEO. Recipients of this award also receive a \$50 Coles Group & Myer Gift Card, feature in our Annual Report, biannual Magazine and across our social media pages.



**MAY 2019** 



SEPTEMBER 2019

## SALARY PACKAGING

Did you know that Rural Lifestyle Options Australia employees are eligible for Salary Packaging?

Salary Packaging through Remserv is available at Rural Lifestyle Options Australia for permanent and fixed term full time and part time staff members. Those who are eligible could qualify for a package of up to \$15,900 within a FBT year. The FBT year runs from 1 April until 31 March the following year.

Salary Packaging enables certain benefits paid by your employer from your pre-tax gross salary base before you pay income tax; i.e. mortgage, rent, loans or credit card payments.

By packaging part of your salary you can reduce the amount of tax that you pay which will maximise your net salary.

If you would like to learn more about Salary Packaging, please email our People and Culture Coordinator, Mrs Fiona Gazzard, at hrsupport@rloa.org.au



www.rloa.org.au/careers



# CUSTOMER SERVICE

In May 2019, the organisation's **Customer Service Team attended a** professional development training day at Nerang.

The course covered six key principals of customer service that, when the company lives them, bring customers back to experience service that outdoes the competition.

Overall feedback from the course, was positive, with Annett Field, Senior Customer Service Officer saying that "The skills we have learnt and will continue to develop will assist our organisation as we continue to grow!"

Customer Service Assistant Ann Colnan said she found the session "informative, engaging and fun" further commenting it was a great opportunity to "gain confidence" and "connect with my team".

As an organisation who considers itself an employer of choice, Rural Lifestyle Options Australia is proud to empower our employees to achieve their full potential through professional development opportunities.







# TRANSFORM CONFERENCE

# In May 2019, Connecting Up held their annual three day conference and expo for not-for-profit organisations.

Admittedly, my first experience attending a Connecting Up conference, the event far exceeded my expectations. This year, the conference was held from Wednesday, May 8 to Friday, May 10 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and encompassed the theme of 'Transform'.

Day 1 saw Abby Clemance, an urban legend in fundraising folklore, walk attendees of her 'Corporate Partnerships and Fundraising' Master Class through a range of topics including an analysis of the current 'social good' landscape, as well as teaching her best practice strategy for organisations to plan, find, connect and keep corporate partners through fostering strong relationships. Abby interwove tales of her own successful partnerships throughout the day, which reenforced that regardless of how small your organisation is, you can still attract a big name corporate partner, if your social responsibilities are aligned.

Day 2 started at 7:30am, with a Leadership Breakfast and a Keynote from Samantha Yorke from Google (Senior Counsel, Public Policy and Government). Samantha, went in-depth about how Artificial Intelligence is shaping the future of technology, which to be frank, was not the easiest content to digest so early in the day alongside my breakfast muffin.

Following the Leadership Breakfast, the Main Conference officially commenced. A powerful and entertaining Welcome to Country from Uncle Bill Nicholson kicked off the proceedings before the day launched into a tirade of different speakers around topics such as the 'overheads myth', 'technology innovation in corporate giving' and 'transforming your marketing for maximum impact and effect'.

A definitive highlight from the day, was hearing marketing giant Mark Ritson effortlessly slaughter conventional marketing practices with his entertaining and at times controversial presentation. Mark, a selfconfessed 'for profit' person who has worked on brands such as PepsiCo, Louis Vuitton and Westpac was a dark horse in a largely 'for purpose' dominated panel of speakers. Albeit, the key messaging in his keynote could be applied to any business, and with his successful credentials and apparent \$40,000 a day consulting fee, who were the people in the room to disagree.

After a long but rewarding day of listening to plenaries, it was time for the Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Awards, which provided a great opportunity to network with peers, and to see how other Not-for-Profit organisations were utilising technology to progress their cause.

Day 3 kicked off at 8:45am with the Community Council Australia (CCA) Pre-Election Forum, which entailed the ALP's Shadow Minister for charities and not-for-profits, Dr Andrew Leigh and Greens spokesperson Senator Racheal Siewert take questions from the audience relating to the future of the sector.

Following this was a Panel session entitled 'Technology for good, bad (and ugly)', which tackled the question "Can technology really tackle some of Australia's biggest social challenges?". Those on the panel discussed in depth how they utilised technology to progress their respective causes. As the day continued, topics around 'Artificial Intelligence' and 'Machine Learning' were discussed foreshadowing what experts from IBM believed to be the future of the industry.

The afternoon was spent in a grant writing workshop, run by Jo Garner from Strategic Grants who over the course of the workshop shared helpful insights in respect to what goes into a successful grant application.

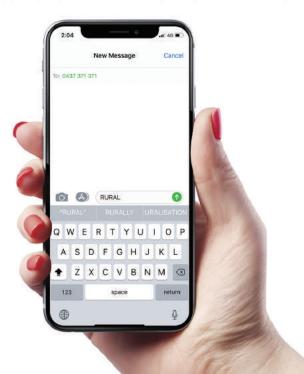
The conference ended with a keynote emphasising the importance of IT security before Mel Kettle delivered a strong closing keynote, which served as a gentle reminder that despite advances in technology, authenticity and maintaining personal relationships are still very much at the heart of the community and for-purpose sector.

On reflection, I found Connecting Up's 'Transform' conference for 2019 an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding three days. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend on behalf of Rural Lifestyle Options Australia, and am thankful to the people who I met along the way, who made the experience, all the more worthwhile.

**Author: Mr Nicholas Power, National Marketing Manager** 



to donate \$5 or more to support people with a disability living in rural and regional communities.





### TALENT ACQUISI **SPECIALIST**

# Melinda joins our growing People and Culture Division, with an eye for finding the right people for the right role.

Melinda's career began in Sales with Penguin Books, providing Administration Support and Supervising the Customer Relations Team - Melbourne. Melinda went to work in Port Hedland, with her family, with many different contract roles in Customer Relations. Melinda returned to Melbourne and began her career in Human Resources and specialised in Recruitment.

Most recently, Melinda joined Rural Lifestyle Options Australia as their Talent Acquisition Specialist. Melinda is very excited to join the organisation and really wants to make a difference in the Recruitment Process making sure the right people are appointed for the care of our participants.

Melinda believes that "Recruitment really does give you an opportunity to make a difference and have an impact."

Melinda joins Rural Lifestyle Options Australia with 8 years of Recruitment experience and is available to support any employee in their career journey.

As the Talent Acquisition Specialist, Melinda Jones acts as an internal Recruitment provider and is responsible for:

- Providing support to the People and Culture Division.
- Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding.
- Delivering the Corporate Induction.

If you are interested in a career with Rural Lifestyle Options Australia, please contact Melinda Jones on 0436 450 107 or recruitment@rloa.org.au.

For all the latest news and updates, visit www.rloa.org.au/news or find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.



Buy a ticket to support Rural Lifestyle Options Australia's Unfunded Projects at: playforpurpose.com.au/rural-lifestyle-options-australia

