

Participate Australia now offers NDIS Support Coordination

The NDIS provides great choice and control but finding your way around this new environment can be difficult.

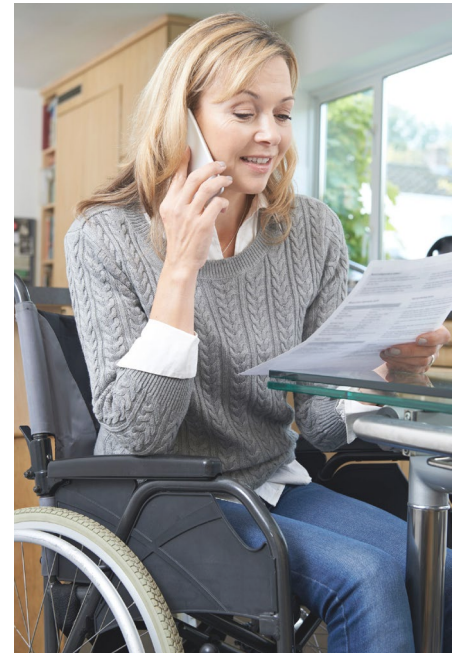
Support Coordination is a service that can help you find and manage supports to achieve your goals. Support Coordination can also help you negotiate and track your plan, so that it continues to meet your needs when circumstances change; and it can support you when changes happen and your plan does not meet your needs anymore.

If Support Coordination is not in your plan ask your NDIS planner about having it included to help you choose the right supports for you!

Participate Australia offers NDIS Support Coordination as a new and

independent service to you. We have engaged an expert team who can assist you in understanding, coordinating and implementing your NDIS plan. We consult with a variety of providers to ensure that you get access to the best supports and activities with any provider of your choice, including Participate Australia. Our own supports and activities can be tailored to suit your needs when you need it, in small or larger groups or through individual support.

Call now on 02 9799 4333 to talk to our specialist team about the options we can provide to help you meet your individual needs, or email ndis@participateaustralia.com.au.



Under a new roof

To provide safe and quality support, our premises require constant upgrading and maintenance.

In the past two months we carried out extensive roof renovations at our Croydon activities centre with grants from the Community Building Partnership Program (through Jody McKay, MP in the seat of Strathfield) and The Raymond E Purves Foundation, who have funded us for yet another project. Thanks to their very generous funding, we can ensure activities and programs take place in a safe and pleasant environment.



THE RAYMOND E PURVES
foundation



**COMMUNITY
BUILDING**
PARTNERSHIP

Do Something! Day

Do Something! Day is an initiative of NewsLocal, the charity DoSomething and ClubsNSW, whose member clubs organised a range of events to give back to the community.

On this special day in July, Club Ashfield organised a tasty luncheon for our participants and carers at their VIBO Bistro.

Guests very much enjoyed this special treat and were even featured on the cover of Inner West Courier with a big smile in the company of their hosts, Club Ashfield's Function Manager, Natalie Rosalie, and Marketing Manager, Tijen Salis.

Thank you Club Ashfield for hosting this event!



A Message from the CEO

The first Annual General Meeting of Participate Australia – and the 34th of our organisation – will be held on Wednesday, 18 October. We will shortly send out separate invites to our AGM, but please pencil the date in your diary. We'd like you to join us to look back on another successful year and celebrate some of our achievements.

We closed the 2016-2017 financial year with a small surplus again after increasing our working capital fund. This is already proving to be a good investment, as our participants are transitioning faster than anticipated and the government's block funding – which is now paid in monthly instalments – is instantly reduced for every participant with an NDIS plan, even before their plan is activated. As a result, some participants are accessing service after their block funding has ceased and before their NDIS funding is available, leaving us temporarily out of pocket. Access to the working capital ensures that we can pay our support workers even when this funding gap occurs.

About 130 participants have already transitioned to the NDIS since July 1. The majority are satisfied with their NDIS plan, and are already exercising choice in a way that was previously impossible. We are still running free workshops on how to best prepare for the planning meeting, and if you're not entirely sure about your preparations for it, I encourage you to participate in one. Call us on 02 9799 4333 or email rsvp@participateaustralia.com.au.

We are now also registered to provide NDIS support coordination to help you navigate the new system and give you expert advice on achieving the goals of your NDIS plan. As a provider of support coordination, we have to demonstrate to the NDIS how

we are ensuring objectivity and impartiality. This gives you the assurance that your needs and aspirations are front of mind, and not our own interests.

On 25 September we will deploy our new enterprise resource planning system. Our team, supported by two Directors with specialist expertise in this area of business, has invested significant time and effort in specifying, configuring and testing the system, and all employees have undergone training in the past weeks. Nothing will change for service users and carers in the immediate future. If anything you should notice better response times and clearer communications in a few months, after initial teething problems have been addressed and our staff are getting used to the new system.

Finally, we were pleasantly surprised by a visit to our supported living program in Ryde (RASAID) by the Assistant Minister for Disability Services, the Hon Jane Prentice, late in August. Arranged by the Member for Bennelong and great supporter of RASAID, John Alexander, MP, the Minister met with some of the residents and their families and toured the facility. Ms Prentice was very much impressed with the high standard of the complex and the unconventional support model employed at RASAID.

Her visit comes off the back of our successful negotiations with the NDIA for adequate funding for safe and dignified support of all residents of the RASAID complex. We are delighted to have secured this commitment and are now able to focus on best practice in this unique supported living program.


Jerry McNamara
Chief Executive Officer

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Participate Australia supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and our employees are bound by the principles for which it stands. The Convention's purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Cooking Club goes Pro

In July and August, we were given the opportunity to hold cooking classes for teenagers in a professional environment, in the kitchen of our great supporters, Canterbury League Club.

The Club's General Manager, Food and Beverage, Wayne Nolland, invited six participants to a series of cooking classes with Executive Chef, Stephanie Azar, in a professional setting. During the 6 weeks program, participants learnt about safe use of equipment and how to prepare a range of all-time favourites like apple crumble,

chicken schnitzel and gourmet burgers.

Stephanie gave up her free time to run the classes on a voluntary basis. She carefully selected easy to follow recipes and took time to demonstrate every step along the way to establish a good rapport with participants, who each brought their own unique personality to the classes.

The program culminated in a graduation dinner for the participants' families to celebrate their achievements with a three-course dinner. Local MP, Sophie Cotsis,

Shadow Minister for Disability Services, was the guest of honour and presented each participant with a Certificate of Completion.

We thank Canterbury League Club and Stephanie Azar for their incredible community spirit and for inviting our aspiring chefs into their business. We look forward to more great opportunities and collaborations with the Club.



Sophie Cotsis MP, Stephanie Azar, Wayne Nolland and participants



The participants, their families and support staff



For Art's Sake 2017

In June, we brought together artists of all abilities and celebrated their creative expression across a range of mediums and diverse styles. This, the ninth For Art's Sake exhibition, was the first one after our name change to Participate Australia. In this context and with an extremely generous gift from an anonymous supporter, we invited entries from emerging and practicing artists of all abilities in and around Sydney to enter in the Participate Art Prize and the For Art's Sake Art Prize. We also invited entries from our own participants in the Collaborate Art Prize. The theme for the art prizes was 'participation'.

The art prizes were awarded by a judging panel comprising of renowned and highly awarded artists Wendy Sharpe, academic and author Prof. Colin Rhodes and celebrated artists David Capra and Tamara Armstrong.

The Participate Art Prize was awarded to Jo Goodes for her 5ft sculpture, 'Hoop Dream'. Nicolas Fodor won the For Art's Sake Art Prize for 'Eager to Please', an intense, colourful drawing. And the

Collaborate Art Prize was awarded to Anthony Lo for his painting 'Shadowplay, Doughnuts Donuts', a painting created in a workshop run by renowned print maker and artist, Ro Cook.

The People's Choice Award overwhelmingly went to Alex Latham's slightly controversial piece 'Fashion'.

This year we showcased 61 pieces of art at the Design Centre Enmore, including 18 pieces from our participants and collaborating artists and 32 pieces from art prize finalists. In addition, we received very generously 11 artworks from professional and leading artists including Jody Broun, Ken Done, Reg Mombassa, Jenny Orchard and Kevin Sabino.

The overall quality of art was again exceptional this year, which was evident in bidding activities and sales on the night.

We owe all contributing artists very special thanks for their time and skill without which this exhibition would not have been possible.

Our special thanks go to ABC

legend and jazz musician, James Valentine for volunteering to be our MC and to Rowen Kelly of Kellys Property for undertaking the live auction.

Linda Arnall gave a free audio description tour of some of the artworks, and we salute and thank the art prize donor, also on behalf of this year's prize winners, and we thank our guests, participants, friends and families who attended and helped make it such a wonderful and memorable event.



Andrea Natoli, James Valentine, Wendy Sharpe, David Capra, Jerry McNamara



Linda Arnall



On to hotdogs

Anthony Lo, 19 years old participant, has taken the first prize award at this year's For Art's Sake exhibition.

Anthony worked with local artist Ro Cook to create 'Doughnuts, Donuts'. The Master of Ceremonies, James Valentine of ABC radio, announced Anthony as the winner and said that the judges awarded him this prize based on his artistic merit and because it was "a bold celebratory work-full of joy and exuberance."

Anthony was surprised and delighted, as was his collaborator Ro Cook, who said: "I love working with Anthony. This is my third year now. He always has a clear vision

and knows exactly what he wants to do. He is both bold and fearless."

Anthony has been drawing and painting constantly since he was little. He has always enjoyed anything tactile, all forms of arts and crafts and enjoys creating new works for himself and others to enjoy.

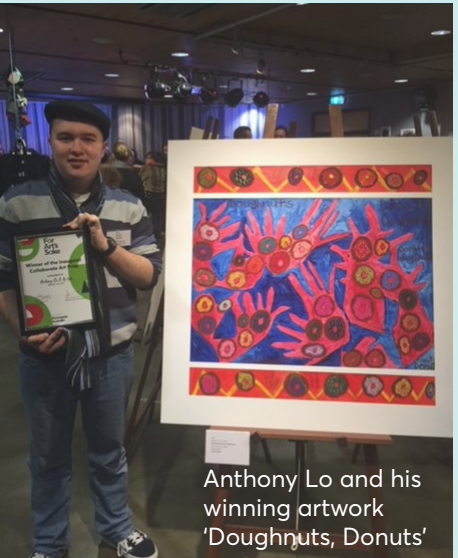
When asking Anthony what his inspiration was for 'Doughnuts, Donuts', he said: "I love eating donuts and I love their different icing colours. They make me and everybody feel happy."

At the end of the evening, the piece was sold as part of the charity auction for \$480. When asking the buyer what he loved most about the artwork, Michael Redstone said: "It's just beautiful to look at, it's geometrically balanced and the colours are vibrant and cheerful".

Anthony's prize money will contribute towards further art classes to develop his skills and interests. When asked what might be his inspiration for next year's competition, he boldly stated: "Hotdogs!"



Anthony Lo and Ro Cook



Anthony Lo and his winning artwork 'Doughnuts, Donuts'

By Christopher Lo, Anthony's twin brother.

Ro Cook is an acclaimed print maker and artist with many years' experience as a production designer and art director in the Australian film and television industry. She is an event designer, sculptor, lecturer and teacher.

Ro joined us for the third year running in this project. She worked with participants through the use of light and shadow to create and then transform basic shapes into amazing artworks.

Her workshops always draw great interest and participants who collaborat with her have created some of the most compelling art in the ten-year history of For Art's Sake.

35th Annual General Meeting

Save the date

When Wednesday, 18th October 2017 at 6pm

Where Our premises at 113-119 Edwin St North, Croydon

Welcome to Country by respected Gadigal Elder, Uncle Charles (Chicka) Madden.

New computers for life skills programs

Through the internet and use of computers we gain access to a wide range of information, goods and services are at our fingertips, as is an array of entertainment options; we communicate with family and friends, we create and we consume.

How we do this and, importantly, how we do it safely, is not always straight forward. For this reason, we developed a computer training program, which has become one of our core life-skills activities where people with disability learn how to use technology effectively and safely.

Being able to access the vast content available online, means greater autonomy and reduced dependence on others. With adequate computer skills, participants enhance their ability to engage in the community, to improve learning outcomes and

increase employability, and to obtain a greater sense of social belonging and increased self-confidence. In addition participants in this program also build friendships and social skills and they share interests with peers.

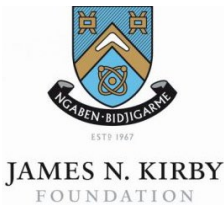
Participate Australia has been delivering computer skills programs for more than eight years with great success. They are amongst the most popular programs. But as technology keeps advancing we have not been able to keep pace and our hardware has become outdated.

Thanks to very generous funding from the James N. Kirby Foundation, we were able to replace our old computers with the latest touch-screen enabled computers that are comparable with that of the general population. Touch-screen features also provide greater accessibility

and better learning opportunities for participants who have difficulties using a computer mouse.

In addition to the funding for hardware, the James N. Kirby Foundation also supported us in running the classes that cover areas including Internet searching and navigation, basic word processing, emailing, safe use of social media and more.

If you want to find out more about our computer programs, please contact your support facilitator.



Mind the gap...

Even before this financial year began, some of our participants were invited to discuss their transition to the NDIS, and as early as July, some moved out of the old block funding into the new environment of the NDIS.

More than 130 of our participants already have an NDIS plan and are now able to exercise greater choice and get the supports that suit their particular needs.

For us, this has an immediate financial impact, as there can be a significant gap between the date at which a participant with a new NDIS plan signs a support agreement and accepts our quote for service, and the time at which the government cuts off their funding. Often, such a participant will continue to receive support from Participate Australia – sometimes for weeks before we are able to access funding to pay our staff.

There is a provision to bridge part of that gap, and we may have access to a participant's block funding for up to a month. Unfortunately, this is not always communicated clearly to participants and their families and some have been led to believe it is for a whole month regardless.

The procedure that actually is in place means that if a person receives an NDIS plan after we have received the block funding for a particular month, we can use their block funding for the remainder of that month.

Here's an example. Block funding payments take place on the first working day of the month. If Jack's NDIS plan is issued on 10 September, we can still use his block funding until the end of the month to pay our support workers for any activities in which he takes part. This gives us 20 days to get the support agreement signed and a quote for his supports

approved. In October, block funding for Jack will be turned off and we must access NDIS funding to pay for his support.

In this case, the period of 20 days should be sufficient to get everything in place for this to take place. This is not the case, if Jack had received his NDIS plan on – say – September 25th.

In that case, the same applies: block funding for Jack in October will be cut off and, unless we can access his NDIS funding, we are out of pocket. Five days is not enough to complete all the necessary administrative work to be able to access NDIS funding. This means that we would need to back-date our claim for NDIS funding to the first day in October on which Jack is accessing support. If Jack doesn't authorise us to do this, we will effectively have provided some support to him without receiving

payment. This issue is causing many families significant confusion at a time when they are getting used to the new environment of the NDIS, which can be confusing enough.

As an expression of good will and in recognition of the loyalty our participants have shown us, we will provide continuation of support for a period of up to four weeks after the commencement date of your NDIS plan, even if this means that we may incur some expenses that we are unable to recover. We believe that four weeks is more than adequate to sign a support agreement and accept a quote and we would like to work with you to make this transition easy for you. However, we are unable to provide continuity of support beyond that period without payment and will have to cease support, unless we are able to claim through the NDIS.

If you are affected by this or if you have any questions, please call us on 02 9799 4333 or email NDIS@participateaustralia.com.au.

Funding received

We would like to acknowledge the very generous funding we have received since our Winter newsletter in June.

Funder	Amount
Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club	\$15,000
West Ashfield Leagues Club	\$10,000
West Ashfield Leagues Club	\$10,000
Canterbury-Bankstown Community Grant	\$10,000
Club Ashfield	\$5,000
Canada Bay Club	\$5,000
Club Burwood RSL	\$5,000
Canterbury-Bankstown Community Grant	\$3,000
Canada Bay Club	\$2,750
Club Five Dock RSL	\$2,750
Canada Bay Community Grant	\$2,600

Meet our ambassadors

After Julie McCrossin stepped down as Patron of our organisation, we started looking to engage a small number of Ambassadors from a range of backgrounds who would appeal to a broad cross section of the community.

We are delighted to have been able to appoint two Ambassadors, Alex Blackwell and Tim Ferguson, who are both committed to inclusion of people with disability in our community and who want to play an active role in its promotion.

Tim is a comedian, screenwriter and director. He has created, written and starred in many TV series in Australia and the UK. Since 1984 Tim has been a member of the acclaimed comedy success trio the Doug Anthony Allstars, with Paul McDermott and



Richard Fidler. They reformed in 2013, with Paul 'Flacco' Livingston, and have since enjoyed many sold-out major theatre tours internationally, including the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and a series of shows in London.

Tim wrote the bestselling memoir Carry a Big Stick, which details his career and battle with Multiple Sclerosis and the bestselling comedy

screenwriting manual The Cheeky Monkey – Writing Narrative Comedy.

Alex Blackwell is a professional cricketer who has played more matches for Australia than any other female cricketer in history. Standout moments in Alex's career include captaining Australia to World Twenty20 glory in 2010 and reclaiming the Ashes against England in 2011 as Australian Test captain. Alex is captain of the Sydney Thunder WBBL team and she led this team to victory in the inaugural Women's Big Bash League in January 2016.



Alex advocates for equal opportunity and inclusion for all people within our society. She has a focus on breaking down barriers within sport and the workforce for people living with disabilities and those who identify as LGBTQI.

We are always looking for new ambassadors who like to work with us to champion inclusion and support for people with disability in our community. If you know someone who has a public profile and who would like to discuss becoming an ambassador, please call us at Participate Australia 02 9799 4333.

Supporters

Commonwealth

Department of Infrastructure and
Regional Development
Department of Social Services

Government of NSW

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Family and Community Services
Transport for NSW

Local Government

City of Sydney
Burwood Council
City of Canada Bay
City Canterbury Bankstown
Inner West Council
Strathfield Council

Other Program Funders

Atlassian
ANZ Staff Foundation
Aurora Group
Canada Bay Club
Carers NSW
Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club
Canterbury Leagues Club
Club Ashfield
Club Burwood RSL
Club Five Dock RSL
Concord RSL
Delhi'o'Delhi
Drummoyne Sailing Club
Executive Central
Financial Literacy Australia
Five Dock Leisure Centre
Future 2 Foundation
James N. Kirby Foundation
JUST Printing & Design
Marian and E H Flack Trust
More Than Human
Petersham RSL Club
Sydney Motorway Corporation
The Raymond E Purves Foundation
Transurban
Town Hall Hotel, Newtown
West's Ashfield Leagues Club

Support Participate Australia

Supporting Participate Australia with a donation is easy...

Visit participateaustralia.com.au, or complete and return this form.

Your donation helps us continue with critical life-skills programs that nurture greater autonomy and help people with disability lead more fulfilled and engaged lives.

We guarantee that your donation goes towards these programs and that it will have a direct impact on the people who access our programs.

All donations of \$2 and more are tax deductible (CFN 14593; ABN 39 136 853 895, ACN 613 814 654)

☐ YES, I would like to make a donation to Participate Australia.

Your support will provide:

☐ \$40 — 1 hour of 1:1 support

☐ \$120 — 1 day group outing

☐ \$250 — 1 day of 1:1 support

☐ Other: \$_____

☐ I would prefer to give a regular gift of \$_____ to be automatically charged to my credit card every:

☐ month ☐ quarter ☐ six months ☐ year.

Become a member

Members are eligible to vote at the Participate Australia AGM, join a subcommittee, and access and borrow books, DVDs and other resources free. Please apply now for 2017/2018.

☐ \$20 Individual / Family membership

☐ \$50 Organisational membership

☐ Dr ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Donation / Membership Payment Details

☐ I enclose a cheque / money order payable to Participate Australia

☐ Please debit my credit card. ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card no _____

Expiry date _____

Cardholder's name _____

Cardholder's signature _____

Return to: Participate Australia, PO Box 210, Croydon NSW 2132