

# Our Voices



Quarterly Newsletter  
Winter 2021 | Vol 1



## Inside this month

A message from Belinda	2	Birthday celebrations for Tegan Matthews	6
Tours feedback	3	Staff member profile: Chris O'Hara	7
The Day Program in 2021	4	Goldwing happenings	8
Participant story: Kameel	5		

## A message from Belinda

Welcome to Our Voices, our new quarterly newsletter. We're excited about making this a fun, informative and interactive space for our community to share. In this first edition I'm also delighted to share with you some exciting changes taking place at Eagleton Ridge.

Firstly, we say goodbye to our General Manager Danielle. We thank her for her service and wish her joy, good health and a prosperous career.

We are welcoming our new General Manager Alex. Alex has come to us full of excitement and enthusiasm and has a wealth of experience. I am eagerly looking forward to what will be a new era for us.

We have quite a few new faces around as well as our old faithfuls. In this and future newsletters, we will introduce many people in our community to help everyone get to know one another.

Further changes include the relocation of our offices from the farm in Eagleton to Raymond Terrace. We have now settled in, so please feel free to pop in and say hello.

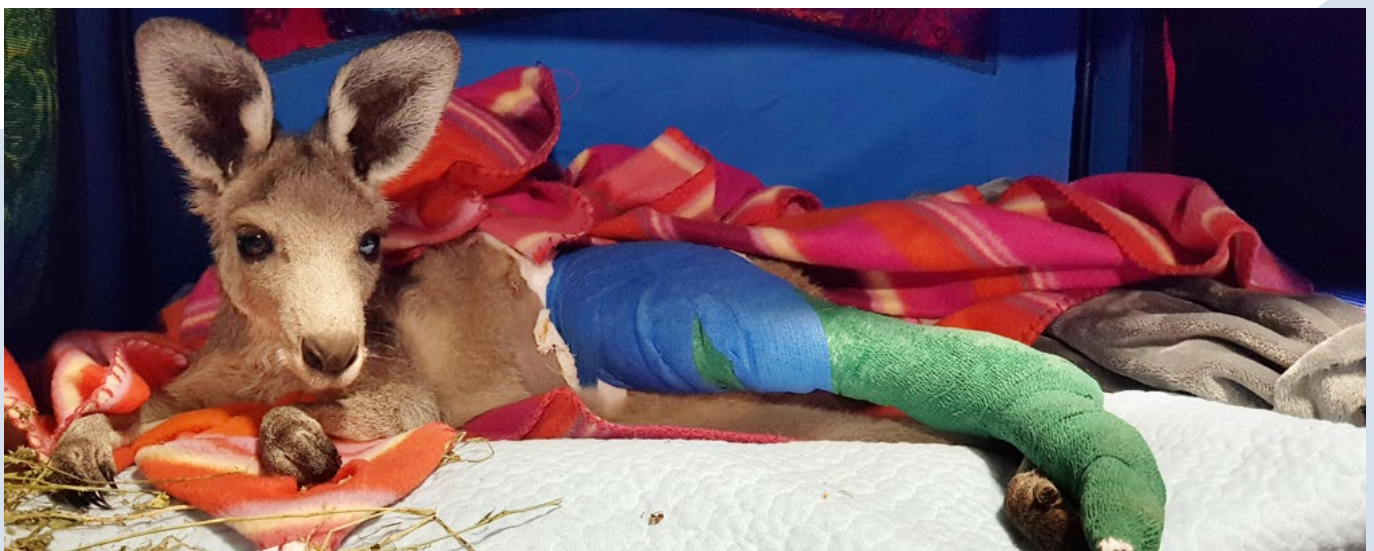
Hopefully we will not outgrow the building too quickly. The address is 2/35 Sturgeon Street, Raymond Terrace.

We are pleased to report that we have purchased a whole new fleet of vehicles. The new wheelchair vehicles have been fitted by engineers to be safe and comfortable for our participants and also easy for our staff to manage.

In other news, Vince and I have just had a DA approved for a boarding cattery to be built on our new place.



Cover: Tours group at the Royal Easter Show. Above: Our new General Manager Alexandra El-Shamy. Below: Little Joel is recovering well after having a plate and five screws placed in his leg.



*"The cattery will be accessible and will give interested participants the opportunity to partake in supported employment. It will also be open to others that just want to come and spoil the pussy cats."*

There will be more supported employment opportunities in the near future as we have also restarted our Dog Treat program plans. Watch this space for further info and please spread the news to your friends and family to support the new venture.

As everyone is aware, Vince and I have a love of our native animals and I am now volunteering at Southern Cross Wildlife Care. We have had many little creatures through our doors, some moved on to be released, and sadly, some passed away.

Eagleton Ridge has donated various items and lots of time to Southern Cross. Some

**Quick Read**

- We say goodbye to Danielle and welcome Alex, our new GM.
- Our offices have moved from Eagleton to Raymond Terrace.
- A fleet of new vehicles is arriving.
- A new cattery on our property will soon provide supported employment and visitation opportunities.
- Our Dog Treats program is moving ahead - it will also provide supported employment opportunities.
- We continue to support the vital work of Southern Cross Wildlife Care.

of our participants' families have spent many hours sewing pouches through the bushfires for the little survivors. Their efforts were greatly appreciated. We even had kids that donated their pocket money to the Southern Cross Wildlife Care Go Fund Me page which was wonderful.

Well that's it from me for now. Let's get into the rest of the newsletter!

**Belinda Furlonger, Director**

## **Tours feedback** *Tell us what you want*

As we await the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, Gail is again planning some great tours. Please give her feedback about places and activities of interest. At this stage we are sticking to NSW but as vaccinations roll out we hope to head interstate again too. **Call Gail on 4987 1686 or email [tours@eagletonridge.com.au](mailto:tours@eagletonridge.com.au)**

We are also looking forward to restarting twilight movies, discos and even a bonfire if the weather permits!





# The Day Program in 2021

A lot has changed at Day Program so far in 2021: a new coordinator, a new program has been released with a second version just around the corner, new participants, and new staff.

The new program has been designed to allow participants to have more of a say in what they are doing each day. Participants' programs will last for six weeks at a time and participants and staff will be having group discussions to decide on what activities they will be doing.

***"Some activities that the group have been doing so far this year are cooking, travel training, mystery bus tours and science experiments."***

One of my favourite activities was the wall-hanging group art project. Each participant

designed a square with something they enjoy, whether it be their favourite animal or vehicle or just their preferred colours.

Participants assisted staff in creating the square by cutting materials, ironing on starch, and using the sewing machine. All the materials that were used on this project were recycled from op shops. A special thanks to Raine Turner who spent countless hours on this project. It turned out amazing!

We have welcomed new staff at Day Program. All these staff have slotted in so well and bring some brilliant qualities to the team.

**Josh O'Brien, Day Program Coordinator**

*– I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants, carers, and staff for making me feel so welcome since I commenced my role at Eagleton Ridge in January. Everyone has been so welcoming, and I am enjoying being a part of the team. I am looking forward to what we can achieve over the remainder of this year.*

## Participant story

### Kameel

Kameel started coming to Day Program in February for three days a week and is loving it so much he wants to come along four days.

Kameel is a brilliant man that always has a smile on his face!

Kameel loves being a part of Day Program and joining in on all the activities. However, his absolute favourite thing to do is play UNO.

If you have not had the chance to meet Kameel yet, come to Day Program and verse him in UNO!



Left: Wall hanging made by participants at Day Program. Above: Kameel, our new participant at Day Program.

**Interested in learning more about our Day Program? Contact Joshua on 0468 911 822 or [dayprogram@eagletonridge.com.au](mailto:dayprogram@eagletonridge.com.au)**

## Out and about at Maitland Park



Above left to right: Sarah loves to go on the liberty swing at Maitland Park. Aaron loves to go on the flying fox. Monica also loves to go to the liberty swing.



Above left: Tegan enjoying some gardening time on her birthday. Above right: Tegan checking out the seedlings to plant.

## Birthday celebrations for Tegan Matthews

Our beautiful girl Tegan, celebrated her 32nd Birthday in style with a big party right here at Silverwing with participants from Goldwing, Unit 1 & 2, Bronzewing and Day Program all attending.

Thank you to everyone who spent the day with her and for their beautiful gifts including a beautiful hand mural from everyone at Day Program and a lovely percussion instrument which she has been using daily.

With the weather getting a bit cooler, we have been focusing on activities outside that Tegan enjoys. She recently visited the Botanical Gardens and went along the trails looking at all the native flowers.

Anyone who knows Tegan knows she adores being in the garden. She would point to flowers and staff would get her to smell and feel the leaves. She really enjoyed this, giggling and clapping to show her delight.

We have also been scoping out new places to explore with our participants and have found some wonderful hidden gems. Crest at Anna Bay now has a beautiful big disability ramp leading into the Café.

**"We attended Blackbutt Reserve at Newcastle for a cheeky look at some koalas and peacocks (Belinda has the wombats covered), Maitland Museum and Fern Bay on recent adventures."**

We have also been working to get our garden out the back up and running complete with a fairy garden and new seedlings which Tegan assisted to plant.

**Emily Hannaford - Team Leader**



*Georgia O'Day and Joshua Rufo, busting some moves at the Push-Up Challenge.*

## Push-Up Challenge

**Eagleton Ridge has been supporting the Push-Up Challenge, raising money and awareness for mental health this June.**

Each day throughout June, we had a push-ups target to complete as a team. The target for the whole month was 3,318 which represents the number of lives lost in Australia to suicide in 2019.

Launched on the 2nd of June, we had over thirty people participating and achieved over a thousand push-ups, swats, and star jumps. There was lots of singing and dancing and everyone had a great time, finishing off with Neil cooking a yummy BBQ lunch.

We are looking forward to presenting trophies to the overall winner and winning house.

**Louise Cowan**

## Staff member profile

### Chris O'Hara

**Hello, I would like to introduce myself, my name is Chris O'Hara, Eagleton Ridge Disability Service's recently appointed Operations Coordinator.**

I live in the wonderful community of Carrington, on Throsby Creek, near the Mangroves, and just down the channel from the Hunter River. It is an area with much to see and do, and only a quick taxi ride to all that Newcastle and its environs have to offer.

I have been working with people with a disability for several years, and in a range of roles. I believe working collaboratively brings the best outcomes for all. To that end, I will strive to listen and work diligently to ensure that the continuation of the provision of high-level support to all Eagleton Ridge participants.



*Above: Chris O'Hara, our new Operations Coordinator.*

I look forward to getting to know you all better over the coming months.

## Goldwing happenings

Goldwing house has been buzzing with activity and the arrival of new Team Leader Tania Jones. Everyone is excited to have Tania on board and cannot wait to move forward with exciting new adventures.

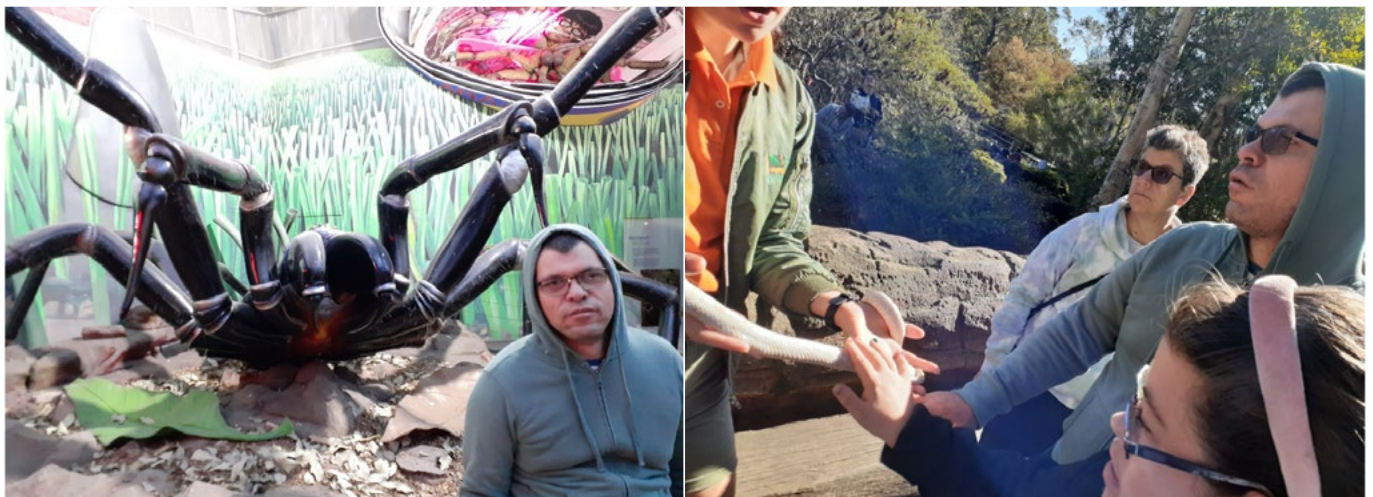
Earlier this month, Sandy, Ben and Dianne all went down to the Australian Reptile Park. They all had a fantastic time looking at all the animals including lizards, spiders and snakes. The cute and cuddly koalas were just the best. Holding the snake was certainly not on the cards as too scary but we did eventually pat the snake while the reptile carer was holding it.

There has been lots of other joy with staff member Cherie Knox teaching Dianne how to waltz and Ben attending the circus and a birthday party with his family.

**Emily Hannaford -Team Leader**



Above: Dianne Melrose gives skippy a pat. Below left: Ben James standing in front of the monster spider. Below right: Participants, Dianne Melrose, Ben James and Sandy Gill get to touch the reptiles.



### Coronavirus (COVID-19): NSW lockdown

NSW is entering a two-week lockdown across Greater Sydney, Wollongong and the Central Coast from 6pm, 26 June 2021. Whilst currently Eagleton Ridge Disability Services are not part of a lockdown area,

we are deploying our COVID policies and procedures and will continually take steps to comply with public health orders and minimise the risk of infection to our participants, staff and community.