

arbias Newsletter

Issue #5 March 2025

A word from the CEO...

Hello everyone, 😊

I suspect that when Kathy comes to me with a request to provide '*a word from the CEO*' for the newsletter, that she is being very diplomatic in asking for a "less is more commentary" John thanks ... Kathy knows me well after 19 months + 2 weeks in the job !! and I am well advised in relation to this activity.

I will start with my thanks to all staff who are doing arbias proud with your application and commitment to person centred principles through person directed planning and practice; the outcomes for the folk we support just keep on getting better and better.

The stories and evidence authored in every newsletter are nothing short of exciting, are about the people we support demonstrating that, across all programs, our clients and residents are really enjoying life.....

This is why I am proud to work at arbias ✓

Now to our governance space...following two of our committed Directors stepping down in 2024, Marie 8 years and Warrick 16 years, wow and thank you so much for your dedication (and counsel) on behalf of the Directors and staff, I am very pleased to announce 3 new Directors, Ann (legal seat), Laura (neuropsychology seat) and Gordana (government and NSW seat), have joined the team. Gordana's 1st Board meeting is at the 31st of March meeting and welcome to all three. Martin and I look forward to new views, positions and challenges on the various matters discussed and debated at the very meetings that 'steer the arbias ship'

There are two stand out amongst us at the senior level and with my sincere appreciation to Kathy and Mario (brilliant)

John

Goodbye 2024

arbias staff in Victoria said goodbye to 2024 with an end of year BBQ, and what a great day it was. There was plenty of food and drink to go around and with a holiday atmosphere lurking in the air, it was time to leave the stress of daily life and relax among the beautiful surroundings of Cobu

Dominic proudly wore his seasonal outfit, which always puts a smile on one's face and of course some were sun smart!



Whether at the table, on a picnic rug or chair, there is nothing better than a BBQ on a sunny day, and all seemed to find their way to enjoy lunch!



Our 'chefs' did an amazing job on the BBQ and when lunchtime came around, all lined up, ready to dig in!



Out with a "Drum"

The highlight of the day was the African drumming entertainment. Master Drummer Mady Keita from Mali drummed endlessly for over an hour, while some joined in to have a go on the drums, and others chose to dance instead. It was a great way to end the day.



Christmas BBQ with arbias clients:

Arbias clients were also treated to a Christmas BBQ lunch. Another beautiful sunny day in Melbourne at Edwards Lake, with the Christmas season spirit, which was thoroughly enjoyed by staff and clients .



Core Support:

We are excited to announce that Core Support has welcomed 6 new referrals, expanding our outreach and support services to more individuals in need. This growth is a positive step in broadening our impact. We are also pleased to introduce Ray and Charles, who will be joining us on an ongoing part time basis, alongside our casual team members.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I):

The DE&I group has begun meeting every four weeks to develop a comprehensive DE&I strategic plan. Additionally, the group is working on acknowledging and celebrating significant events and dates, contributing to our commitment to a more inclusive and equitable workplace.

Community Programs:

Community Programs has significantly grown, now offering weekend services and plans for an afternoon service in the future. This expansion has been incredibly beneficial for clients who do not have NDIS-funded support during weekends and afternoons. A special shout-out to Nelly, whose dedication has been instrumental in helping us develop this AM, PM, and weekend service model. We would also like to warmly welcome Asher Liebenberg, who has joined the team as a part-time student worker in Community Programs.

Isabella Gatsios – Team Lead – Core Support / Comm. Programs



arbias National Apology Day Breakfast

Thursday, 13th February, marks the anniversary of the National Apology, where 17 years ago, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal public apology, on behalf of the federal government to First Nations people, children and families who were traumatized by past forced child removal, known as the Stolen Generation, and assimilation government policies in 20th Century Australia.

arbias commemorated National Apology Day with a full breakfast at a local park in Brunswick. Bacon & eggs, pastries and fruit were just some of the delicious food on the menu and the helping hands was much appreciated.

Mario Nuzzo, Client Services Manager – Victoria, not only helped cook, but commenced the occasion with a short introduction and history of National Apology Day.



Thank you to Bonnie, Isabella and Reilly from the Hope St Client Services Team, who initiated the event, as part of arbias' introduction of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) in the workplace program, that refers to a set of principles and practices that fosters an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and included.

National Apology Day is not to be confused with National Sorry Day, in May, which marks the initial tabling of 'Bringing Them Home' report in the Australian Parliament. This, along with other special dates, will be acknowledged by arbias as they occur within the calendar year.

Special moments with arbias clients

This is what we are all about!



Community Programs

Exciting times for Community programs. As the number of SRSs are increasing, arbias' services have expanded to Saturdays. We recognised that our clients often don't see their support workers on the weekends, and wanted community programs to help fill that gap. There are many interesting activities offered around Melbourne. Our clients are already keen to get out and about and see what the city has to offer. Thank you to the team and team leaders for contributing their time for community programs to grow and volunteering for weekend shifts. This couldn't be done without you!

This month, our team also had the opportunity to be in the audience for popular TV show "Tipping Point" with a few of our clients. One client, Lauren, was particularly starstruck by the host Todd Woodbridge as she is quite the fan! The team, along with Mario, Isabella and Nelly have been spending a lot of time brainstorming ways to engage more clients by creating a wider variety of activities and asking for client feedback on what they want to see in the program (via client surveys facilitated by Nelly).

We can't wait to see what else this year brings for Community Programs as we develop and explore more opportunities for our clients.



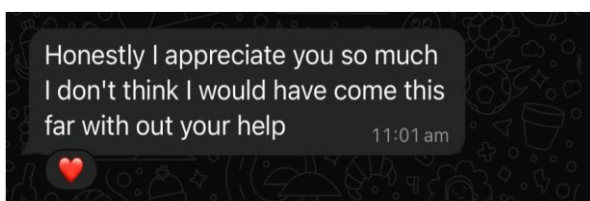
Nelly Lay – Community Programs

ITS NSW - Leichardt

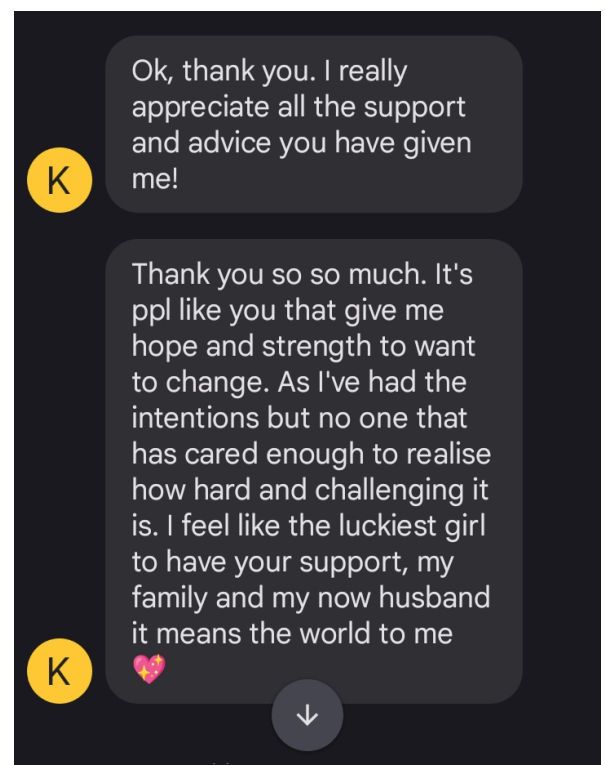
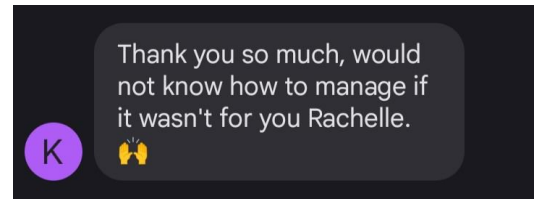
Katherine Cooper

Katherine Cooper began working with ITS in November 2022, struggling with heavy alcoholism, trauma, and severe isolation. She had been using alcohol to cope with mental health challenges since she was 16 and was resistant to receiving help. However, in October 2024, after discovering she was pregnant, Katherine reconnected with ITS and committed to the program for the sake of her baby. Over the next 12 weeks, Katherine made remarkable progress, including:

- Establishing care with a specialized GP for her pregnancy
- Connecting with a midwife at St Vincent's Hospital
- Accessing AOD support for alcohol withdrawal
- Attending rehab for the first time
- Remaining alcohol-free throughout the ITS program and beyond
- Rebuilding relationships with her mother and sisters after 10 years
- Marrying the father of her child and meeting his family
- Introducing her husband to her family in Queensland after a decade
- Continuing to engage with her support teams and thriving



Katherine is now a transformed individual, a far cry from the person she was in 2022. She remains in contact with ITS and is considering moving to Queensland to be close to her family for the upcoming birth of her daughter in March.



ITS NSW - Leichardt

Kevin Cox

Kevin Cox recently completed his parole for the first time after 11 years, a significant milestone in his life. He entered the ITS Leichardt program in mid-2024, initially believing that his only need was assistance with his Disability Support Pension (DSP) application. However, his journey through the program brought a shift in perspective, and he began to see the value in comprehensive support, which helped him navigate the challenges of reintegrating into society.

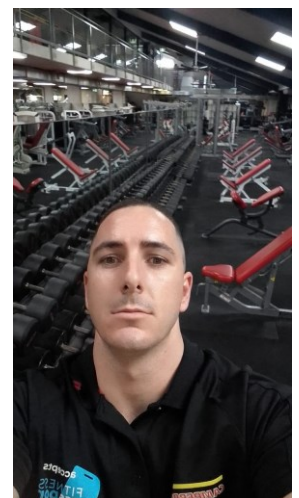
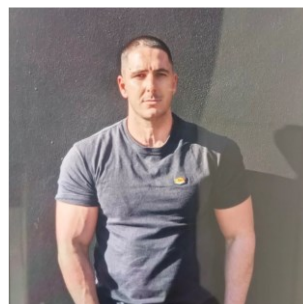
Before entering the program, Kevin faced numerous obstacles. He had never held a job, never had a driver's license, and was estranged from his family, including his son, who lived in Newcastle. He also struggled with the physical aftermath of an altercation that had left him with crushed hands, and he was uncertain about how to access support for housing, finances, and overall stability. Kevin found himself at risk of reverting to theft as a means of survival.

Working with ITS, Kevin made significant progress towards addressing aspects of personal growth, life skills, and navigating the challenges that come with transitioning out of a correctional environment.

Kevin's story is one of transformation, demonstrating how, with the right support, individuals can overcome significant challenges, rebuild their lives, and give back to their community.

Some of his key achievements include:

- **Obtaining DSP for his hands**, which provided financial support for his condition.
- **Securing legal assistance** to pursue a claim for medical negligence, which has resulted in a substantial payout.
- **Completing a rehabilitation program**, marking a major step toward recovery.
- **Obtaining his own apartment** in Dulwich Hill, creating stability in his living situation.
- **Securing his Full Driver's License**, an important step as a lot of his previous offences were due to driving without having a legal license
- **Securing full-time employment** as the manager of a well-known large gym in Camperdown.
- The gym **offering to fund his studies** in Personal Training and Nutrition, which he is close to completing.
- **Reconnecting with his mother and son**, beginning to rebuild meaningful relationships with them.
- Becoming a **mentor for others** in rehab and



Turning my life around didn't happen on my own and especially you have had a massive impact on this change I appreciate the work you do so much sometimes even just the fact I can vent and have people on my team means the world honest that stuff really means a lot 😊

5:04 pm

Thanks so much I hope you understand your a major part in my journey and I kno that I wouldn't even be in stage 2 for rehab without you helping me I am so greatfull for your help and I hope Too see you at the gym soon if your ever free I'd always be happy to catch up

2:42 pm

Rachelle Michael – ITS - Leichardt

Attendant Care and RIPL Services - Vic

Attendant Care - Tamara

Tamara and newly recruited casual staff Member Jade headed to the circus on Saturday the 15th of February.

This is an outing that is outside of Tamara's program, yet we were able to work with TAC to gain an additional, one-off funding to support Tamara to go attend the circus.

This is an activity Tamara has wanted to do for some time, and they had a wonderful day.



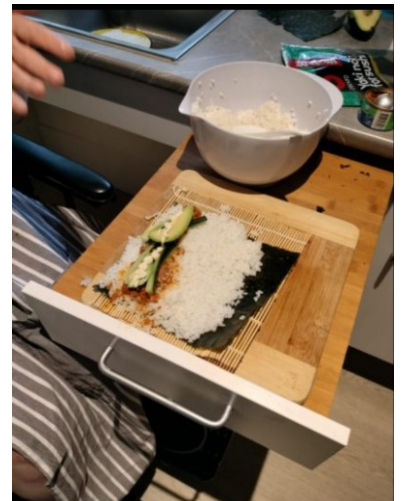
Kerrie Guy – Team Manager Accommodation & Attendant Care Services

RIPL – Wheelers Hill

One of our residents at Wheelers Hill, Bree Edwards has recently achieved washing her own dishes. Bree likes to be independent and tries to achieve her independence by completing tasks.

In the last 12 months Bree has achieved putting a load of washing on, assisting in cooking meals and washing her own dishes.

This is a big milestone for Bree, and we are all so proud of her.



Georgia Valantasis – House Supervisor – RIPL Wheelers Hill

Attendant Care and RIPL Services - Vic

RIPL - Abbotsford

Planning a holiday is exciting and at times can be stressful. For those we support ensuring their complex care needs can be met with focus remaining on the anticipated holiday and activities comes down to thorough planning and organisation. Working alongside the client and their care team (TAC support coordinator, leisure specialist, OT) and support staff an Abbotsford resident was supported by 2 staff on a week's fishing holiday to Paynesville. All aspects of planning were based around person centred practice with keeping the resident in focus at all times.

I would like to give a huge shout out to Zhane and Sarah who supported this much awaited holiday, the happy smiling photos spoke a thousand words and reminded me of why we do what we do. (sadly, we cannot share them).

Even the best planning cannot predict all the things which may occur. This dynamic duo demonstrated flexibility, teamwork and professionalism. Even learning some new skills along the way.

Whilst the only fish being enjoyed were purchased from the local fish and chip shop, the thrill of the chase was very much alive.

'a wonderful experience for support staff and the client in great lakes region. We spent our days fishing (or at least trying to), visiting small towns along the way, and browsing an array of fishing goods. The holiday was a learning experience in more ways than one, having left a with a greater understanding of waterways, fishing, that part of the world; but most importantly a greater understanding of the client and his passion for this hobby' – Zhane

Zhane and I joined the resident for an adventure filled with challenges and unforgettable moments. Despite facing several hurdles due to poor planning and organization, we made the most of it and had a blast. Thanks to this person for teaching and plenty of patience, we learned to fish—successfully catching pinkies and black bream—while taking in the stunning local scenery and even spotting a few drop bears! A highlight was enjoying Maccas while watching a dramatic thunderstorm, made even more memorable by the unexpected surprise of having no electricity when we returned to our accommodation. The trip left us with tan lines, laughter, and plenty of stories to tell. - Sarah



Kristel Bonetti – House Supervisor – RIPL Abbotsford

So far in 2025...

Baby News

Congratulations to our new mums in early 2025!

Both mums and bubs are doing well, and we wish them all the very best!



Mandatory Training 2025

arbias have recently opened the lines of communication with Absolute Care & Health and are exploring ways in which the two organisations can collaborate.

Absolute Care & Health can provide training to arbias staff on all mandatory training, such as Manual Handling, Medication Assistance, Bowel and Catheter Care.

Mario and Kathy visited their premises and were pleased with the set-up of training rooms, which were fully equipped to enable thorough hands-on training to arbias staff.



Training will begin in March 2025 through to April 2025, with more details to come soon.

10-years of Service

Our NPAIS team has a double celebration so far this year. Neuropsychologist, Matt Treeby, celebrates his 10th year at arbias.

Matt's name plate will be added to the ever-growing 10-Year Recognition board at Hope St office.

Congratulations Matt!



Coming up ... ITS NSW Forum 2025

The annual ITS NSW Forum is quickly approaching and is scheduled for 20-21 May 2025.

This year it will be taking place in Wollongong at the Hotel Tutto.

More news and photos of the event will be included in the next newsletter (issue #6).





Every
accomplishment
STARTS with
the Decision
to TRY