



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 20 April, 2017

Hunter Valley Disability Services Consortium Successful in NSW Disability Supported Accommodation Services Transfer

Hunter Valley (HV) Disability Services Limited is honoured to be selected by FACS (the NSW Department of Family and Community Services) as the chosen provider for the transfer of 37 accommodation and supported living services across the Hunter Region of NSW.

HV Disability Services is a not for profit consortium comprising local, well respected community organisations including Ability Options, ConnectAbility Australia, Finding Yellow and accommodation partner Evolve Housing, who combined have over 100 years' experience supporting people with disability.

The locally based consortium members are fully committed to the people they support to live the best life possible and experience respect, belonging and contribution within their local community. Each consortium member brings a wealth of experience, established workforces and strong networks within their respective communities. All organisations have in-depth working knowledge and experience of the new NDIS framework.

Mr Fred Van Steel, Chair of HV Disability Services and CEO at Ability Options said "The current employees at FACS already make a real difference in the lives of the people they support. They are highly trained, knowledgeable and committed and are an asset to the organisation supporting continuum of care for the residents, families and carers. We look forward to working together with them to ensure a smooth transition of management and to further enhance the services and programs that provide opportunities for people to achieve their goals."

As an immediate priority the consortium members of HV Disability Services will be focused on ensuring the next stage of the transition process for residents, their families and support staff is as seamless as possible.

"Continuity of services and clear communication with all residents, their families and carers is vital. Collectively we are already deep into planning all aspects of the transition process. We have already formed a specialist transition team with extensive experience, to allow for the successful transfer and ongoing management of the homes from FACS to our organisation."

"We are really excited by this wonderful opportunity and look forward to welcoming participants, families and staff, and ensuring people with disabilities live inclusively in their communities, assisted by support services delivered with integrity, respect, compassion, innovation, diversity and understanding," Mr Van Steel said.

-ENDS-

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IMAGE SUPPLIED:

Left to right (back) - Heather Scheibenstock (Ability Options Board Member), Dudley Johnson (AO Business Development Manager and HVDS Director),

Left to right (front) - David Carey (CEO ConnectAbility Australia and HVDS Director), Minister for Disability Services, the Hon. Ray Williams MP, Patricia Biszewski (Ability Options Board Member)

About Ability Options

Ability Options have been supporting people with disability who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community for over 40 years. Ability Options are an experienced provider assisting participants with tailored services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and have been leaders in the NSW Hunter Trial site since 2013 and in the Nepean Blue Mountains since 2015.

With more than 900 employees, Ability Options provide a variety of services from 25 sites across NSW, supporting over 15,000 people in the home and in the community.

Our services include allied health and therapy supports, as well as supported and independent living assistance. Ability Options also provides employment services to assist people to find the job that's right for them, through the Australian Government's jobactive scheme as well as the Disability Employment Scheme (DES).

Ability Options strive to deliver supports and services using a person centred approach. We aim to meet the needs and wants of each individual person accessing our services, with support to achieve personal dreams or aspirations, and to be contributing members of our community

Ability Options is a strong supporter of the NDIS and are behind its full implementation. We stand firm behind its principles of increasing independence, choice and control, improving social and economic participation and making a real and profound difference in people's lives.

abilityoptions.org.au

About ConnectAbility Australia

ConnectAbility Australia was founded in 1992 by a group of community members and families to meet the needs of people with significant disabilities and challenging behaviours. Determined to provide opportunities for people requiring high levels of support to access community based resources, facilities and services they established Newcastle Community Access. In 2010 after consultation with participants, families, carers and staff the service was renamed ConnectAbility Australia to better reflect our values, vision and mission.

In 2015 ConnectAbility Australia announced a strategic amalgamation with Jesmond Connected Communities that enabled both organisations to expand their support services for local people through offering a wider range of services.

ConnectAbility is proud of the relationships established within the Hunter that support community inclusion and welcoming environments for people with a disability.

ConnectAbility has fully transitioned to the NDIS and works with participants, families and carers to ensure that people achieve their goals and dreams.

connectabilityaus.org.au



About Finding Yellow

In the 1970s, a group of local parents came together with one goal: to improve care and support services for people with disability in the Hunter region. As parents of children with disability, they recognised that existing services were insufficient and needed to change. They were determined to provide their children and future generations with the quality support they deserved as valuable members of society.

The group gained swift support from the Hunter community. Tireless community fundraising efforts led to the opening of Cessnock Hostel in 1982, finally providing much-needed support to local residents with disability.

To this day, the Cessnock Hostel continues to provide accommodation and low-level support to people with disability, helping to increase their independence and confidence. To meet increasing need for disability services, the Community Living Program was established and began providing long-term housing, brokerage, and emergency respite accommodation for people with disability. We recently acquired Disability Social Circles, formerly known as Lower Hunter Peer Support, allowing us to offer people with disability more opportunities to participate in community events, travel, gain new experiences and make new friends.

In 2013, the organisation was renamed "Finding Yellow". The name represents the unwavering commitment to the community and determination to discover better resources, stronger community networks, and improved facilities for clients. It is also a reflection of clients' individual journeys towards improved confidence, independence, goal success, and fulfilment. Finding Yellow now offers an extensive range of disability support services to the local Hunter region.

findingyellow.org.au

What is the NDIS?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides individual support for people living with disability, their families and carers.

The NDIS means people can work on different goals throughout their life to assist them to be independent by providing eligible people a flexible, whole-of-life approach to the support needed to pursue their goals and aspirations and participate in daily life.

ndis.gov.au