

connect
ABILITY

AUSTRALIA

Live your life your way

*Do what you want to do.
Be who you want to be.*



Welcome to ConnectAbility Australia

ConnectAbility Australia believes every person is entitled to the best life possible. We treat each person as an individual and understand and acknowledge that you come to us with a history and a desired future. ConnectAbility welcomes all people whatever your dreams, aspirations and goals might be.

When you commence with ConnectAbility Australia we will work alongside you to develop a support schedule, which is unique to you and focuses on assisting you to achieve the life you choose to live. Through our innovative and flexible approach together we can develop a schedule of activities and supports that match your interests and needs. Should you wish to engage and make the most of the community connections and resources on offer in your communities ConnectAbility will support, empower and assist you to make the connections to become a valued participant and contributor to your community.

You may like to be an office worker, gardener, artist, car detailer, pet shop assistant or volunteer in the community. You may like to spend time exercising at the local gym, spend time at a local club, go sailing, play wheelchair rugby league or go for lunch with friends. You might need assistance with household tasks, shopping, personal care or to develop life skills to live independently in the community. Alternatively you may want assistance with planning or supports for your holiday. What else might you need or choose to do?

Our aim is to give you your life, your way, connecting and engaging with people you like and like being with you. Let us listen to your goals and aspirations, your strengths, your abilities and the goals you dream of achieving in the future. Together we can make your dreams a reality!

"Support that helps reach and achieve individual goals"

Safer, Affordable and Achievable

Being safe and secure is of utmost importance. You may be supported in an individual support arrangement or you may choose to share your support with others who share the same interests and goals as you. No matter what support model you choose you will be supported by a direct support professional, a trained volunteer "buddy", or choose to self-direct your own supports with people you choose to work alongside you. Personalising your support and participating in your favourite activities means a greater level of satisfaction, safety and will increase your level of independence.

At ConnectAbility your  personalised schedule of supports will be developed with you and those that you choose to have involved in your life so that your unique requirements are accommodated. We know you want value for money, quality outcomes from your activities and for ConnectAbility staff to listen to you, understand what makes you who you are and connect you to the places, people and resources to help you meet your needs.

Working with you, ConnectAbility will look at your support package and find the support options that best meet your requirements and enrich your life. Our collaboration and partnerships with community organisations, local businesses and volunteers help us to make your dreams a reality.

ConnectAbility is a registered Provider with the National Disability Insurance Agency and works with them to assist you to achieve your goals.



Amazing People. Real Dreams.

On the following pages we will introduce you to people who have connected with ConnectAbility and see their real life stories. By sharing their stories you will see how they have been guided to achieve their goals and in the process open new doors to further opportunities. You will have your own story to write, experiences to explore and outcomes to achieve. ConnectAbility would love to have you join us so in the future we can be telling your story.

David Bate

David Bate
Chair of the Board

Together...lets imagine the possibilities.

Great relationships create great opportunities



"What will ConnectAbility look like to me"

Empowering Abilities

ConnectAbility is leading the way in promoting the inclusion of people with a disability in the wider community. This is based on working holistically with you to design a diary of events to connect you to fulfilling your individual goals and dreams. We will support you to live the life you choose and to be a valued and included member of your community.

There is no picking from a limited list of group activities that requires you to follow an organisational plan or participate in activities at the one location. ConnectAbility will get you into the community to pursue your passions and interests. In this way you can explore your local neighbourhood and community to identify opportunities to connect and build meaningful relationships, make new friends and be in control of your life. We can assist you to surround yourself with friends and people who care about you, supporting you to achieve.

People of all ages come to our service, so we will help you put together a support schedule that fits with what is important to you and the stage of your life.

You could be **Starting Out** where people, including those leaving school create a personalised schedule of activities to further develop, social, daily living, vocational skills, provide meaningful recreational opportunities and inclusive community connections. Or you might be looking at **Building Opportunities** where your supports can be accommodated in shared, group or individualised support schedules based on your needs, wants and specific requirements.

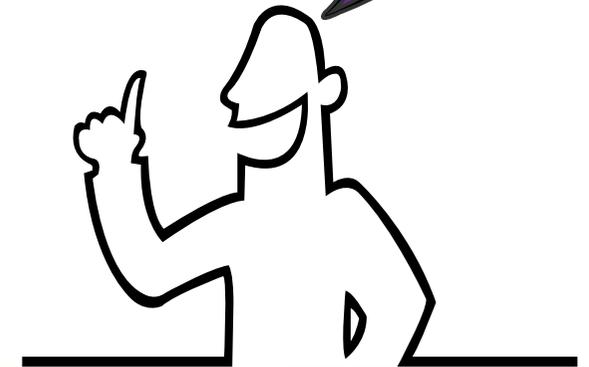
But, if you are looking at self-managing your support **It's Your Choice** to self-direct your goal development, manage your own planning, staffing, funding and budgeting, administration, and engagement in your community. Commonly referred to as the Self-Managed Model.

As a ConnectAbility participant you have the flexibility to try different models of support as your needs, wants and requirements change. We would love an opportunity to meet with you and establish a personalised schedule of supports, designed especially for you.

We welcome people with all abilities

We empower people to achieve their unique dreams, goals and aspirations

We support flexibility, choice and control when planning





"Steps that helped me be who I want to be."

Step 1

Making that first connection

Come and have a chat with us so we can find out a bit more about what's important to you and identify any other important contacts or support links in your life. ConnectAbility staff will provide you with all the information to make an informed choice about whether you want ConnectAbility to become a part of living life your way. If you like what you see then we can work alongside you to formalise a transition pathway and work with you to identify your support needs and requirements.

Step 2

Understanding who you are and what you want from your life

ConnectAbility understands that your success relies on the relationships built between you and your family, ConnectAbility and other support providers or supports who form part of your support network. We will build those relationships through getting to know you, your goals and dreams, likes and dislikes and what is important to and for you. We will take the time to listen and identify your strengths and abilities and build trust with the people in your life who are experts in knowing you best before any planning commences.

Step 3

Working together to Develop your Support Schedule

You are central to the process and it can't occur without the involvement of you, your family, carer, friends and

those important in your life. At this step we will further discuss all the ideas you have about what you want to achieve in your life. For many people this is a difficult step as it may be the first time you have had to think about goals or talk about your dreams and aspirations, but it is often the most exciting part of the process. ConnectAbility staff will provide as much, or as little support you require to help you through the planning process.

From these ideas we can make suggestions, look at possibilities and contribute to a unique support schedule that's right for you. How your time spent with ConnectAbility looks is totally up to you!

Step 4

Coordinating the Supports & Your Support Schedule

From here one of our support professionals will identify the right team of people to commence bringing your plan to life. We can complete all of the research, make community connections for you and coordinate your support timetable. You can have as much or as little involvement in this part of the process as you wish. Alternatively, you can take control over all of the planning and coordination so you retain as much independence and direction as you want.

From time to time you may be confronted with problems or concerns that may impact on your supports and meeting your current needs and goals. ConnectAbility will assist you to create back-up plans from the start to ensure safeguards and consistency with alternative support arrangements in place.

Step 5

Checks and Review

We will continue to walk with you to ensure everything is running the way you planned. Review and modification can be made at any time to your plan and support schedule. This allows flexibility for you to alter, adjust and grow when your needs and support requirements change. Regular contact is made by our support team to ensure your program keeps evolving and changing - just as you do.



Social Skills



Travel Education



Health & Fitness



Volunteering



Recreation



Vocational Skills



Employment

“What interests you?”



Social Skills

Alanna lives in supported housing and comes to ConnectAbility with a goal to stay connected to her community.

One of her joys in life is to be able to help others through volunteering with Meals on Wheels. This valuable service helps people maintain their independence. Alanna sees it as a way of providing not only a meal but a smiling face for those she visits.

Alanna feels she gets more out of it than she puts in because she “gets to meet really nice people” and is out in her community.

Employment

Sophie came to ConnectAbility looking for an opportunity to get more out of her life.

Fresh from school Sophie hoped to develop work skills to work with animals and make some new friends. Together we listened to her ideas and goals and assisted her to make contact with a local pet shop. As they say the rest is history. Sophie is on the path to achieving her goals by volunteering in her chosen field, enjoying the company of staff, interacting with customers and developing her knowledge and skills of working with animals.



Health & Fitness

Tom believes in staying fit, healthy and getting the most out of life

Tom is a passionate surfer, plays rugby league, sails and loves to work out at the gym, the more adrenaline inducing the activity, the more Tom likes it. Because Tom uses an electric wheelchair and has very limited movement, he needs to love his sport more than most of us. It takes 10 mates to help him surf, specialised transport to help him get to his footy games and support staff to help him use the equipment at his gym.

ConnectAbility helps people like Tom to get involved in the sports and activities that they love.



Education

Patrick wanted to learn new skills and indulge in his passion for sailing.

ConnectAbility assisted in finding a sailing group and support Patrick to attend his regular lessons with Sailability at Belmont.

Not only has Patrick learnt to sail but has increased confidence through being able to achieve his goal of being out on the water independently.

It can take time to learn something new, but with the right support and encouragement dreams can turn into reality.

Volunteering

Dan loves to be out with people. He has a quick sense of humour and engages with all who come into his life.

He loves to volunteer at Ngioka in their gardening project by potting plants for them to resell. Dan feels this gives back to his community but also makes him new friends, keep fit and find out what is happening within his community.

"We are members of the community and can contribute to helping others lead a better life," Dan said.



Recreation

Nathan enjoys a variety of activities including assisting with washing cars at the Westpac Helicopter base, bowling, researching projects, and, in his spare time golf.

ConnectAbility, together with Nathan and his family looked at how all of Nathan's dreams and ambitions could be tailored into a schedule of activities that ensured there was time for everything.

This took a couple of re works but now Nathan is out in his community every day doing what he loves.



Creating art and more!



"Who Is ConnectAbility?"

ConnectAbility Australia was founded in 1992 by a group of community members and families to meet the needs of people with significant disabilities. 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.

ConnectAbility continues to be inspired by the uniqueness of the individual needs of its participants and it is this that is driving ConnectAbility to transition into a fully personalised, flexible participant-centred model that supports people with disabilities to live the life that they want. We provide a broad range of personalised supports to approximately 180 people, ranging in age from 18 to 85 with both physical and intellectual disabilities. ConnectAbility participants reside throughout Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland and other Lower Hunter local government areas.

Our approach is personal, flexible and centred on the person. This represents the future of disability support. ConnectAbility is establishing a reputation as an advocate for meaningful change in the delivery of community inclusive services and is highly regarded by industry colleagues in the Hunter disability sector.

Our supports focus on addressing those barriers that exist for participants achieving their goals, dreams and aspirations. Current activities include further education and training, volunteer work and recreational activities using local facilities such as libraries, parks, gyms, shopping centres and other recreational venues. ConnectAbility can also assist you with in-home personal care and domestic assistance. ConnectAbility services include personal hygiene and domestic assistance, shopping and meal preparation, assistance with medication management, social supports and respite care both in-home and in the community. We look at creating meaningful relationships and true inclusion for people within the community.

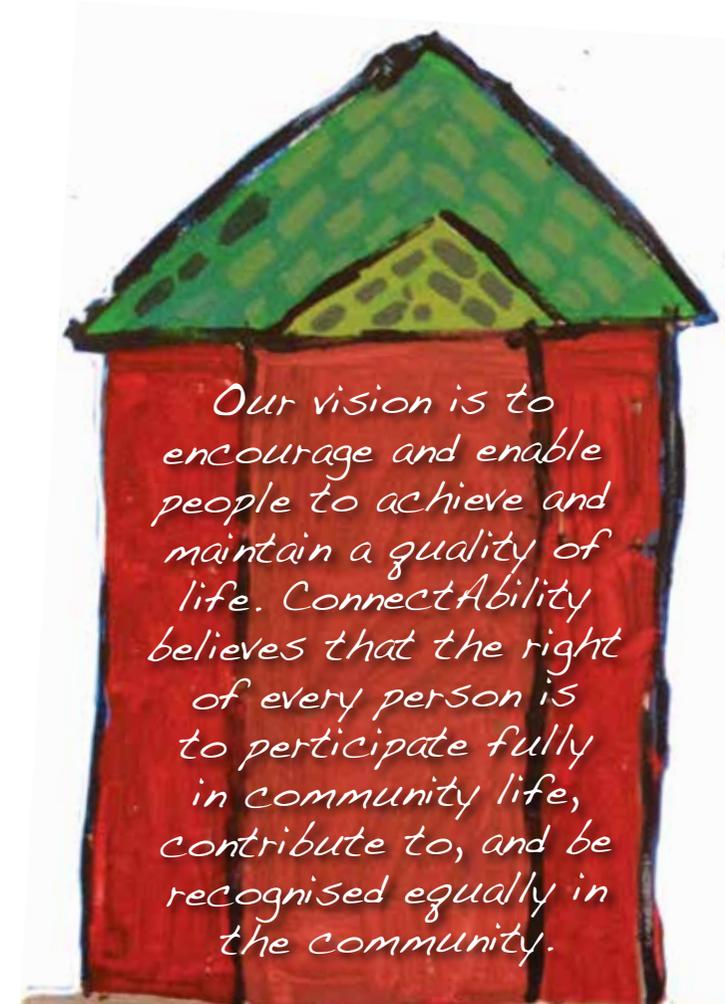
We actively seek community and corporate supports and partners to further enhance opportunities and outcomes.

ConnectAbility Australia is a not for profit incorporated association, and is registered as a gift deductible recipient with tax charity concessions. We are governed by a Board consisting of volunteer community and consumer representatives.



Dane is an artist.

Dane's talents were recognised during a project with ConnectAbility. With the support of a professional artist as a mentor and the Newcastle Arts Community, Dane held his first solo exhibition this year. He sold nearly all his paintings and is now planning his next exhibition. He has formed lasting relationships within the community.



Our vision is to encourage and enable people to achieve and maintain a quality of life. ConnectAbility believes that the right of every person is to participate fully in community life, contribute to, and be recognised equally in the community.



Everyone benefits



Community is created through a sense of belonging and contribution. It is where you live and are encouraged to participate no matter what your skills and abilities are.

Our aim is to build natural supports around you in a range of community settings as part of your support, so that you are included in community life in the way that you wish. The values of respect and understanding will underpin these relationships leading to inclusion, friendships and personal growth. To assist we can use our existing knowledge, brainstorm ideas, find opportunities, make the contacts and help establish and foster ongoing relationships required to help you achieve inclusive connections.



Community Inclusion: Who Benefits?

This could be through a local sporting group, business, library, community group, volunteer organisation or club. It totally depends on your ideas, goals and interests.

ConnectAbility has developed and fostered a broad range of community partners specific to individuals or for group opportunities that are committed to inclusion, but is always looking to build community relationships with other volunteer groups, local businesses and community organisations.

Partner with the ConnectAbility Community

ConnectAbility recognises, values and acknowledges our community and corporate partners. Without your assistance we would not be able to offer as many quality outcomes for local people living with a disability.

There are a number of ways organisations can assist whether through including someone with a disability in your community group or workplace, a volunteer role, workplace giving program, supporting fundraising activities or specific projects.

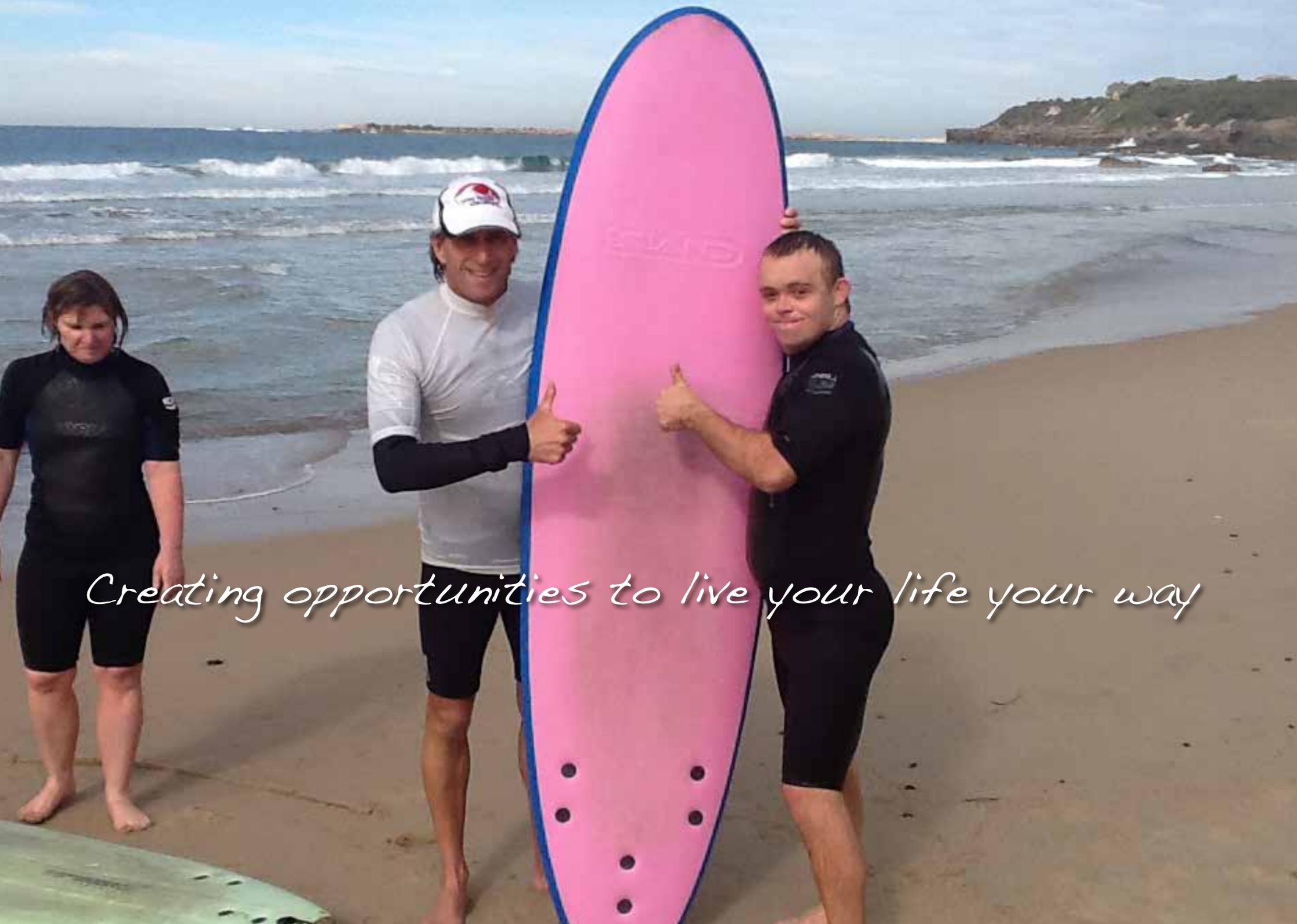
If you are interested in discussing the possibilities to enrich someone's life and bring a new dimension to your organisation please contact us on (02) 4962 1000 and see how everyone can benefit.

Volunteering with Us

ConnectAbility has a number of volunteering opportunities through our *Community Buddies* initiative. This initiative links participants and trained volunteers based on their mutual interests and shared location to participate in common interests and activities. Alternatively you may have skills in the provision of transport, finance, administration, marketing, or photography and would like to share your experience and time with us.

If you are interested in volunteering and would like more information on different volunteer roles and opportunities with ConnectAbility please call (02) 4962 1000 or volunteer@connectabilityaus.org.au





Creating opportunities to live your life your way

Management of your Funding and Supports

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is here to give you choice, flexibility and control over your life and through the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will help you make decisions about the things that are important for you.

ConnectAbility supports people and their families with all abilities and different levels of support needs. Treating each person as an individual helps identify any challenges, so we can support your more intensive needs in a flexible and plan. 

Management of your Funding and Supports

ConnectAbility supports people and their families each who have their own unique abilities and different levels of support needs. Treating each person as an individual helps identify any challenges, so we can support your more intensive needs in a flexible and safe approach that accommodates your support needs within your allocated funding package.

How we can assist you:

Your choice may be to have NDIA hold your funding. ConnectAbility Australia will work with you in every aspect of your support and service delivery. We can research, develop and establish your support schedule, coordinate all of the staffing, volunteers and stakeholder engagement and provide ongoing support to review and modify your plan where required. ConnectAbility will manage all of the administration and claims payment tasks associated with your support schedule through NDIA.

Plan Management

For people who elect to maintain full responsibility for the coordination of their supports and services, ConnectAbility can support you as a registered Plan Management provider. We provide the regulatory oversight so you can do the things you want, when you want with your own staff, safe in the knowledge that we will provide the administrative support to help you meet your funding and government requirements. We can assist you in two ways:

Financial Intermediary Service: this includes organising and maintaining records of services and supports provided to you and facilitating payments. We can provide financial statements to you for the claiming of due funds from NDIA on your behalf.

Service Intermediary: includes a range of activities to assist you in negotiating and coordinating the provision of supports and services. This includes sourcing providers, negotiating the method and timing of the delivery of supports, and negotiating individual requirements as part of the support management.

Self-Directed Service

Alternatively, if you do choose to manage your own support package, we can assist you to navigate through this process to ensure you obtain the best value and develop the skills to incorporate the required processes and best support options to maximise benefit from your support plan.

*ConnectAbility Australia is a registered provider with The National Disability Insurance Agency
Provider Registration: 61595112*

Contact us today and let's create the opportunities to help you lead your life your way!

The ConnectAbility Australia Team





Live your life your way!



connect
ABILITY
AUSTRALIA

Phone 02 4962 1000 Email contact@connectabilityaus.org.au

Head Office Units 3 & 4, 46 Hudson Street, Hamilton, NSW 2303

Website www.connectabilityaus.org.au

