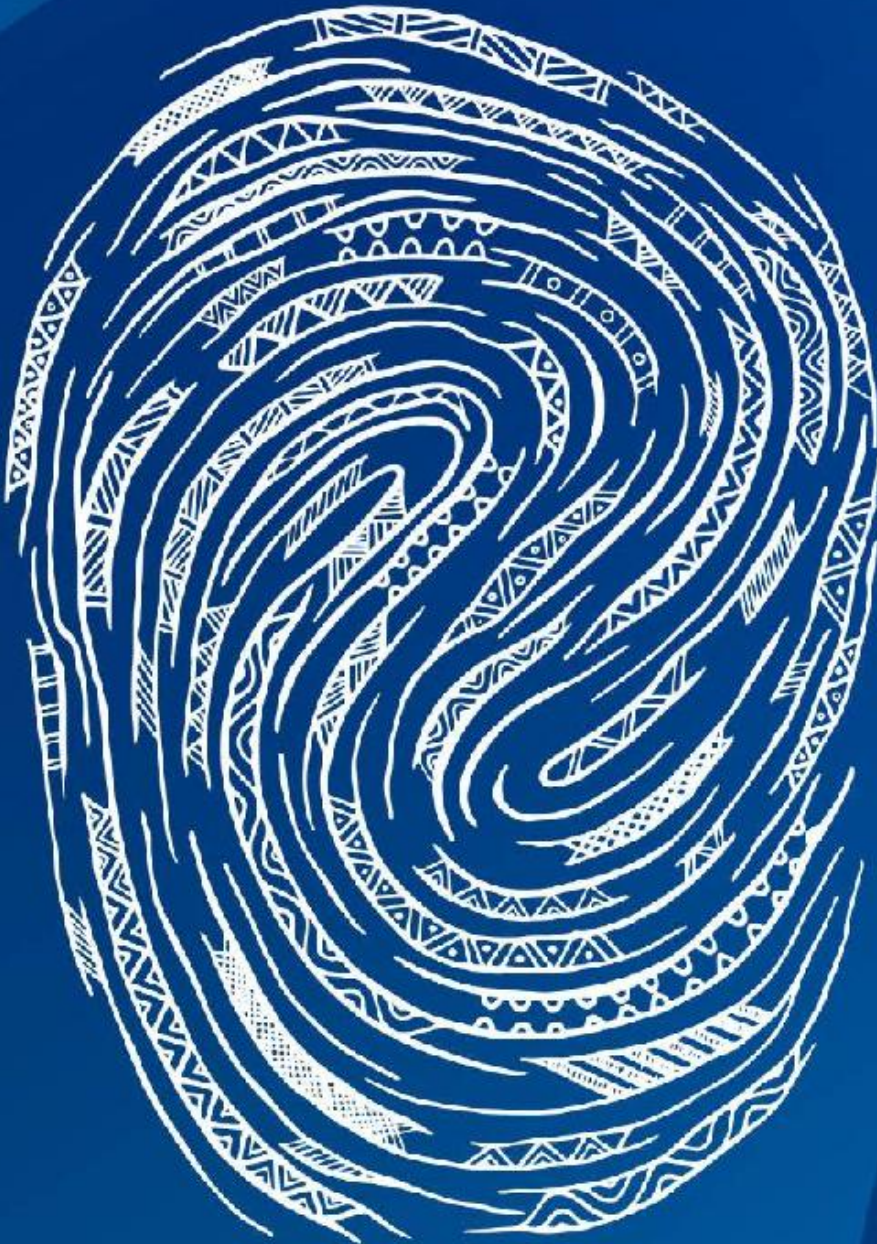


Welcome to June 2026 WDN Community Meeting





City of
Whittlesea



Acknowledgement

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

Housekeeping



Meeting Agenda



Item	Who
Welcome to June 2026 WDN Meeting • Acknowledgment of Country • Housekeeping • Overview of Agenda	Jafar Hussein, Community Strengthening Officer
Work Readiness Program with Northern School for Autism	Rosie Beaumont, Community Strengthening Officer
Feedback from Community Catchups in March and April	Jafar Hussein, Community Strengthening Officer
Council Update	Stephen Mckay, Manager Community Strengthening
Morning Tea	
Employment Programs – Cape Group	Megan Walther, Cape Group
Employment Opportunities – Connecting 2 Ability	Owen Hewlett, Connecting 2 Ability
Roundtable Discussions	Jafar Hussein, Community Strengthening Officer

Councillor Michael Labrador



Councillor for Lalor Ward



Work Readiness Program with Northern School for Autism

Rosie Beaumont, Healthy Communities Team



Whittlesea Disability Action Plan



(a) reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities

(b) **reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment**

(c) promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability

(d) achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

Employment for people with disability

- Gradually improving
- Workplace adjustment policies
- Disability Employer programs
 - Recreation & leisure
 - Supermarkets
- Potentially large neuro-diverse workforce has few opportunities



Supporting young people with disability to transition from school to work life



- WDN June 2024
- Few local work opportunities for young people with disability
- Graduates with disability stuck in endless cycle of training programs



Partnership with Northern School for Autism 2017 – 2024



Partnership with Northern School for Autism 2017 – 2024



Partnership with Northern School for Autism 2017 – 2024



2026 Work Readiness (Horticulture) Program



Greenbrook Community Garden



Greenbrook Community Garden



Preparing students for the program



Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) provided

High-Visibility Vest 	Eye Protection (unless you wear glasses) 
Gloves (gardening & leather) – labelled 	Ear Protection - labelled 
Gaiters 	Helmet and Face Shield 
Face Mask 	Safety harness 



Big on structure, small on group size



Big on activity, small on talk



Managing new environments



What did students achieve?

- Reading a job advertisement
- Setting up a work space
- Wearing protective equipment
- Learning safety procedures
- Ground clearance, maintenance
- Weeding, pruning, hedging
- Brush cutting & mowing
- Seed cleaning & propagation
- Planting seedlings
- Species garden design



What did Council learn?



- Students achieved high skill levels and learn practices and procedures with ease
- Instructions need context and clear outcomes to help manage anxiety
- Deliver instructions early, gradually, visually and often
- Highly structured and active sessions support longer participation
- Individuals with autism have different capacity to manage new environments or changes in the environment
- Challenges are around individual patterns of participation rather than capacity to fulfill a role

Questions?



Feedback from Community Catch-ups

Jafar Hussein, Healthy Communities Team



WDN Community Catch-ups



Thomastown Community Catch-up



Whittlesea Community Catch-up



South Morang Community Catch-up

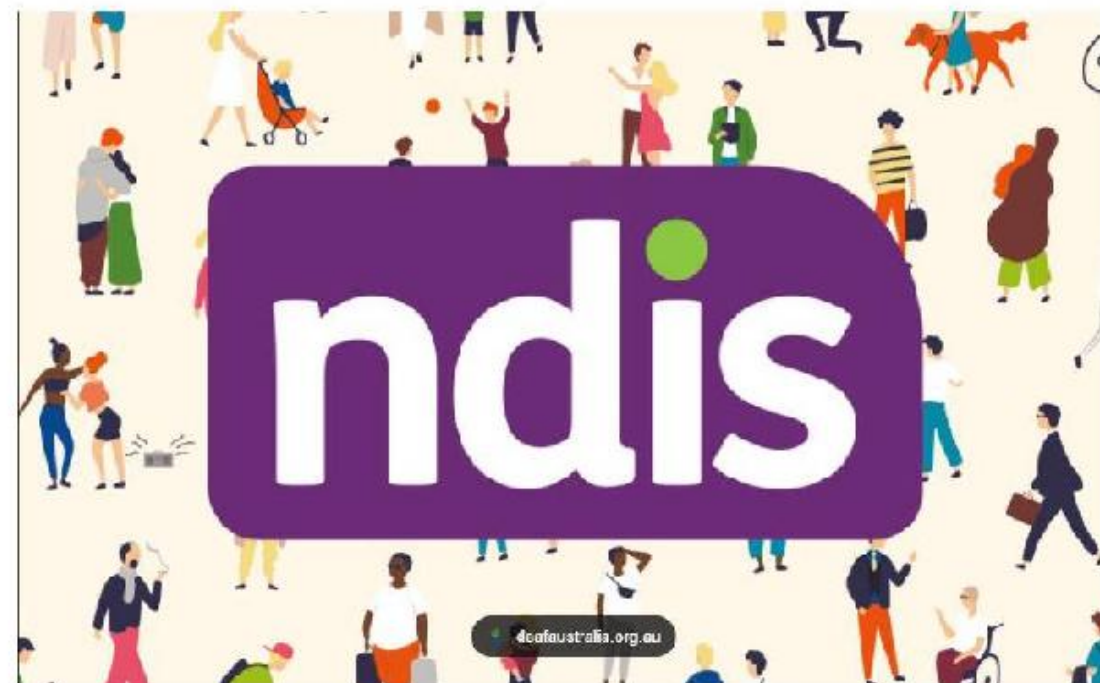


Wollert Community Catch-up



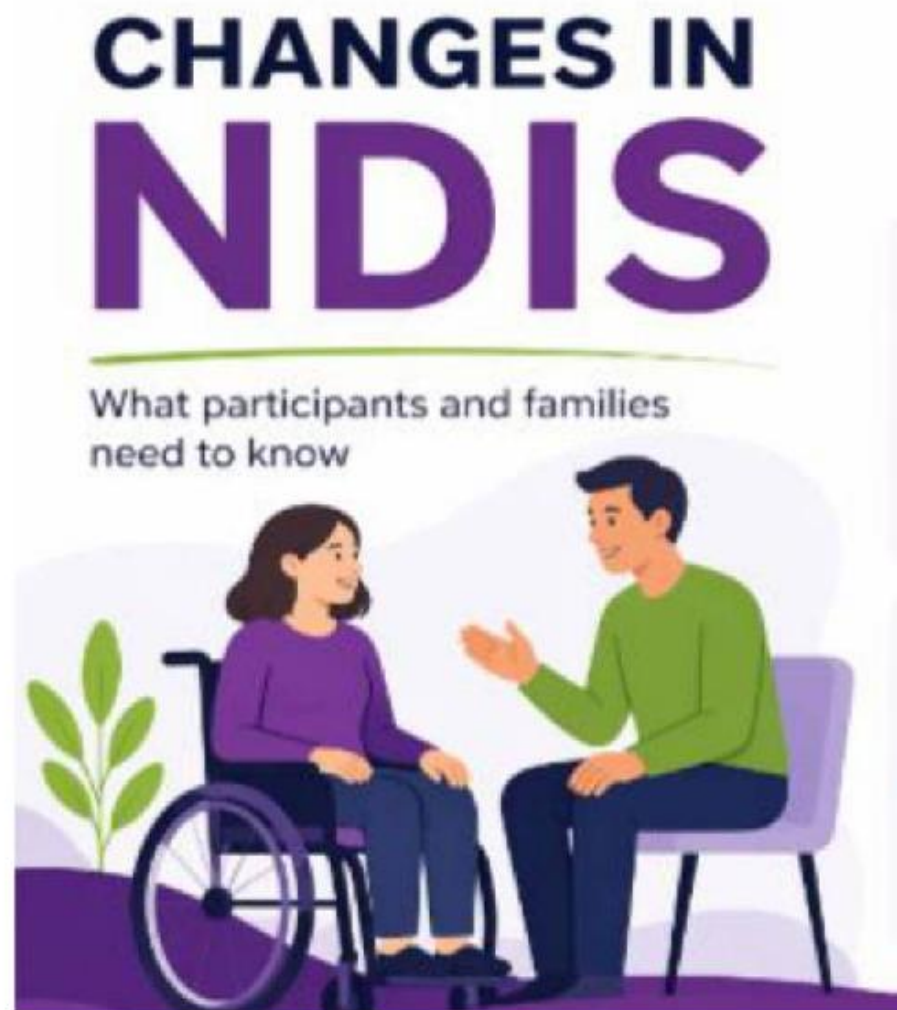
Recent NDIS Changes Observed

- New Planning Framework
- Support Needs Assessment
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Bill 2025



Impact of Changes on Participants and Carers

- Increased fear and stress
- Difficulty navigating plans
- Additional pressures on carers to fill gaps in support



Information and Support Needs



Council Update

Stephen Mckay

Manager, Community Strengthening



Disability Advisory Committee Update



Council is taking a moment to make sure we get this right.

- *Previously proposed a Disability Advisory Committee*
- *Reviewing how all lived experience advisory groups work*
- *Want to create an approach that is meaningful and effective*

Disability Advisory Committee Update



What are we trying to achieve?

An approach that is:

- *Meaningful for members and the community*
- *Has a genuine influence on Council decisions*
- *Includes diverse lived experiences*
- *Flexible and able to respond to changing community needs*

Disability Advisory Committee Update



Inviting you to help shape the best way forward

At the next WDN meeting we'll workshop:

- How this community can best inform Council decisions
- What approaches would work best
 - *Disability Advisory Committee?*
 - *Whittlesea Disability Network?*
 - *Another model?*
- Your ideas will help shape Council's future approach

Employment Programs – Cape Group

Megan Walther, Cape Group



cape*

PICK AND PACK & WAREHOUSE





















CAFE











PLANTS



QUALITY CONTROL

ASK TEAM LEADER
WHETHER TO
RONGSTAR AND
WATER PLANTS

QUALITY CONTROL

FILL SOIL TO
THE TOP OF
THE POT

RECORD
YOUR RESULTS









FOOD ROOM



WORK EXPERIENCE







Connecting 2 Ability

Owen Hewlett



Connecting2Ability Presentation

Connecting2Ability



C2A is a registered NDIS provider and not-for-profit organisation that has been supporting people with disability since 1953 through innovative support services, community programs, social procurement, and employment for people with disability to live a full and inclusive life.

Operating from 10 sites in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria which includes, work connections in Bellfield and Thomastown

We provide a diverse range of engaging activities and support programs, including high-quality care, skills development, social activities and supported employment.

Purpose

C2A will enable full & equal participation in society for people with disability.

Mission

We support people
with disability to live
their chosen life.

Supporting People with Disability to Live Their Best Life

INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT



For people who want more in life

Our individualised support services build essential life skills and independence, enhance well-being, and encourage social interaction. These programs offer a range of educational and fun activities to provide choice and meet individual goals and interests.

SOCIAL PROCUREMENT



For businesses and organisations

You need to make a difference. We connect you with skilled workers and deliver high-quality commercial services, ensuring your procurement decisions support community inclusion, foster economic growth and ensure you meet your social procurement objectives.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT



For people who want to work

Everyone deserves to be employed and feel valued at work. We provide a supportive environment where you can develop your unique skills, connect with a workplace community, and achieve financial independence.

ACCOMMODATION



For people who need a break

Shorter House, our respite short term accommodation facility in Traralgon is the perfect place to relax. We offer time away for people who need a break. We also offer time away for carers who need time out to rejuvenate or a short stay away.

OPPORTUNITY SHOPS

For participants who want to learn retail skills.

Shops located in Mt Eliza, Wonthaggi, Mildura and Traralgon



What is Supported Employment

Disability Support Workers/ Crew Leaders

Our highly experienced Disability Support Workers/ Crew Leaders provide on the job training and help develop new skills in a safe and inclusive environment.

Our Supported employees are trained in safety procedures and best practices and supported by experienced Crew Leaders who provide ongoing guidance and training

We create a supportive and inclusive work environment to help develop skills that allow everyone to reach their full potential



Supported Employment



Supported Employment



Community Connection



Roundtable Discussions



1. How can employers make their workplace more accessible for employees with disability?

2. What practical barriers do employers face when seeking to employ people with disability, and how might they be overcome?

Summary of Roundtable Discussions



All Abilities Program



ANNOUNCEMENT!!



Next WDN Community Meeting



Tuesday 22 September 2026 Community Meeting

Fountain View Room, Civic Centre, 10am – 12:30pm

Closing



THANK YOU