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## ABOUT FEROS CARE

Feros Care is a not-for-profit people care organisation caring for seniors and people with disability across Australia.

We support people to live healthy, socially connected and fulfilling lives. We call it Growing Bold!

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# CEO'S WORD

## WELCOME TO THE WINTER 2020 EDITION OF FEROS MAGAZINE



I'm so proud to welcome you to your Winter 2020 magazine, because it commemorates 30 years of service!

Feros Care started with the dream and determination of founder George Feros to provide aged care services in Byron Bay in the 1960s, with those who joined his crusade, some of whom are still members today, helping to turn that dream into reality.

Today, after 16 years of fundraising and lobbying and 30 years of service, people are still at the heart of Feros Care.

From humble beginnings consisting of wooden collection boxes and tireless fundraising, to now supporting over 60,000 people to live healthier, happier, more connected lives, we are proud to have proved that dreams can come true when the right people believe in them. Ultimately we're continuing George's legacy of caring for Byron Bay's elderly, only now we care for seniors across Australia, as well as people living with disability. You'll find a brief history of Feros Care starting on page 8.



*Thank you to all of our volunteers, staff volunteers and all the team who have worked to make our residents, clients and their families as comfortable as possible.*

Our board have been an integral part of our success and growth, and it's a testament to them and the organisation that so many of our board members have been with us since very early days. Thank you to all board members past and present.

Each edition of our magazine gives me a chance to reflect on the changes, challenges and achievements we've experienced as an organisation. Although 2020 has held its fair share of challenges and changes for all of us, I can't help but cheer at the way our team has faced those challenges. Some of our staff have been temporarily redeployed to provide more support in the places needed during COVID-19. Others have chosen to volunteer in their spare time to help families connect with their loved ones in our residential villages. All of our team have risen to the occasion.

That's not surprising, when you know our people. Even during less turbulent times, our team go the extra mile to make sure the people we care for receive the support they need. You'll find wonderful examples of this throughout this edition. From our LAC team in Mackay passionately making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access the NDIS (page 14), to our staff making sure nobody is forgotten (page 20), I'm so proud of the genuine compassion of our team members.

People are the centre of our organisation, and we love to celebrate their successes, their journeys and their lives. That's why you'll find plenty of stories about people in this, and all our magazines. Take Kaden on page 6, an NDIS participant who has used martial arts therapy to foster his independence.

Or Local Area Coordinator Deb Hayes who is using her years of experience with Auslan to become a voice for the deaf community in Canberra (page 17).

There's plenty more inside the cover! The focus for Feros magazine is information and enjoyment. We'd love to hear your feedback and any suggestions for the magazine. You can email [marketing@feroscare.com.au](mailto:marketing@feroscare.com.au) and it will be gratefully received.

We're determined to keep helping people to Grow Bold in their way, and to inspire an inclusive, connected and vibrant community. While some of our projects have been put on hold to ensure social distancing, many of our planned projects have been able to go ahead with some changes. We launched our podcast, Grow Bold with Disability and keep finding reasons to create more episodes. There's so many important stories to share and so much awareness to create. If you haven't already, it's worth taking a listen. Find out how on the back page! And our charitable initiative, Be Someone For Someone, has had an exciting six months since launch – read all about it on page 22.

I hope you and yours are safe and well in this tumultuous time. While we're proactively contacting our clients and participants to make sure they're safe, if there is anything we might be able to do to support you, please get in touch. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading this edition of your Feros Magazine.

**Jennene Buckley**  
CEO

## BOARD UPDATE

Thank you to our outgoing Chair, Allen Lind who has served on our board since 2012 and was our Chair from 2017–2019. We are delighted that he remains on the Board as a Director.

We welcome Colin McJannett as our new Chair. Colin has served on the board since 2017 and has held governance responsibilities as Chair for both Primary Health and Social Service organisations. Colin has extensive consulting and senior management experience which has encompassed the social services, primary health and the finance industries. His governance responsibilities have included strategic planning, monitoring social service and delivery of primary health contracts for Government and District Health boards amongst others.

Thank you for your service on the board goes to Erica Kneipp who resigned in



**Board Members Colin McJannett, Dawn Stanfield and Allen Lind with Jennene Buckley and podcast hosts Tristram Peters and Pete Timbs at the launch of our new podcast, Grow Bold with Disability**

2019. We are pleased to welcome two new board members Andrew Young and Michael Tennant!



## AWARDS

Our Google Home and MyFeros portal is the winner of the IT News Benchmark Best Health Project. Our Grow Bold campaign is also a winner, taking out the Community Engagement top honours in the Future of Ageing Awards.

## SUZANNE'S GRACE KELLY MOMENT

Sometimes, you just want your movie star moment. That's exactly what happened for our client Suzanne, thanks to her Wellbeing Manager, Dan.

Suzanne was booked in for three weeks respite at Feros Village Byron Bay, and joked with Dan about 'arriving in style' in his flash convertible – which also happened to be Suzanne's favourite colour, red!

Dan initially had concerns about how he would be able to get her in and out of the car. But Suzanne was unperturbed. "Drag me out by my feet if you have to – I don't care as long as I get to go for a ride in the car!" So, after assessing the risks and enlisting her sons to help her in and out of the car, Suzanne got her Grace Kelly moment.



For Suzanne, this was her first time staying at a residential village and she was a little nervous about it.

The drive down was a wonderful distraction for her and got her stay off to a great start!

## BOLD ON FILM

Prior to his 'early' retirement in 2016 – at the ripe age of 85 – Feros Village Byron Bay resident, Alan Harkness had spent most of his career in film production. Throughout the decades, Alan has worked on documentaries, television commercials, feature films and television dramas including *The Beach*. One thing that has never changed is his passion for film – and he is always up for discussing cameras, lenses and filming with any visiting film crews that attend the village.

The team at the village knew that Alan's passion for film remained, and he is one film director not quite ready to hang up his director's hat! Committed to supporting all our

people to Grow Bold, we worked with Alan to get him back in the director's chair.

We sat down with Alan to discuss his passion and he shared with us a vision he had to produce a short film about village life. After a few production meetings, Alan shared with us his handwritten notes and storyboards and we set about planning his next project *Village Life* at Feros Village Byron Bay.

*Village Life* is a film produced and directed through the eyes of Alan. Working in collaboration with a film crew and residents, Alan captured the culture and feeling of living life at Feros Village Byron Bay. Stay tuned for the glitzy premiere later in the year.



## HOT OFF THE POD

At Feros Care we are committed to building inclusive communities – and doing it in a bold way! Amplifying voices that aren't always heard is a big part of fostering that inclusion. That's why we're delighted to bring you Grow Bold with Disability, our podcast series.

Officially launched in March, the podcast is thought-provoking, entertaining and uplifting, exploring the taboo, funny and surprising side of living with disability – through the stories of people who do.

Pete Timbs and Tristram Peters, our host and co-host have insightful discussions with guests like blogger, writer, speaker and appearance activist Carly Findlay, and Rosanne Stuart, mother of ground-breaking model with disability, Madeline Stuart.

There are 20 exciting episodes in Season One, and Season Two is being worked on as we speak! Our aim is to keep them coming and we'd love your support. You can help us bring you more by simply subscribing and listening to the podcast.

## PET POWER AT FEROS VILLAGE BANGALOW



Cookies and cream, sugar and spice, Margaret and Beau – definitely a match made in heaven! Beau came to Feros as a rescue cat from the Animal Welfare League in 2011. Margaret, a devout cat lover, moved into the village in 2015 and she and Beau have been best friends ever since. We can only describe their relationship as symbiotic, where both of them thrive off each other's companionship and affection.

Beau, who is now blind, is more reliant on Margaret than ever and is usually found nestled lovingly alongside Margaret in her bed, never far from her side. For Margaret, Beau provides valuable company and lifts her spirits when she is feeling under the weather. Margaret always ensures that her beloved friend has been tended to by staff and that breakfast, lunch and dinner are served on time.



Available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Spotify, we know you'll love listening!

[feroscare.com.au/growbold](https://feroscare.com.au/growbold)

# KADEN GETS HIS KICKS FROM NDIS FUNDING



**GETTING HIS KICKS OUT OF THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS) IS JUST ONE ASPECT OF KADEN'S "AMAZING" YEAR.**

**L**iving with rare genetic condition Mowat-Wilson syndrome, Kaden is non-verbal and has limited muscle strength and control and needs a lot of mobility assistance, but it hasn't held him back.

On a self-managed plan through Feros Care Mackay and Local Area Coordinator (LAC) Davina Harrison, Kaden has kicked goals with martial arts therapy and his mother Tina Gleeson is hopeful an upcoming review could help her son's blossoming life and independence continue.

"We're in the process of upgrading Kaden's wheelchair and are looking at a Convaid Stroller, and we're also looking at securing a Wike bike trailer," Tina said.

"The Wike trailer is a lightweight trailer that hooks up to the back of a bicycle as he loves doing the outdoors stuff, being in the bush and that sort of thing.

"We also trialled Eye Gaze technology and that was amazing. An iPad is a logical step, but he gets distracted on them so if we go for something more disability specific like Eye Gaze, it might be more successful.

"But it's a long, slow road so we want to make sure we get the right stuff."

While Kaden's health and chance at prolonged independence is the long-term goal, it's his short-term gains which have resonated most.

Regularly letting out a "come on" and echoing tennis great Lleyton Hewitt, the Mackay 18-year-old is attacking life with the same zeal as the Australian champion.

Bouncing up to hit the martial arts mat, the water, or making his way along one of his beloved bush tracks,

Kaden's improvement in the last 12 months has been "mind blowing".

"He's been in a happier frame of mind and is more interested in wanting to communicate about what he's done through the day; he's wanting to communicate and interact with the world more," Tina said.

"He's always been a very cautious person, but now when we suggest things, we get an 'uh huh', and he's all bouncing and ready to go."

A key activity in Kaden's schedule has been his job as a confectionary control officer a couple of days a week at a local newsagency, where he is also responsible for delivering newspapers to nearby government offices.

Building his confidence through the role, Kaden has been assisted by long-term support worker and advocate Rebecca, who accompanies him in navigating a maze of office spaces.

Enjoying his first camping trip with Rebecca in 2018 where he experienced the water and the rush of tubing, Kaden's energy and enthusiasm has blossomed.

Taking to dancing (strength building), ten pin bowling, sailability, martial arts, a supported dining out program, movies, playing games at Time Zone and going to karaoke where he puts his dance moves into practice and supports his friends, Kaden has developed an active social life.

Crucially, NDIS funding has allowed Kaden to spend nights away from home at Rebecca's, where he continues to build life skills and independence.

"Rebecca has known Kaden since he was in grade one when we moved

to Mackay; he gets her and she gets him... they just click," Tina said.

"Currently he has one overnight visit a week with her and her son Jacob, and he has learnt to set a table with visual aids, put washing in the washing machine, wipe the table, help make his bed and cut up food (with support).

"He gets encouragement from Jacob and his approval means a lot. We've been able to get Kaden to try new foods and push through his sensory barriers.

"We're hoping to extend his stays as he's 18, so he shouldn't have to be home all the time and we're all champing at the bit for him to get out and be independent."

A big advocate for carers being able to care for themselves, Tina believes Kaden's continued push for more independence has an all-round positive effect.

While the family has strong friendships and networks, it's NDIS funding which has assisted Kaden to chase the things he loves.

"We wouldn't have been able to do a lot without the NDIS and I would have had to leave my place of employment and we wouldn't have been able to maintain our quality of life," Tina said.

"He needs around the clock care and having the funding also helps with giving us a break and it's been like a safety net.

"It's been really helpful."



**For more on Feros Care and its role with the NDIS visit [feroscare.com.au/ndis](https://feroscare.com.au/ndis)**

# A VOLUNTEER FOR A VOLUNTEER

**"SOMETIMES TWO PEOPLE MEET AND IT'S MEANT TO BE." 54-YEAR-OLD VOLUNTEER ANDREW WELLS SUMMED IT UP PERFECTLY.**

**D**espite the 34-year age gap between he and his new friend Kevin Berger, the pair are like two peas in a pod.

Partnered through Feros Care's volunteer program 'In Great Company', they both love a chat, are no strangers to grief and have a shared love of motorcycles.

**“ I WALKED IN, HIS FACE LIT UP AND WE JUST CLICKED**

“I walked in, his face lit up and we just clicked,” says Andrew.

Kevin had been waiting for someone like Andrew to turn up.

“Well I filled out a form to get someone to come and visit me cause I thought, 'I don't get many visitors from around the street!,'” he says.

Kevin already knew about Feros Care, having been a volunteer himself for six years.

“I was lonely after my wife passed away,” says Kevin, who watches a slideshow of her life every day.

“The bottom just fell out of everything I was doing. I thought 'well, I've got to do something. I've got to meet people!'”

Kevin became a star of the community as the much-loved bus driver, co-captaining the Feros Care social bus – a free service that takes seniors on outings like winery visits and shopping trips.

“I enjoyed every mile of it,” Kevin grins.

“The people on my bus were a bunch of characters – no wonder we'd have so much fun.”

In a lovely twist of fate, it's Andrew who's now taking Kevin's place in the drivers seat.

“I'd heard about Kevin before I met him because I'd started doing the Thursday bus trips to take the ladies shopping,” says Andrew.

“When Feros Care told me I'd be partnered for visits with Kevin I knew I'd be meeting the guy that I was taking over from and I'd heard so many great things about. He's a bit of a legend among the volunteering circles.”

Having people around to chat to is vital to Kevin's wellbeing. He worked for NRMA as a mechanic and carpenter for 25 years and meeting people was a big part of it.

“I like talking to people,” he says.

The good news is, Andrew does too.

He became a volunteer after he lost his mum and while his sister was in palliative care. He says spending time with seniors was his 'light in a dark period'.

“You can spend an hour with somebody and you can get a better perspective on life which makes you appreciate what you have,” he says.

In Great Company is a volunteer program that links people with, or waiting for, a government-funded Home Care Package with a visitor for regular one-on-one help, in-home visits, social outings, group activities,



virtual community sessions or social phone calls.

While the program is designed to help seniors in need of some companionship, Andrew says it goes both ways, and as a motorcycle-lover, he's keen to learn more about mechanics from Kevin, who has rebuilt plenty of cars and bikes in his time.

“When I walked into his house, Kevin had this motorcycle magazine on his table that I recognised because I have the same magazine at home,” says Andrew.

“It turns out Kevin actually built the Triumph Bobber that's on the front cover. The exact one.

**“ WE JUST HAD SO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT. I WAS THERE FOR HOURS**

“We just had so much to talk about. I was there for hours.”

Kevin couldn't be happier.

“We've got a lot in common,” he says, then adds with a wink, “And he lives close-by. And he's welcome here any time.”



**In Great Company made a difference in John's life too – see page 20.**

# CELEBRATING 30 Y

## FEROS CARE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT PEOPLE

**F**rom humble beginnings caring for 40 village residents in Byron Bay, to supporting more than 60,000 people across Australia, Feros Care has transformed itself and the aged care industry over three decades of service.

After first focusing on growing the villages to stabilise the organisation financially, Feros Care diversified to become a multi-regional provider of community-based aged care, winning competitive bids to grow into new regions across Australia.

Harnessing its agility, Feros Care became one of the first community-based organisations in the country to centralise its care operations and create a virtual office model, allowing it to mobilise services quickly and with little investment in bricks and mortar.

An early foray into emerging Telehealth services in 2009 and the adoption of early-generation smart home technology meant Feros Care was poised to better

support community-based clients through the delivery of in-home care and wellness programs that improved people's lives and enhanced their independence.

"This set us on a road of digital innovation that has really helped Feros stand out from a very crowded marketplace and emerge as leaders in innovation," says Jennene Buckley, Feros Care's CEO since 2000.

As Feros Care continued to reinvent itself, it began diversifying to remain competitive and secure the organisation's longevity, moving from its sole focus on aged care to encompass other areas such as disability, and establish itself as a provider of 'people care'.

Branching out to develop new ways to support people, Feros Care has launched initiatives such as its foundation to tackle loneliness, Be Someone For Someone; its volunteer arm, In Great Company; and a suite of digital health programs, including the Virtual Social Centre, Staying Healthy Living Well, and Let's Get Technical.

"At our core, we have always been about caring for people and helping them live their best life," says Jennene.

"We now care for people aged seven to 107, providing everything from aged care and chronic illness management to disability support as partners in the community for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)."

As Feros Care moves into its next 30 years of service, it reflects

1990

Feros Village Byron Bay opens. A low-care, cottage style facility, it is home to 40 residents.



*My parents actually lived here when it first opened. Dad was 90 when he had a little fall...we looked in the local newspaper and there was a story about this place opening. That was a Saturday and the next day we drove here and they were cleaning up from the opening celebration.*

**HUGH WEBSTER  
CURRENT FEROS VILLAGE  
WOMMIN BAY RESIDENT**



1990

on its enduring culture and ethos of community service and commitment to care.

**“ OUR CLIENTS ARE ALWAYS AT THE CENTRE OF OUR MISSION, STRATEGY, OUR RENEWAL AND OUR FUTURE ”**

"Our clients are always at the centre of our mission, strategy, our renewal and our future," says Jennene.

"Our incredible team are dedicated to improving the lives of every senior and person with disability in the country – not just through the delivery of exceptional care, but by changing perceptions of age and ability and smashing stereotypes to create a more inclusive community.

"It is an exciting future made possible by a strong 30-year foundation and a team of incredible people committed to the same mission our founder George Feros embarked on in the 1960s – to care for others."



*George Feros was a passionate and tireless fundraiser.*

# YEARS OF SERVICE

**2000**

Feros Care first provides care in the community, delivering Community Aged Care packages in Byron Bay. Today we provide this care in communities across the eastern seaboard – from Tasmania to Northern Queensland.



*We were nimble, innovative, unconventional and “punched above our weight”. We wanted to change the “shape” and model of care. We recognised opportunities and approached them with innovation and creative solutions.*

**STUART GARRETT**  
**CHAIR 2010 – 2013**  
**BOARD MEMBER 23 YEARS**



**2012**

Feros Care takes over the ownership and management of Wommin Bay Hostel – now known as Feros Village Wommin Bay. The village is a happy home to 70 residents.



*I started at Feros Care 17 years ago, as a young volunteer. I’ve been given lots of opportunities to learn and grow all while being able to care for people from my own community. The team and our residents are like an extended family.*

**TOBY TAYLOR**  
**OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR,**  
**RESIDENTIAL VILLAGES**



**1997**

**2000**

**2008**

**2012**



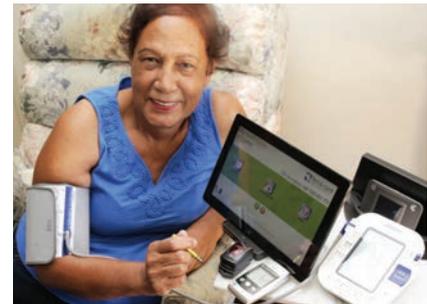
Feros Village Bangalow opens. Originally providing care to 30 residents with higher care needs, by 2007 it was home to 64 seniors.

*After several successful years we were in a position to build what George always wanted, a nursing home, albeit in Bangalow.*

**SHIRLEY NELSON**  
**CHAIR 1990–1998**  
**BOARD MEMBER 34 YEARS**  
**LIFE MEMBER**



Feros Care’s Lifelink Telehealth service is launched. This marks the start of Feros Care’s exciting journey to enhance our clients’ lives by making use of innovative technologies. Today, as well as Telehealth, we offer a Virtual Social Centre, technology training and the award-winning MyFeros portal that seamlessly links with Google Home.



*Feros Care was well-placed to take advantage of the emerging opportunities in the aged care sector, particularly in home care services. While never losing sight of its primary purpose as a care provider, Feros became an innovator, building a reputation for the enhancement of care through technology.*

**TERRY HAND**  
**CHAIR 2013–2016**  
**BOARD MEMBER 6 YEARS**



**1997**

**2008**

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

2017

Feros Care now supports people aged from seven to 107 when it is appointed the Local Area Coordination (LAC) partner for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Mackay – quickly followed by Townsville, the ACT, Northern Adelaide and the Barossa region.

*As one of the first members of the LAC team at Feros Care, I felt very proud to be part of a team that was going to help make people's lives better. At Feros Care we're part of something bigger.*

**KIM BARTOLO**  
ASSISTANT SERVICE AREA MANAGER, LAC MACKAY



2020

## REFLECTIONS

*Our clients are always at the centre of our mission, strategy, our renewal and our future.*

**JENNENE BUCKLEY**  
CEO

*Feros is growing with the times and growing into what it needs to be. The future for aged care is more than just nursing homes. I'm nearly 90 now and I am happy living at home and receiving a few services from the Feros fellas to help me stay independent.*

**KEITH CASTLE**  
CHAIR 2003–2010  
BOARD MEMBER 15 YEARS

*I'm sure Feros Care will enjoy further success by continuing to manage changes and challenges in the aged sector, retaining its culture, values, mission and purpose, and being supported and guided by a committed, professional Board.*

**ALLEN LIND**  
CHAIR 2017–2019  
BOARD MEMBER 8 YEARS

*During my connection with Feros Care it's been evident that the staff and executives are focused on caring for people. This mission has not changed, however Feros has, in that there has been significant growth in its footprint, as well as in the range of services it provides.*

**COLIN MCJANNETT**  
CHAIR 2019 – CURRENT  
BOARD MEMBER 7 YEARS

*George would not be able to comprehend Feros Care as it is today. We started from very humble beginnings but our philosophy has always been that in whatever we did, caring for the aged and disabled would be foremost in every decision. It has been our guide and ensured we've never lost sight of this mission.*

**SHIRLEY NELSON**  
CHAIR 1990–1998  
BOARD MEMBER 34 YEARS  
LIFE MEMBER

2015

2017

2019



Feros Care is contracted to provide Regional Assessment Services for My Aged Care in 15 regions across NSW and QLD. This helps more seniors stay happily and safely in their own homes.

*It was a very exciting time in our history. In a small amount of time we were able to make a big impact on thousands of people's lives.*

**MICHAEL SCURRAH**  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
ASPIRE4LIFE



Be Someone For Someone – Feros Care's charitable initiative – was launched. With the goal of tackling loneliness head on, it's finding ways to address the growing issue of loneliness in Australia and help people of all ages live happier, healthier lives.

*At Feros Care we see first-hand the effects of loneliness. We started Be Someone For Someone so that together, we can address loneliness so people can live healthy, connected lives.*

**JO WINWOOD**  
HEAD OF BE SOMEONE,  
FOR SOMEONE



2015

2019



# VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

**ROBYN CONDLIFFE HAD BEEN HAPPILY ATTENDING FEROS CARE EXERCISE CLASSES FOR YEARS, BUT WHEN COVID-19 HIT AND SHE SWITCHED TO VIRTUAL CLASSES, SHE DISCOVERED A PORTAL TO A WORLD STRETCHING FAR BEYOND THE WALLS OF HER HOME IN BOAMBEE, NEW SOUTH WALES.**

The 79-year-old was introduced to Feros Care’s Virtual Social Centre (VSC), giving her access to a range of group sessions, in everything from arts and crafts to cooking and gardening, helping her stay connected, fit and stimulated while in isolation.

After first swapping her weekly in-person group exercise programs for more regular online versions that were beamed into her lounge room, Robyn began exploring other content available on the VSC.

“I’ve been on a tour of the Victorian Art Gallery, I’ve been through people’s gardens, joined in some knitting classes and listened to a group reading,” said Robyn, who was introduced to Feros Care two years ago when her late husband received services through a government-funded Home Care Package.

“There’s really something for everyone on the Virtual Social Centre. I’ve met lots of people. There’s a lovely couple from Lightning Ridge –

they host a half-hour coffee catch up and we chat about different things.

“There’s meditation on Sundays and a fortnightly card-making class; and I still do my exercise, of course.

“While I miss catching up with my old friends after our physical class, I do prefer doing it virtually.

“It’s better for me because now I’m doing the exercise every day, instead of just once a week, and I can do them at a time that suits. If I miss the live class, I do it later on ‘catch-up’ and replay the session whenever I want it.”



**Interested? Call our friendly team today on 1300 763 583**

## MORE VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

**WE’VE JUST LAUNCHED ANOTHER VIBRANT ONLINE COMMUNITY!**

This one is for individuals who are accessing Feros Care’s Local Area Coordination service as a part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is a safe and welcoming virtual space

where you can actively participate in live events that cover topics from employment, health and wellness, cooking to starting a business and more – all from the comfort of home!



**Call the Feros Care LAC team on 1300 986 970 or email [vsclac@feroscare.com.au](mailto:vsclac@feroscare.com.au)**



# BRENT'S

# STORY



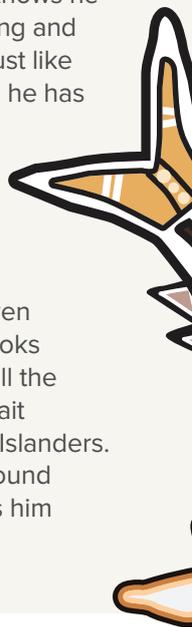
**AS TOLD BY BRENT'S AUNTIE, MICHELLE HOOKE, CEO OF GIRUDALA COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED, BOWEN. MICHELLE SHARES BRENT'S STORY WITH THE HOPE IT WILL ENCOURAGE ALL HER MOB TO ACCESS NDIS SUPPORTS.**

## **ABOUT BRENT**

Brent is a proud Mitacoodi and Australian South Sea Islander man who was born with an intellectual disability. Brent is a loved and celebrated member of the Hooke family, cared for by his grandmother (Michelle's mother) from an early age. He attended school through to Year 12 in Bowen, and was in supportive classes during high school.

When Brent finished Year 12 he had a normal transition from school to support services, attending Bowen Flexi Care Disability Support Services. Brent knows he has to get up each morning and to go to work each day, just like everyone else! He knows he has to earn the money that gets put into his bank account.

Brent has a very sunny and happy disposition, and everyone in the Bowen community knows and looks out for him – especially all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and South Sea Islanders. He rides his pushbike around town and everyone gives him



advice on the road rules to make sure he is safe. Brent loves going to church – he attends many different churches as he will go to the church of whoever picks him up to take him there!

When his grandmother was moved to a nursing home due to her dementia, Brent, now in his 30s became essentially homeless. His aunties started looking out for Brent, however this was hard for him. His grandmother had been at home with him every day, and his aunties worked full-time so Brent found the change difficult. After some months Brent had made up his mind that he did not want to live with them. He wanted to live on his own.

## BRENT'S CHOICE

It was around this time that the NDIS was getting started. Brent's family hadn't heard of the NDIS previously, but wanted to learn more as they realised that it would allow Brent to choose what he wanted to do, with a little support from them. To their excitement they learned that there was a lot of support through the NDIS to allow Brent to realise his dream of living on his own.

Brent attended his first meeting with his Auntie Michelle. Michelle stayed quiet during the meeting and let Brent do all the talking because she knew the choice of what he wanted to do with his life was Brent's to make. He was very clear he wanted to live on his own.

Michelle and Brent's family also recognised that they were no longer young people. They had to think of Brent's future and not 'be selfish and keep him under our wing' so when they eventually pass on he will not be left on his own with no help.

Brent's NDIS plan allows for a support worker to be with him 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He and a mate from Bowen Flexi Care Disability Support Services live in separate but adjoining units, sharing their support worker, as well as day to day things like chores and meals.

Brent has achieved his goal of living independently!

## REFLECTIONS

Michelle says that Brent has 'just blossomed' under the NDIS. His family feel that he has grown up.

They feel they may have molly coddled him a little previously, doing lots of the talking for him. Since he has lived on his own they've noticed he is more social and can have a conversation – rather than just giving a yes or no response.

They are very proud of how helpful he is in the supported accommodation complex he lives in, which has elders living there too. He takes care of weeding in the garden, and takes care of wheelie bin duties for all the residents of the supported accommodation complex.

Michelle recognises that Brent's NDIS journey has been made easy because he was born and diagnosed with an intellectual disability. 'He was already in the system when NDIS came along, so it was a lot easier for Brent than for our mob who are not diagnosed'.

The message Michelle wants to get across is "Don't give up on your NDIS journey – there is light at the end of the tunnel. NDIS is a beautiful thing for people with a disability, whether intellectual or physical. NDIS is a great benefit for families".

This story has been published in partnership with Feros Care and Girudala Community Co-Operative Society Ltd, as part of the Mackay & Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathways Project.

Artwork elements by Danny Eastwood.



# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**BE PREPARED FOR A LONG CHAT WHEN YOU SPEAK WITH FEROS CARE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, DI CHATAWAY ABOUT THE PATHWAYS PROJECT. "I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT EQUALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE, AND THIS PROJECT IS VERY DEAR TO MY HEART" SHE SMILES.**

**W**hat began as a project to help more Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people with disability access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has become a personal journey of learning and cultural discovery for Di.

Early in 2019, as part of the project, Di began a participatory mentoring programme where she worked with an experienced mentor to understand and connect with people from these communities.

And the experience was life-changing – on both a personal and professional level.

"I have many friends who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, who I've known all my life. Until now, I hadn't opened my eyes to how different their experience of the world is to mine, and how difficult it can be for them," explains Di.

This new-found understanding has allowed Di to connect on an extra level with her friends and they now have a much deeper relationship.

"It's changed my whole approach at work too," continues Di.

"Previously I would approach communities with the best intentions,

but I would already have an agenda and be focusing on outcomes. Now I just go in quietly with the intention of becoming part of the community. I ask how we can help".

**“ NOW I JUST GO IN QUIETLY WITH THE INTENTION OF BECOMING PART OF THE COMMUNITY. I ASK HOW WE CAN HELP**

This respectful and culturally appropriate approach has been integral to the success of the project. Supported by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership, Mackay, this project saw Di and the Feros Care team creating partnerships with community organisations Girudala Community Co-Operative Society Ltd, Mudth-Niyleta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, and Marabisda Mackay and Region Aboriginal and Islander Development Association.

Rather than expecting the community to come to Feros Care, these partnerships allowed Feros Care to come to the community. And by working together the Feros Care 'kinship model' was developed. This model means

that when partners are working with a person with a disability, there is a quick, easy and culturally sensitive way to support them to gain access to the NDIS.

Most importantly, the model means that strong relationships are now established, and trust is continually being built. Although you can't put a value on relationships, a 90% increase in referrals to Feros Care suggests that value is high.

For Di, it's even simpler.

"Our job is to take away the fear," she says, referring to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's general anxiety around interacting with government departments.

And Di does that every day.



**For more on Feros Care and its role with the NDIS visit [feroscare.com.au/ndis](https://feroscare.com.au/ndis)**



# LET'S TALK TELEHEALTH

**TELEHEALTH ALLOWS YOU TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT HOME USING SIMPLE TECHNOLOGY. YOU CAN KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH YOUR HEALTH TEAM WITHOUT HAVING TO LEAVE YOUR HOME, USING A COMPUTER WITH A VIDEO CAMERA.**

**W**e've been providing Telehealth services to seniors since 2013. At Feros Care, we call it Telehealth Remote Monitoring, and we've built an experienced team of Telehealth Nurses and technical support people to make sure the service runs smoothly. Even the technology we provide is senior-friendly and easy to use.

Anyone can access the benefits of Telehealth Remote Monitoring, which may be available as part of your Home Care Package or other government-funded programs.

As part of Telehealth Remote Monitoring, our seniors are loaned a touch-screen computer and measuring devices so they can record

their vital signs (like blood pressure, oxygen levels and blood sugars) each day. This equipment is set up by our Telehealth team who, together with our Telehealth Nurses, teach our clients how to use it. It's designed to be simple and easy to use – suitable for all levels of experience, even those who have had none!

Results are sent securely to a trained Telehealth Nurse for review. They are available to chat with clients via a videoconference or telephone call on any weekday.

The best thing about Telehealth Remote Monitoring is that it gives you the confidence of knowing someone's keeping a close eye on your health without the need to constantly travel to appointments.

## THE BENEFITS OF TELEHEALTH REMOTE MONITORING

- provides regular checks of your health status, vital signs and general wellness all from the comfort of your own home
- monitoring and support from specially trained Telehealth Nurse – easy weekday access
- your healthcare team is able to fine tune the management of any chronic health issues using Telehealth Remote Monitoring's valuable daily vital signs information
- gives you a better understanding of your health and conditions, and how you can help to look after yourself



**To find out more about Telehealth Remote Monitoring including if it's available as part of your Home Care Package call 1300 763 583.**



# FEROS CARE SHOWS TRUE COLOURS IN WHAT MATTERS MARCH

**FLOATS, FEATHERS, BRIDES AND BOAS, FEROS CARE SHOWED ITS TRUE COLOURS BY MARCHING FOR WHAT MATTERS.**

Almost 42 years since a small group of protestors sparked the beginnings of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on the streets of Darlinghurst in Sydney, the shopfronts and walkways of the Strand Shopping Centre in Coolangatta came alive in a sea of pride, as Feros Care and its employees came together for equality and acceptance.

Adorned in colours of the rainbow, around 60 committed staff members including Feros Care’s Troy Lawlor and his team of trainers created a buzz as they were cheered on during their march through the Strand, slaying stereotypes and showing solidarity in front of a packed centre.

“It was so good to see everyone take part, and everyone had a different spin on it, and everyone was creative in their own way,” Troy said.

“It doesn’t matter if you do a massive thing with your department or you do something little to dress up and participate on the day, it’s just about being inclusive and showing we’re an inclusive practice.”

Highlighted by rainbow umbrellas capturing the light and brides and grooms showing the love, the march culminated with a coming together at the top of the Strand to a chorus of cheers.

A crucial date on the annual Feros Care calendar, Troy said the pride-filled parade was “elevated” this year, with the impact, buy-in and culturally appropriate approach reinforcing the company’s ethos of walking the talk.

“Comparing it to last year’s parade, we’ve elevated it through training and awareness which has increased everyone’s knowledge and skills, making more of an inclusive impact,” he said.

“We want to show everyone out there that we’re inclusive, and we’re doing it and not just saying it. That comes back as well from the opposite side and customers come in knowing that

when we say we’re inclusive, we mean it.”

While the march was celebrating equality in honour of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras which culminates with its world-famous parade, Troy said Feros Care wanted to show its support beyond the LGTBQIA+ community.

Throwing up questions such as “what are you willing to fight for”, and “who will you fight for”, Troy, who wore a green love heart emblazoned with “equality and acceptance”, said the aim was to provide support for everybody.

“We want to make an inclusive impact and want to show our support for all communities and cohorts and not just the LGTBQIA+ community,” he said.

“People are people regardless of their sexual orientation, whether they’re short, tall, or have dark hair or light hair, it doesn’t matter to our organisation, and we’re very much about treating everyone as a human.”



**For more useful, inspiring and entertaining articles visit [feroscare.com.au/feros-stories](https://feroscare.com.au/feros-stories)**



# DEB FOLLOWS THE SIGNS ON PATH TO REWARDING CAREER

WHEN SEARCHING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A VOICE FOR THE DEAF COMMUNITY, A LOCAL AREA COORDINATOR (LAC) ROLE WITH FEROS CARE PROVED THE PERFECT FIT FOR DEB HAYES.

**A** qualified interpreter and Auslan teacher, Deb was drawn to the role, which offered the perfect chance to help people with disability in the ACT.

“I was in employment services and saw a job advertisement for the LAC role. I was inspired by the opportunity to utilise all my skills in one position, so I felt a career as an LAC would be the right fit for me, so I jumped at it” she said.

Deb has accomplished a lot in assisting National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) recipients to achieve their goals since becoming an LAC in January.

Building on past and new relationships specifically within the Deaf community in the ACT, Deb has become a crucial conduit between Deaf participants and the NDIS.

But every journey has a beginning, and for Deb, her passion for helping others was sparked in the early 1980s.

“When I started in the Australian Public Service, one of the staff members was particularly quiet and I had not seen other staff members speaking with her,” Deb said.

“It became apparent that she was Deaf and used sign language to communicate with other staff members. I knew the alphabet in fingerspelling and approached her to introduce myself.

With Auslan not being heard of until 1987 and sign language yet to be

recognised as the language of the Deaf community, Deb’s co-worker used what was called Deaf Sign or Deaf Talk.

Engrossing herself in learning to be able to support her co-worker, Deb learnt fingerspelling and signing, and within a few months was able to share in conversation and become her on-site interpreter.

“So, my colleague would invite me to meet her Deaf friends and suddenly I was interpreting at parties. I attended any public events that had an interpreter and got to know the Canberra Deaf Community who gave me the social opportunities to develop my language skills.”

Obtaining her Level 2 National Accreditation for Translators and Interpreters accreditation in 1989, Deb went on to receive her Level 3 professional accreditation before supporting the development and establishment of training courses for interpreting skill development.

“Since then, Auslan has been recognised, and there are now training courses for Auslan and Interpreting, so Deaf people’s voices are being heard,” Deb said.

“It has been a privilege for me to be a small contributor and part of that and be able to provide such a valuable service.”

Applying those skills and her passion to her LAC role, Deb has played a crucial role in assisting Feros Care participants within the Deaf community.

Helping to ease any confusion by translating NDIS information from English to Auslan, Deb has been developing strong connections in the process.

“Through meeting with participants using Auslan, I’ve been able to breakdown NDIS terminology, to help around understanding the NDIS and plan management while breaking down any confusion,” Deb said.

Taking her drive to the next level, Deb has joined forces with fellow Auslan trained LACs, Beth Helmers and Amy Holt, to develop the early stages of a project which will directly assist ACT’s Deaf community.

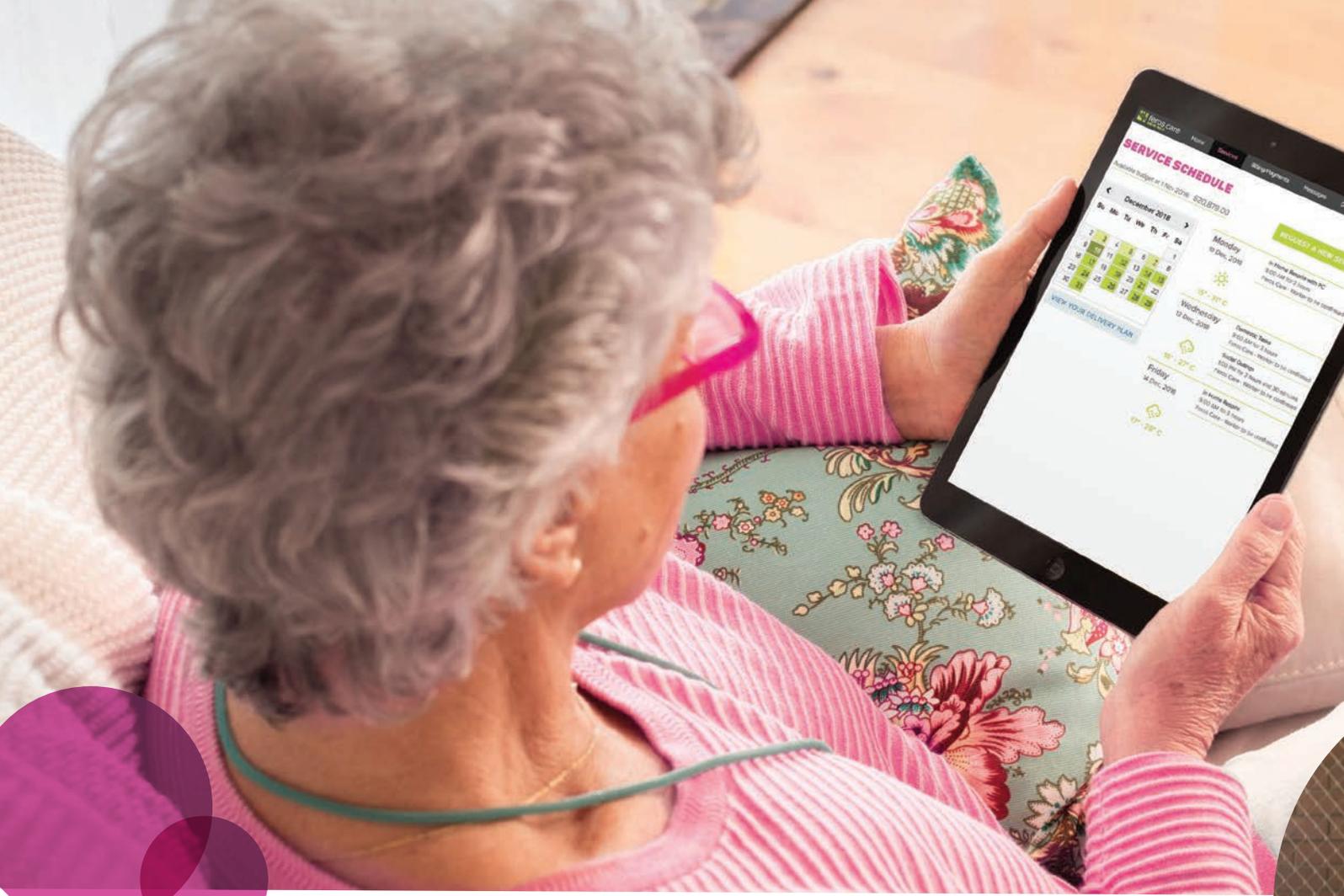
Including workshops, the project will offer the opportunity for Deaf participants to have their questions answered, while offering information on NDIS plan funding, how to prepare for meetings and reviews, and providing tools for plan self-management.

Not only crucial for participants, Feros Care Community Development Coordinator (CDC), Tara Barrett, said Deb’s skills and passion had also proven invaluable for her fellow LACs.

“Having that personal drive provides an extra edge to go that further step for others, and people like Deb always go the extra mile,” Tara said.



**For more on Feros Care and its role with the NDIS visit [feroscare.com.au/ndis](https://feroscare.com.au/ndis)**



# MYFEROS UNCOVERS UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

**W**ith hundreds of Feros Care seniors logging into their MyFeros portal accounts since it was first introduced in 2018, we know we're offering a service that's useful. And we want to keep it that way! That's why our team have continued to improve the application, and roll-out new features.

On any device, at any time, Feros Care clients can manage their services as they see best. View budgets, book and change scheduled services and make contact with our care team online – all without the need for a phone call.

## UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

Originally designed to simply make it easier and more streamlined

for clients and their loved ones to interact with Feros Care, we discovered there's benefits for clients beyond this convenience.

We spoke with Feros Care Client Advocate Rachel Tyler who explained that many clients who are non-verbal or find it difficult to be understood over the telephone love being able to simply log into their MyFeros account. "It takes a whole level of stress around interactions away."

On the other hand, for clients who may have dexterity and mobility issues, logging into a computer or device is difficult or even impossible. That problem was solved with a little help from Google Home. Once a Google Home device is set up, and linked to a MyFeros account,

clients just need to say "Hey Google" followed by "ask Feros Care..." to check their scheduled services and access a myriad of other useful information.

For Feros Care Client Bill Bryce, this has decreased his dependency on others. He says "I can't use a scroll pad on a laptop. I've had operations on my voice box and sometimes struggle to find the right words on the phone. Google Assistant has helped counter that and I'm sure there will be a lot of seniors or people with a disability who will benefit from the technology."

## CONVENIENCE FOR CARERS

If we can make life easier for carers – those family and friends who

“

**I'M NOT VERY TECHNOLOGICALLY-CAPABLE, BUT THE PORTAL IS SO EASY, THERE'S NOTHING COMPLICATED ABOUT IT.**

**BARBARA BARRETT,  
MYFEROS PORTAL USER  
SINCE 2018**



support our clients – we will! Our clients can give permission for their family members, friends or carers to access the MyFeros portal on their behalf. Children who may be working full-time or live interstate are able to jump into MyFeros and feel assured knowing that a Feros Care team member is scheduled to visit their mum.

For Joe, who is the full-time carer and husband of Feros Care client Jocelyn, MyFeros makes his life easier. “The portal makes our life so much easier. It is easy to use and we are very happy with it. Reimbursements seem to get processed quicker and we can communicate easily with Feros for any queries.”

“It’s all positive!” says Joe.

# FEATURES OF MYFEROS



## MANAGE YOUR TIME AND SERVICES

View all upcoming (and past) services, request changes, holds and new services.



## MAKE SECURE PAYMENTS

Make hassle-free, online secure payments with BPAY or Credit Card facilities.



## MANAGE YOUR FUNDS

View your available budget, previous statements and manage your reimbursements in one convenient location.



## UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Edit personal details and preferences with ease as well as utilising the dual access function, allowing selected contacts access to your MyFeros account to help manage your services.



## COMMUNICATE WITH EASE

Quickly and easily interact with Feros via the electronic messaging system for any type of enquiry/request. Use the group messaging feature to stay in touch with your contacts and carers.



## AVAILABLE ON ALL DEVICES

MyFeros is available on all mobile phones, tablets, laptops and PCs. The MyFeros App is also available on Apple and Android devices.

**To register or for more information on MyFeros visit [feroscare.com.au/myferos](http://feroscare.com.au/myferos) or call 1300 763 583.**

# FINALLY IN GREAT COMPANY



## “WITHOUT THEM I’D BE STARVING.” IT WAS THAT SIMPLE.

**J**ohn Steele is an 89-year-old living in government housing in Coolangatta who, after several strokes, has lost most of the use of his hands and relies on in-home services to prepare meals for him.

But when his service provider told him the company was closing down for Christmas, John didn’t know what to do.

“The people I usually see went on holidays, so I was going to have to go just over a month without anything,” says John.

He called people care provider, Feros Care and 25-year-old Julia Pettet answered the phone.

“John was extremely distressed about his situation, and we just knew that we had to step into action and help”, says Julia.

“Due to the way the federal funding is set up we couldn’t help him through the official channels until we got government approvals, so I called

our volunteer team instead who got straight into action.”

Feros Care’s volunteer program, In Great Company, links people with, or waiting for, a government-funded Home Care Package with a volunteer visitor for regular one-on-one help, in-home visits, social outings, group activities, virtual community sessions or social phone calls.

In Great Company Program Manager Emma Moore says “the program supports almost 300 people nationally, who live both independently in their own homes, and in residential care. Many of our seniors experience very real isolation and loneliness in our community, and In Great Company matches these people to like-minded and skilled volunteers who help people maintain their independence and connection to community”.

“The response we’ve had from volunteers is fantastic overall, but seeing how everyone came together

to support John was absolutely heartening, there are so many kind people in our communities who want to help,” says Emma.

“In John’s case we had one woman donate a whole trolley of groceries in memory of her late son, while several volunteers put their hands up to cook over the whole Christmas period so he didn’t go hungry.

“We discovered John has a love for fresh food so we want to make sure he has access to that.”

For John, fresh food has played a big role in his life but sadly it is something he rarely gets.

“I usually live on pies, rissoles and sausages because that’s all I can make but I find now I can’t even cook the sausages and rissoles with my bad hands,” he says.

“Both my parents were cooks. They met when they were cooking on cruise ships so we always cooked fresh food growing up.

"I've always liked to cook but I can't now. My hands don't work so I can't cut or peel anything."

Despite his ailments, John manages to stay mostly independent and while he has had to give up his much treasured visits to the movies, it is the smell and taste of a home cooked meal that he misses the most.

"Julie, she came first," says John – his memory as sharp as a tack.

"She made 12 meals for me. I had potato pie, spaghetti bolognese and fresh sliced ham.

"The following week Wendy phoned and asked what I had in the fridge. She turned up with a pressure cooker and tins of crushed tomatoes and we made a big chunky stew, and you won't believe it but she arrived with a massive homemade chocolate cake in a tin!"

John's eyes light up as he talks about the carrots, potatoes and peas that were added for extra flavour.

It is clear these people made a big impact on John. He recalls little details about their visits and their lives; he rattles off facts about their families, their likes and dislikes.

"Feros Care and the volunteers got me out of strife," he says.

"Without them I'd be starving. I can't say enough for them. They're good people."

And it turns out they get better.

John mentions a volunteer called Andrew Wells who has phoned him several times for some "long phone conversations".

"Every time he rings me I seem to be going somewhere, which is odd because I don't go many places," he chuckles.

"The first time he rang I was getting all dressed up for something....now what was that?" John's memory fails him for a second.

"Christmas lunch!" he says cheerfully, then continues on more somberly.

"It was the first Christmas that I haven't been on my own in 30 years."

After three decades of spending Christmas alone, John sat down to a traditional festive feast with the residents and staff at Feros Care Residential Village Wommin Bay.

"We wanted to make sure John had someone to spend Christmas with so we invited him to spend it with us at one of our residential villages," explains Emma.

John jumps in.

"A nursing home was a dirty word to me. My mum was in one but it was just corridors with rooms off it and four beds in each room. It was nothing compared to Wommin Bay," he says.

"This place (Wommin Bay) was lovely. I've had thoughts about moving in there now myself.

"And the people, well, I can't say enough about them.

"Kim had her own Christmas Day with her family but she put aside time to take me down to Kingscliff and bring me back. She brought her young son on the first trip and her mum came with her on the way back."

Kim is a Feros Care employee who volunteered to be John's personal driver on Christmas Day.

## “ THAT'S THE FIRST CHRISTMAS DINNER I'VE HAD FOR 30 YEARS

"That's the first Christmas dinner I've had for 30 years," John repeats.

"Usually I'm a loner. I don't go out much you know, but I really enjoyed it. Everyone was so friendly there. They matched me up with a chap, George – he was a resident and he was good to talk to."

When John is asked how being included in the Christmas celebrations made him feel he looks lost for words for the first time since we arrived.



"Good," he finally gets out.

"I was pleased to go and I was more happy when I got down there because the staff and everyone were so friendly.

"It was really, really good and different to what I've been used to. I usually just stay at home and have one of the meals there," he points to the freezer.

"...yeah, it was really good and quite a surprise. I've found that there's a lot of caring people, you know, particularly the volunteers who've been coming to my home. It's great they're going to keep coming too."

When asked if he is hoping for something similar next Christmas he gets a cheeky twinkle in his eye and looks to Emma as he asks "are you going to invite me again next Christmas?"

"Of course," says Emma.

"Wonderful," smiles John.

"Well, there's your answer."



Looking for a volunteer or want to become one? Visit [ingreatcompany.com.au](http://ingreatcompany.com.au) to find out how!

# BE SOMEONE FOR SOMEONE

**SINCE BE SOMEONE FOR SOMEONE LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER 2019, WE'VE BEEN STRAIGHT INTO IT - WORKING TO CONNECT PEOPLE AND FIGHT LONELINESS IN OUR COMMUNITIES.**



## WINTER UPDATE

**A**s I write this update to tell you about our progress since launch, we are in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic – possibly the biggest challenge to human connection ever faced. Feros Care established Be Someone For Someone to tackle loneliness as we knew, first hand, it was a growing epidemic with crippling effects on our most vulnerable. We had not anticipated how quickly and widely our work would be needed, as many seniors in particular have quickly become isolated and without face to face contact.

With that in mind we launched our 1,000 Notes of Friendship campaign, which saw volunteers from all across Australia writing to seniors, to help brighten their day and make them

feel less alone. There's something special about a handwritten card to let someone know they really matter. It's such a pleasure to see the gorgeous heartfelt cards, many with beautiful decorations and drawings on them.

Whilst this situation has amplified the need to address loneliness, Be Someone For Someone has been hard at work since launch with our campaigns and programs.

Our More the Merrier campaign was launched for Christmas 2019, and we prompted Australians to think of someone who might be lonely over the festive season and encouraged

them to make their Christmas a little merrier.

With the community's support, we helped over 400 people! The kind acts included everything from setting an extra seat at the family's Christmas lunch to visiting patients at the local hospital.

Sharing a common belief that nobody deserves to be lonely, we also partnered with Relationships Australia for 2020 Neighbour Day. Held on the last Sunday of March, Neighbour Day encourages people to connect with others in their neighbourhood and supports the work we are already doing at a grassroots level.

Our partnership with Relationships Australia as a Very Neighbourly Organisation is another way we can raise awareness of the importance of community connections and encourage even more people to connect with each other locally. Everyone benefits.

At Be Someone For Someone we also believe fun is a great way of raising much needed awareness – and much needed funds – to help in our fight against loneliness. And there was plenty of both at Drag Queen Bingo in February! Thanks to the team at Miami Marketta Gold Coast and Drag Queen Bingo for nominating us as their fundraising partner, with all proceeds from the night donated to our charitable initiative.

Long-term isolation is likely to cause a real problem for hundreds of thousands of people, and we all know

*To invite my elderly neighbour over on Christmas eve for drinks and nibbilies*

JAN COUGHEY  
19 December, 2019

*I will buy a couple of bunches of flowers and go to the local hospital. Will check with the staff which patients have no family or very few visitors and gift the flowers.*

HELEN PRITCHARD  
10 December, 2019

**More the Merrier encouraged people to make simple pledges that would change Christmas for someone who is lonely.**



Jo Winwood at Drag Queen Bingo



*Just some of the 1,000 Notes of Friendship*

someone who's at risk. That's why Be Someone For Someone has started the Let's 5 Loneliness campaign, to give people practical ways to tackle loneliness head-on before it has a chance to take root and lead to other health issues.

**The Let's Five Loneliness steps encourages people to:**

- 1. Make a daily 5-minute call
- 2. Get online
- 3. Lend a hand or volunteer
- 4. Send a note of friendship
- 5. Donate today

Our CEO, Jennene Buckley, reminds me that Be Someone For Someone is supporting the work Feros Care

has been doing for more than three decades. In our work caring for seniors and people with disability, we see loneliness everywhere. That's why Feros Care has already established a volunteer program, In Great Company – a platform to connect volunteers with people who are lonely. If you haven't already, check out the stories on pages 7 and 20 to see the great work they're doing. Other projects like The Madagascar Project, encourage connection through volunteering for a cause.

Loneliness is a modern-day tragedy with devastating effects – COVID-19 highlights this. It can be addressed if we work together and we are here to do just that.

Creating opportunities for people experiencing isolation to re-connect takes time and resources. It's only through the support of our donors and volunteers that we can change, even save lives. Visit [besomeoneforsomeone.org/donate](https://besomeoneforsomeone.org/donate) to see all the ways you can help lonely people experiencing loneliness.

Thank you for your support so far! To stay up to date be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

Warm regards,

*Jo Winwood*

**Head of Be Someone For Someone**



**For more on Be Someone For Someone programs, or to get involved, visit [besomeoneforsomeone.org](https://besomeoneforsomeone.org)**

## VIRTUAL SOCIAL CENTRE GOES INTERNATIONAL

Our intrepid Social Experience Coordinator, Kayla Meredith managed to squeeze in a European holiday earlier this year, prior to travel being restricted. In what we believe is the Virtual Social Centre's (VSC) first international live tour, Kayla gave attendees a beautiful view from her apartment in Vienna, while having a relaxing chat about her adventures.



This simple technology made it possible for attendees to feel connected to the wider world, and perhaps reminisce about their own youthful adventures. Kayla says a lot of her regular VSC attendees were excited in the lead up to the trip, so she wanted them to feel part of it while she was there.

“The VSC is all about creating community, and helping people feel as involved as possible in what’s happening is a great way to do that.”

For more information about the VSC visit [feroscare.com.au/virtual-social-centre](http://feroscare.com.au/virtual-social-centre)



## SENIORS, SAM & SUNRISE

Our seniors have been spending isolation in style, with some of our regulars from the Virtual Social Centre even having a virtual catch up with Sam Armatyge on Sunrise.

We love that we can help seniors connect and fight loneliness with the help of technology. They had a great chat with Sam and enjoyed their television debut!



## FEROS VILLAGE RESIDENTS ARE TOP OF THE CLASS!

Residents at Feros Village Byron Bay had the opportunity to relive their school days – complete with uniforms, tests and even detention!

During the day the senior students attended class, sat for maths and geography tests and had their lunch delivered to their class in a brown paper bag. School Captains, a boy and a girl were chosen to represent the class, and students received merit awards.

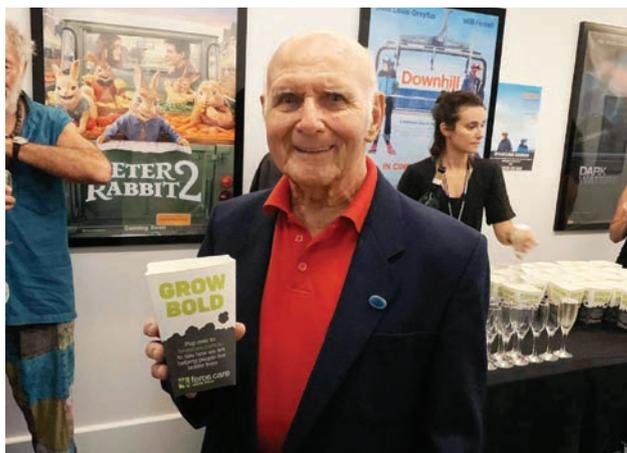
Feros Care Positive Living Team Leader, Bec Stephens says the day “Was such a laugh! Everyone loved it!” .



## STAYING YOUNG AT HEART

In 2020 we were once again a proud sponsor of the Young at Heart Film Festival. Running from 19 February to 4 March 2020, Young at Heart is Australia's only film festival programmed for film lovers aged 60 and up.

This year we got a little creative and had our very own Feros Care popcorn boxes available for festival attendees.



## UPDATED DICTIONARY

Another small selection of new words and senses coming into the English language.

**Climate Emergency** – The Oxford Dictionary Word of the Year for 2019, Climate Emergency is defined as a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage.

**Freegan** – Sometimes referred to as a 'dumpster diver', a freegan is a person who believes it is wrong to throw away food when millions of people around the world are hungry. For this reason, they only eat food they can get for free, which would usually have been thrown out or become waste.

**Nomophobia** – Anxiety about not having access to a mobile phone or mobile phone services.

**Lit** – something (usually an event or situation) that is intense, fun and exciting.

**Angsting** – worrying or agonising over something.



## OUR PLACE

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) has launched an incredible new website called Our Place for women and girls with disability. Our Place is by and for women, girls (aged 15 years and above), feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability. Our Place exists because women and girls have asked for it, and have been actively involved in every stage of the development of the website.

So far, over 100 women with disability across Australia have directly contributed to Our Place through a Project Steering Committee, an Expert Advisory Panel, workshops, user testing and contributing their personal stories.

Our Place provides practical resources and information across five main areas:

- **Human rights**
- **Leadership and participation**
- **Decision making and choices**
- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights**
- **Safety from all forms of violence.**

## MEME CORNER

I'M HERE TO TURN  
YOUR ROUGH DAY  
INTO A  
RUFF DAY



For more Feros Care social news follow us on Facebook

# CARE IN OUR C

## TEAM PROFILE

### TANIA GARLAND COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKER

**FOR 10 YEARS TANIA GARLAND HAS BEEN BRINGING JOY TO HER CLIENTS AS SHE WINS HER WAY INTO THEIR HEARTS WITH HER GENEROUS ATTITUDE AND KIND SPIRIT.**



As a Feros Care Community Support Worker, Tania helps her clients with everything from personal care, shopping, respite and domestic services. She relishes the interaction and loves meeting new people.

“Working on the personal care side is wonderful because I know that they are looking forward to seeing me and having a chat,” said Tania.

“All of my clients have such different personalities and it’s lovely to be able to get to know every one of them.”

Tania found her passion for people care while looking after her parents and joined Feros Care after they passed away.

“When you have beautiful parents or elderly relatives you want to make sure they are being treated the way you would treat your parents so I wanted to work somewhere that I could offer that level of care,” she said.

**“ WHEN I VISIT MY CLIENTS I TRY TO CARE FOR THEM THE WAY I WOULD MY OWN PARENTS**

“When I visit my clients I try to care for them the way I would my own parents.”

Tania always takes the time to learn about her clients – their likes and dislikes – and each of them

has a place in her heart, but one particular client stands-out in her decade of service.

Gweny was Tania’s very first client and over the years she has formed a special bond with the now 90-year-old.

“The very first day I started my mum had passed away the week before, and when Gweny opened the door she just reminded me so much of her I burst into tears,” said Tania.

“I was supposed to be taking care of Gweny but she ended up caring for me as she gently soothed me and helped me through my grief. It was like a role reversal.”

Tania and Gweny became good friends and she fondly remembers the time they made a detour on the way to an appointment.

“When I found out Gweny loved the races I got her all dressed up and we visited the TAB on the way to her doctor,” Tania said.

“It was great to see her so happy and excited and it’s something I still enjoy seeing in all my clients – that glint in their eye when they are enjoying themselves.”

Tania said the kindness and support she’s shown by the team at Feros Care was what set it apart from other jobs she’s had over the years.

“You feel heard,” she said.

“The kindness of Jennene (CEO) and all the upper management is what makes Feros great.

“They always remember your name and take the time to congratulate you when you’ve done a good job.

“If you ever have a problem you know you can call and it will be solved quickly. In past jobs I have felt like I was on my own but at Feros you feel like you can express your concerns and get a response.”

**“ AT FEROS YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN EXPRESS YOUR CONCERNS AND GET A RESPONSE**

For anyone considering becoming a carer, Tania said it was important to be yourself and be prepared to be flexible.

“Be kind,” she said.

“When you knock on the door to someone’s home, make sure you do it with a smile and a warm greeting.

“Remember you are there to support your clients with whatever they need – whether it’s taking the dog for a walk or calling a cow in for dinner. Be prepared for anything.”

**Looking for a community support worker like Tania? Call us on 1300 763 583**

# COMMUNITIES

## TEAM PROFILE

### BETH MAHONEY, TELEHEALTH COORDINATOR

**IN BETH MAHONEY'S VAST EXPERIENCE AS A NURSE, THE PROVISION OF AGED CARE WAS MOSTLY REACTIVE; RARELY PREVENTATIVE. BUT SINCE JOINING FEROS CARE IN 2019 SHE HAS ENJOYED THE PROACTIVE APPROACH THE ORGANISATION TAKES TO MANAGING PEOPLE'S HEALTH.**



Beth is the Telehealth Coordinator for our Virtual Care team, currently coordinating the Staying Healthy Living Well program in Central Eastern Sydney. The program aims to improve the health outcomes of seniors by offering education, coaching and vital signs monitoring.

"I love that Feros Care actively promotes good health and wellbeing and develops tools for people to improve their quality of life," said Beth.

"As an organisation, we focus on what people can do, rather than what they can't, and we are always finding ways to innovate and enable people to become healthier and more connected."

Staying Healthy Living Well is a free program for seniors, funded by the Central Eastern Suburbs Primary Health Network, that combines Telehealth with vital signs monitoring and mentoring by Feros Care Telehealth nurses to help people understand and self-manage their conditions.

The program was first launched for people with chronic illnesses over 75, but Beth successfully expanded it to include younger, more active people who had more recently been diagnosed with a condition.

"While the program was already a great success for people over 75, I noticed there was a cohort of people who were just reaching their

senior years and starting to deal with health issues that would also benefit," said Beth.

"It is now available to anyone over 65 looking to improve their health, general wellbeing by being open to learning about their health and accepting support which will allow them to better manage their health conditions.

"We work with people to develop and achieve goals, which might be increasing their level of activity or improving their mood.

"The outcomes have been very positive and most participants are disappointed when the program comes to an end.

"Some say they feel like they are losing a friend as they've enjoyed the interaction with nurses through Telehealth, as well as the programs and classes available through Feros Care's Virtual Social Centre."

Beth said while the social interaction had great benefits there were clinical benefits too, including a reduction in hospital admissions.

"We're finding that once the participants have an increased knowledge of their condition such as what causes it, what triggers it and how to control it, they gain the confidence to self-monitor," she said.

"Armed with this knowledge and understanding they take control of managing their own health, reducing

the occurrence of unnecessary hospital visits.

"Participants are also more confident with technology. This has been hugely important during COVID-19 as they are adept at using Telehealth and monitoring devices, which has given both the client and the clinician options to overcome isolation barriers."

Beth said Staying Healthy Living Well demonstrated the essence of Feros Care's ethos of empowering people to live better lives. She believes this program should be expanded across the country.

"The benefits are far reaching – not just for the participant, but for the entire community," she said.

"The provision of good health care should be multifaceted, and this program supports GPs, clinicians and allied health professionals, while giving seniors the power to take more control over their wellbeing and improve their quality of life.

"A healthier community means a happier community and less burden on the health care system. Everybody wins."

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**For more information on Staying Healthy Living Well or any of our Telehealth programs call the team on 1300 763 583**

# CARE IN OUR C

## CLIENT PROFILE

### REG MATTHEWS, NDIS PARTICIPANT

**LIKE ON THE FIELD HE USED TO COMMAND AS A JUNIOR INDIGENOUS FOOTBALL STAR, REG MATTHEWS IS NOW KICKING MAJOR GOALS OFF IT.**

Enjoying waterfront outings along the Strand in his home of Townsville, the former mine security guard and Feros Care participant said he felt like he'd struck gold with a new lease on life, after gaining access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

"My life has changed for the better, now I'm getting support," said Reg, who has had two strokes and lives with diabetes.

**“ MY LIFE HAS CHANGED FOR THE BETTER, NOW I'M GETTING SUPPORT**

"I have carers from Open Minds come for three hours every day and they're (funded) through the NDIS.

"We go out for rides and walks, and they help me clean the house and do the washing. It's really good and everything has changed a lot."

A proud Aboriginal man, Reg's new-found happiness and chance to reconnect with his culture and community takes him back to a time before his health issues had taken hold, when sport, socialising and connecting were key pillars of his life.

Originally from Ayr, Reg was a junior two-code football star, representing and honouring his indigenous heritage as an Australian All-Black in league.

As an Aussie rules back-pocket with plenty of potential, Reg was headed to Papua New Guinea to represent Australia before officials discovered the talented teen was only 16.

Working security in the mines of the Northern Territory amid the dusty expanses of Alice Springs and Katherine in his adult years, Reg loved connecting to country.

However, after his first stroke 15 years ago, Reg returned to Townsville before a second stroke just four years later greatly affected his life.

With his health declining, Reg felt like he was in prison. Cut-off from friends and loved ones, he was limited to a gruelling walk around his neighbourhood while struggling at home.

"I required a walker, but the one I had wasn't good enough... it had small wheels and I couldn't push it around," Reg said.

"So, I tried to sit down most of the time. I couldn't put my hand above my head, and I had to butter bread with a spoon.

"Having no cultural connection was really hard... It felt like I was in a prison cell. I didn't go out and I got no air; you just want to be active and have a friendly talk with friends and just talk about anything really."

From never receiving any funding support prior to being introduced to the NDIS through a co-location between Feros Care and Townsville Aboriginal and Islanders Health Service (TAIHS), Reg, now 62, is on the path to happiness.

Aside from alleviating his social isolation, Reg's NDIS plan has given

him access to occupational therapy support for equipment, including a new power bed and a sit stand chair.

Assessments for home modifications including a ramp for easy house access will also be carried out, and adaptive technology for the kitchen to help build capacity around meal preparation, nutrition, and maintaining general health and wellbeing is also in the works.

Describing Reg's capacity building as "phenomenal", Feros Care Community Development Coordinator (CDC) Stacey Stafford has seen great strides.

"When we first went through the process and I told him he'd gained access to the NDIS, he said 'I don't believe you, things like that don't happen to me,'" Stacey said.

**“ HE WAS SO GRATEFUL THAT SOMEONE WOULD WANT TO HELP HIM AND MAKE HIS LIFE BETTER**

"He was so grateful that someone would want to help him and make his life better. He's a very proud man and doesn't like asking for help but assisting him to get access to the right services has been fabulous."

Ringling Reg every week to keep in contact, Stacey sees plenty of exciting things ahead, with a "whole scope" of options taking shape.

Wanting to spend more time with family and friends, Reg is also set

# COMMUNITIES



on joining culturally appropriate men's groups, including a Men's Shed in his area.

While he's champing at the bit to see a North Queensland Cowboys game again, it's calling on his culture and sporting knowledge to help the next generation of Indigenous footballers which forms the basis of a dream Reg thought impossible not so long ago.

"Reg is very keen to reconnect with his community, and it's something he talks about all the time," Stacey said.

"He has a huge passion to give back to the Indigenous community through sport, and in particular youth, who he hopes to mentor."

"There's many things available for Reg now and he can't wait to explore them."

## Need help with the NDIS?

 **1300 986 970**  
 **feroslac@ndis.gov.au**



Visit [feroscare.com.au/ndis](https://feroscare.com.au/ndis) click on the pink chat icon at the bottom of the screen and start typing your question.

## CLIENT PROFILE

# NORMA BURGESS

**WHEN NORMA BURGESS HAD A NEGATIVE REACTION TO CHEMOTHERAPY, SHE COULD NO LONGER PERFORM THE SIMPLEST OF TASKS.**



Unable to walk or use her hands, the Tweed Heads mother relied on her husband to look after her 24 hours a day with support from Feros Care.

"I wanted to walk again and with the help of Koh, my physiotherapist from Feros who visits me in my home, I've been able to regain my balance," said the 70-year-old.

"At Christmas 2018 I couldn't even feed myself as the chemotherapy killed the nerves to my hands and legs, but fortunately my nerves slowly grew back and now my muscles have gotten stronger and I have a lot more confidence.

"Gaining that confidence is such a big thing – especially when it comes to walking. I want to be able to get on my walker and just go but I'm not there yet. It will come. I've just got to be patient."

Norma said having the support to reach her goals was paramount.

"I feel that I've got the right people around me to get to where I want to be," she said.

"My goal was to be out of the chair and able to walk by Christmas and I'm sure that will happen well and truly before that.

"I don't expect to be able to walk alone again but I'm happy to be able to get around with a walker.

"It's a big step from where I was and I'm grateful to my husband, my rehab team and Feros Care for helping me get there."

Physiotherapy isn't the only service Norma receives from Feros Care on her government-funded Home Care Package.

After her husband had an operation and could no longer assist Norma for several weeks with tasks like showering, she needed extra services and found Feros Care's packages superior to other providers.

"What Feros offered in terms of packages and services was much better so I went with them and I'm happy with the decision," she said.

"As I make progress with my rehabilitation I don't need as much help, but I still get a domestic lady for a couple of hours a week who is really good, and a podiatrist comes to check my feet and cut my nails."

Norma manages her services through the MyFeros Portal.

"I find the portal great. You can do all your communication through it – just type your questions or changes and in no time you get an answer back," said Norma.

"It just helps make the process easy and I'm happy with the services Feros Care provides as it helps keep me in my home, rather than having to go into care."

**To register or for more information on MyFeros**  
Visit [feroscare.com.au/myferos](https://feroscare.com.au/myferos) or call **1300 763 583**

# BRAIN GAMES



## COMMUNITY WORD SEARCH

A O R G A N I S A T I O N H F  
 A N C J F R A T E R N I T Y Q  
 C E C A M A R A D E R I E H I  
 O I R L C O M M O N A L I T Y  
 L G G V A S S O C I A T I O N  
 L H R H V D S P D V L P F K J  
 E B C D S C O M M U N I T Y S  
 C O L D J N C I N E T W O R K  
 T U C O A L I T I O N N X O I  
 I R E X Q B E L E A G U E Z X  
 V H R E L A T I O N S H I P S  
 E O K P A E Y N B B B V R J B  
 T O Q F E L L O W S H I P W Q  
 G D F E D E R A T I O N G V O  
 C O M P A T I B I L I T Y U U

NEIGHBOURHOOD  
 ORGANISATION  
 LEAGUE  
 FEDERATION  
 COMPATIBILITY  
 CAMARADERIE  
 COMMONALITY  
 COMMUNITY

RELATIONSHIPS  
 COLLECTIVE  
 FELLOWSHIP  
 COALITION  
 ASSOCIATION  
 SOCIETY  
 FRATERNITY  
 NETWORK

# SUDOKU CHALLENGE

## BEGINNER

2	3	1	
	1		2
3	4		1
1			

## INTERMEDIATE

1	5	2	6		3
6		4		5	2
2	4	3	5		
	1	6		3	
			3		
3			4	6	

## ADVANCED

					1		9	
				9		2	6	
		9				1	3	8
		3	9	2	5	4	8	1
9	1	8	3		7		2	6
	4	5	1		8			3
5			2	8		6		
7	2		5		4	8	1	9
8	9	4			6	3		2

3	4	2	1
1	2	4	3
2	3	1	4
4	3	1	2

3	2	5	4	6	1
4	6	1	3	2	5
5	1	6	2	3	4
2	4	3	5	1	6
6	3	4	1	5	2
1	5	2	6	4	3

8	9	4	7	1	6	3	5	2
7	2	6	5	3	4	8	1	9
5	3	1	2	8	9	6	4	7
2	4	5	1	6	8	9	7	3
9	1	8	3	5	1	6	2	4
6	7	3	9	2	5	4	8	1
4	5	1	6	8	9	7	3	2
1	8	3	4	7	5	2	6	9
4	5	1	6	8	9	7	3	2
1	8	7	4	9	3	2	6	5
3	6	2	8	5	1	7	9	4

BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE ADVANCED SOLUTIONS:

# REVIEWS

## BOOK REVIEW

Fruzsina Gal – Digital Marketing Specialist

### THE WEEKEND

by Charlotte Wood

*The Weekend* by Charlotte Wood is a short, impactful novel about the friendship of three women in their 70s as they gather at the beach house of their recently passed fourth friend.

As the weekend trudges on, we get an insight to each of the three women's past and present, and the twists and turns that have led their lives to this point – whether it's a failed career as an actress, a lifetime of being a mistress to someone with a family of his own, or alienation from your adult children in the wake of your husband's death.

The book tackles friendship, grief, loneliness and ageing in insightful,

funny and sometimes cruel ways – it looks at the fabric of friendship that endures decades, secrets, tragedy and success. As the three friends adjust to their circumstances and each deal with the loss in their own ways, we get an insight to their flawed, human, often unlikeable yet strangely relatable lives.

What really drives this novel home is a slow but steady revelation of vulnerabilities (both of the main and the supporting characters), creating a multifaceted perspective that shines light on some wonderful, incisive moments and observations about ageing and ageism. This book has taught me that the way we carry on



through times of great change may differ, but we must have friends to hold onto through it all.

At its core, this character-driven story is about life, and how sometimes it can get away from you faster than you realise – it is guaranteed to make you look at your own life in a different light.

## MOVIE REVIEW

Jacqi Holloway – Marketing Coordinator

### WONDER (2017)

More than just feel-good entertainment, *Wonder* is a movie that invites you to see from different perspectives and creates the magic of empathy.

The story centres around Auggie, a clever, funny and imaginative young boy who has Treacher Collins Syndrome. This means his face looks different to most other young boys. Home-schooled for his whole life, Auggie makes the decision that he wants to attend school. The movie takes us through that journey through the eyes of Auggie and his family.

We see the fear and protectiveness of a mother afraid for her child, and a father putting on a brave face

to cover up that same fear and protectiveness. We also see what it's like for a sibling of someone with medical issues and disability. We see that same protectiveness as well as their sacrifice.

Auggie's cleverness and humour serve him well, and he soon has a best friend, Jack Will, and the respect of most. Bullies exist, however they ultimately become allies. The story arcs when Auggie overhears Jack – trying to fit in – say he'd kill himself if he looked like Auggie. We get a heartbreaking insight into what it's like to look different when he exclaims to his sister "Do people avoid touching you?"



Available on Netflix Australia, *Wonder* is worth your time. You'll laugh, you'll cry and you'll develop your empathy. Let's leave you with some words from Auggie's sister, that fit beautifully with our ethos here at Feros Care.

"If they stare, let them stare. You can't blend in when you were born to stand out."



# GROW BOLD

## WITH DISABILITY



**A PODCAST  
THAT BRINGS  
YOU UPLIFTING  
AND INSIGHTFUL  
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