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# LAAS Summer News

Accommodation services | Day Options

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*Featuring*

New Short Term  
**Accommodation Service**

A Year in  
**Review**

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*Day Options*  
**Opening**

**Sensory Room**  
**Update**

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As we move into the festive season and make ready to welcome in the new year, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the year that has been.

Firstly, in January the LAAS community voted a new Board to govern, working under a new constitution.

It has been a privilege to work with the current board. I sincerely thank Rosey Sandow as Vice-Chair and Co secretary, Tony Meissner as Co-Secretary and public officer, Cindy McDonald, Kylie Scott and Sandy Mitchell.

It's been a team effort as we navigated the year using zoom meetings and electronic communication, attended multiple training sessions and worked on subcommittees throughout the year.

On Friday, 27 November, the members voted at a Special General Meeting for the new changes to the constitution to which we had a great turn out via proxy voting and zoom.

Secondly, the Operations has overseen the renovations of the LAAS Day Options Centre and moved the office

to the same building, a one-stop-shop you might say. The service is expanding in all areas, client base, staff and geographically.

The team has done well to operate, as well as move and become accustomed to a different working environment.

Operations have had to continually look for more innovated ways to support the organisation through the pandemic, a task which cannot be understated, and the teams have done magnificently.

I am sure we are all looking forward to some freedom in 2021 to meet in larger groups when permitted and hopefully hold some community events with our family members. The first event will be our deferred 2020 AGM, as yet, still in the planning.

Here is hoping we can have some family engagement sessions in 2021 and come together for some information sharing of how best to support our family members as we grow.

Like many in the community, I'm looking forward to an official opening of the renovated LAAS building, and I know those who have already been able to attend are most impressed.

So, to each and every one of you, I wish you all a safe and happy festive season. See you all in 2021.

Pam Davis  
LAAS Chairperson

## Board Representatives

### Chairperson

Pam Davis

### Treasurer

Pam Davis (Chair of Finance Sub-Committee)

### Committee Members

Rosey Sandow (Chair of Risk Management Sub-Committee),  
Sandi Mitchell, Kylie Scott,  
Cindy McDonald,  
Tony Meissner

## LAAS Team

### General Manager

Jeremy Mills

### Chief Operations Officer

Sue Crispe

### Corporate Services Manager

Megan Walker

### General Manager Accommodation & Day Options

Leah Cunnah

### Engagement & Quality Officer

Sophie Wiese

### Human Resources Officer

Kelly Leigh

### Administration Officer

Ethan Grosse



# A Year In Review

We had an ominous start to 2020. Australians watched on as many parts of the country experienced devastating bushfires which were quickly followed by equally devastating floods.

During some of Australia's darkest days, we saw the strength of the human spirit. Communities, friends and strangers stood together to support those affected by these natural disasters.

Money was raised, donations were given and people worked hard to ensure that everyone was looked after. The "mateship" that is so proudly Australian was evident to everyone.

What came next, nobody was prepared for. COVID-19 has changed the way we live our

daily lives and has created new social norms.

Our clients and staff have also experienced challenges this year. However, we have also been fortunate to have experienced many achievements.

LAAS entered the new year focused on achieving competency in all areas of our NDIS audit; in March, that audit took place. Auditors visited all LAAS sites and audited our entire scope of practice.

The audit outcomes were very positive, and we continue to work to ensure that our organisation meets the NDIS Safeguarding Practices.

Valued feedback from

auditors has allowed LAAS to review some of our systems and work towards continuous improvement within the organisation.

After the audit was completed, we all took a deep breath and looked forward to a few quiet days, but this was not to be.

Within 24 hours of our audit being completed, the South Australian Government announced COVID-19 restrictions. As information filtered through, LAAS was proactive in temporarily closing our Day Options site and reconfiguring service models.

This measure helped us to provide services under the constraints of COVID whilst ensuring we provided a safe environment for all clients and staff. We developed a COVID-safe plan where all safety protocols were put into place.

In the first few weeks, nobody knew the extent or the severity of what we were to expect. While we did adapt to a new way of working and clients adapted to the restrictions, it was still a challenging time for everyone.

One positive that came from





the COVID restrictions and the temporary closure of Day Options was that LAAS took advantage of the closure and commenced renovations on the Day Options Building.

These have been extensive, and while they are also ongoing, the bulk of the renovations were able to be carried out without interruption to clients or the service.

The easing of COVID restrictions in August meant we could reopen Day Options. It was fantastic to see our clients return to the service.

They have since been busy catching up, undertaking activities and exploring the changes at Day Options. During the early part of the year, LAAS also opened two new SIL houses: one in Berri and another in Waikerie.

Supported Independent Living is our specialty, and this was our first Waikerie accommodation site.

As with every year, we farewelled some long-standing valued members of our team; some chose to retire and others moved onto other opportunities. We are always sad to see team members move on but thank them for their years of service and dedication to our clients and organisation.

This year has proved what a great team we have created. The commitment and dedication of our staff have shone through during the difficult times and LAAS is very grateful to have built such a skilled workforce. It wasn't just a year of goodbyes.

We have been very fortunate to welcome many new staff members. Within 12 months the service has grown quickly, and we have almost doubled our workforce.

We welcomed many support workers who work across the Riverland. Kelly Leigh joined our team in the office as an Admin/HR Officer, and

Leah took on the position of General Manager of Accommodation and Day Options.

The easing of COVID restrictions in August meant we could reopen Day Options. It was fantastic to see our clients return to the service. Clients have been busy catching up with each other, undertaking activities and exploring the changes at Day Options.

Within months of reopening, South Australia was put into lockdown due to a COVID outbreak in Adelaide. The lockdown impacted all services, and once again, we had to close Day Options for some time.

We are unsure what the rest of the year will bring with regard to COVID restrictions. LAAS is prepared to meet any COVID requirements, ensuring the safety of our clients, staff and stakeholders are paramount.

December is when we host many fun events; this year, however, we are very disappointed to have to reschedule all of our end-of-year events. The Support Worker of the Year Awards, International Day of People with Disability event, Day Options opening and Client Christmas party will all be rescheduled for 2021.

We move into 2021 with optimism and look forward to another year of achievement, challenges and growth.

# Staff roles & a new addition



Sue – Chief Operations Officer, is moving away from Accommodation support and moving towards Business Development, quality oversight and support of Jeremy within his role.



Sophie - Quality & Internal Audits

Internal Auditing plays a significant part in ensuring LAAS comply with NDIS standards.

Internal audits are conducted monthly throughout the organisation. The audits conducted review policies and procedures, documentation, registers, and restrictive practices and reportable incidents, as well as incident management and feedback processes.

These are completed and fed back into the continuous improvement cycle, which then leads to the upskilling and training of all employees.

In November, LAAS welcomed Ethan to our administration team. Ethan joined the organisation to provide administrative support to the corporate team for the next couple of months. Please say hello and introduce yourselves to Ethan when you are next at the LAAS office.

## Welcome Ethan

My name is Ethan Grosse. I've just



finished high school and am very excited to be working at LAAS!

I was born in Loxton and have lived here ever since. Now that I don't have to spend my days studying in a classroom, I'm able to enjoy adult life and slowly grow and mature as a person.

I thoroughly enjoy public speaking as well as theatre (especially musical theatre!). I'm heavily involved in my church community of Concordia Lutheran Church as a Bible and lay reader, alongside being my congregation's Sunday School teacher.

I aspire to be a Lutheran pastor sometime in the future, though I'm in no hurry to get there as I want to get as much life experience as I can before then.



Feedback is extremely important to us so we can work out what we're doing right and what we need to improve on. This is to ensure that we can provide quality services for our Clients as well as a safe, rewarding and positive work environment for all of our employees.

You can provide all types of feedback, whether that be a compliment, complaint or suggestion for improvement. It is just as important to let us know when we are doing something right as well as when there is an issue to give us a balanced view of the organisation.

Once you provide feedback, it will be assessed and responded to depending on the type of feedback provided.

In line with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018, LAAS is committed to investigating and dealing with all feedback in a fair and timely manner. This is to ensure all relevant parties are consulted at every stage of the feedback process and a resolution achieved.

## How to provide feedback



### Website

The Laas Feedback Page includes a form in which individuals can provide feedback to the organisation. Feedback can remain anonymous and could be a compliment, complaint, comment or a suggestion.



### Hard copy

By filling out a hard copy feedback form at each LAAS locations



### Verbally

By speaking to an operations employee who can fill a feedback form out on your behalf



### Electronically

By requesting an electronic version which the operations team can email to you



[www.laas.com.au](http://www.laas.com.au)

Please feel to provide any feedback online via <https://laas.com.au/contact/feedback/>



## Employee of the month

The employee of the month award was introduced by LAAS as a way to celebrate the hard work of our staff. The recipients of the awards are always nominated by their peers. Many staff receive multiple nominations each month. For December we would like to celebrate the contributions that Larissa Halupka. Larissa has been with LAAS for just over seven months. In that time she has worked at both day options and within accommodation. She was nominated for her positive approach and continual client focus.

## Traineeships

In 2020, LAAS committed a significant investment to upskilling staff. Eight staff are being supported to undertake their Certificate III and IV in Disability. Training is being conducted via TAFE SA, and students access training via online courses. They are required to complete assessments and undertake practical training. The study is completed at the students' own pace, and they can decide on the number of units they will complete each semester.



## Annual General Meeting

The LAAS AGM has been rescheduled to 2021. We have recently distributed Board nomination forms to all families. Nominations are accepted both from Members self-nominating or another Member nominating an individual to a position. If you are the type of person LAAS needs, please consider nominating yourself to the Board as it will be a great opportunity both personally and professionally.

## Newsletter update

In 2021, newsletters will be sent to clients, families, staff and stakeholders quarterly. A quarterly newsletter allows for increased quality of content and provides a greater overview of news and events. Each newsletter will also include a Day Options Planner which will outline the upcoming programmes, outings and special events.







## Day Options renovations nearing completion with finish line in sight

**T**welve months ago, LAAS undertook the enormous task of renovating our Day Options building and facilities located on Edward Street in Loxton.

The renovations have been extensive and have taken significant planning and time. What started off as a coat of paint has ended with updated facilities, offices, a training room and a meeting room, as well as our well-spoken-about, state-of-the-art sensory room.

The original aim was to update the property and some of the resources; however, as the renovations progressed, we found that the upgrades would be extensive, but with the enhancements came many opportunities. One of these was converting the old Day Options garaging into office space.

This part of the renovation allowed us to merge our corporate services with Day Options, placing all resources within the same building. This move allowed for the greater day-to-day support of Day Options as well as additional contact with the clients supported by the corporate services team.

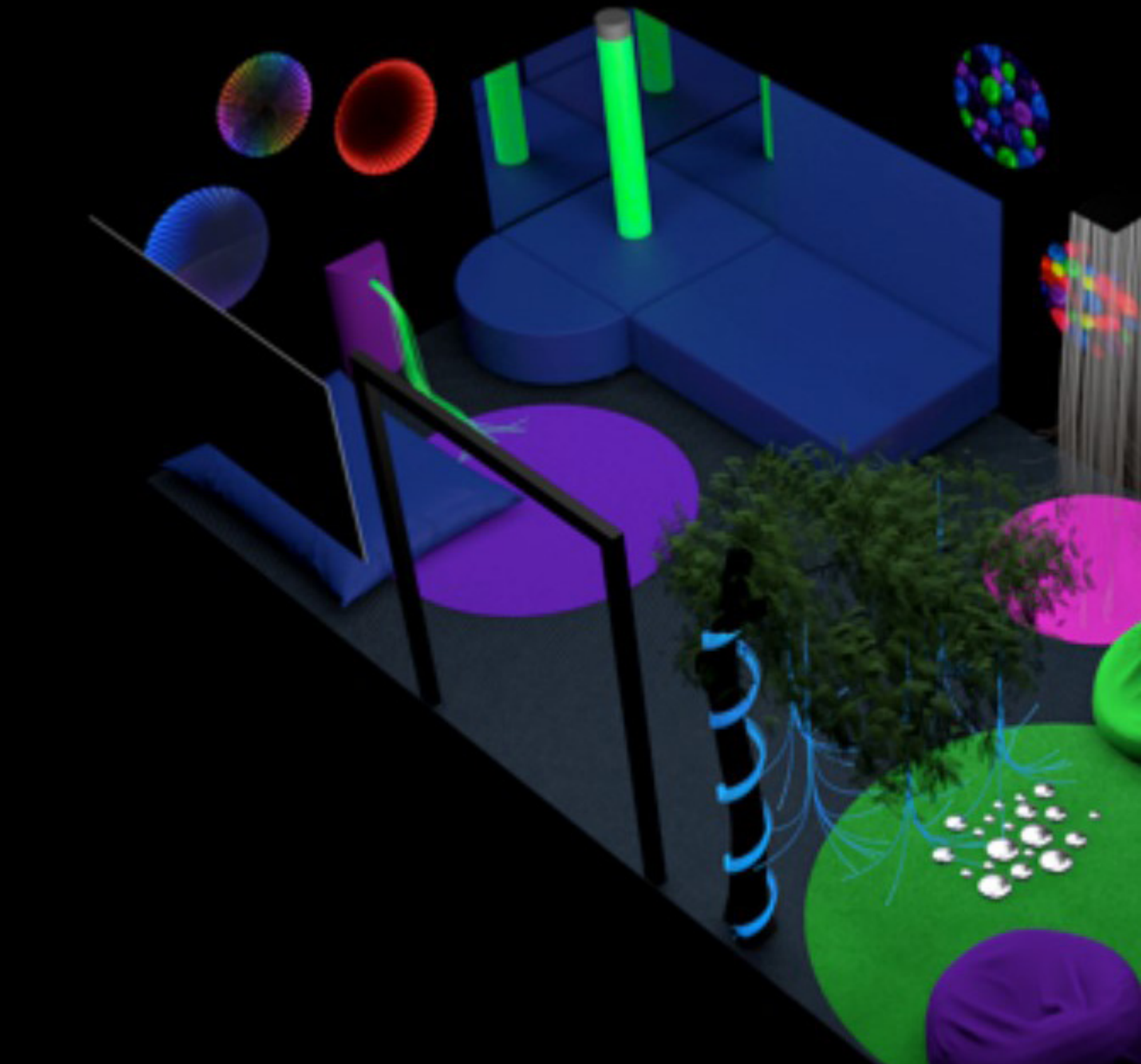
Along with offices, we were able to integrate a meeting room and a full training room. The training room allows for all LAAS training and inductions to be onsite.

Within the Day Options building, the kitchen has been fully renovated to incorporate numerous ovens and cooktops. The kitchen is fully accessible, and wheelchair-height benches have also been included.

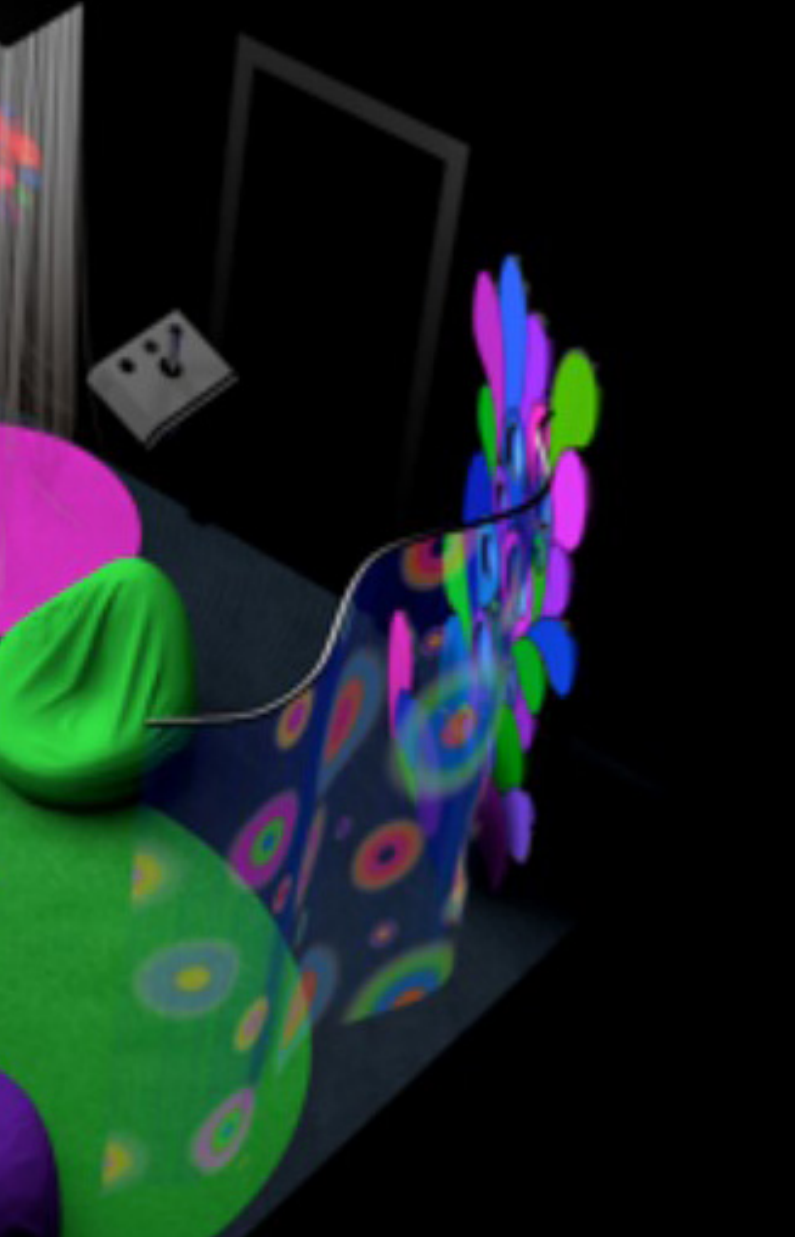
The bathrooms were upgraded to meet all regulations for disability bathrooms and an electrical upgrade was completed, with new lighting and safety equipment installed throughout the building.

Although we have achieved a lot in 12 months, our renovations are continuing into 2021. The outdoor area will be the next area of focus, with the installation of a sensory garden and BBQ area.

We invite clients, staff, stakeholders and members of the community to come and visit Day Options when we hold our official opening early in 2021.



# A SENSORY ROOM EXPERIENCE



**W**hen the Day Options renovations commenced, LAAS allocated a room and a generous budget for the design and installation of a state-of-the-art sensory room. The sensory room has been equipped with an interactive “magic carpet”, full wall projector, LED waterfall lighting, waterbed, bubble tube and vibrating bean bag.

All the technology was provided and installed by Assistive Link. Assistive Link visited Loxton numerous times to design, install and provide training for all the equipment allocated to the room.

Once the technology was in place, LAAS

identified a gap—although the technology equipment had provided a unique sensory experience, LAAS decided that it need to be taken one step further. To complete the fit-out of the sensory room, we therefore engaged the services of Bliss from Sensory Spaces Australia. She visited our sensory room in November and put forward ideas to further develop the sensory experience. Bliss suggested we include sensory wall installations and a galaxy ceiling. In addition to this, we brought in more items to enhance the sensory experience, such as weighted blankets, mirror stones, dream clouds and aromatherapy items.

LAAS clients will soon be able to enjoy a state-of-the-art sensory room after 18 months of visualizing and planning.

The versatile space can be used to assist people of all ages to develop communication skills. Sensory rooms are suitable for people with and without disabilities.

Multi-sensory environments help people to increase concentration levels, improve alertness and general awareness of their surroundings. LAAS Clients are going to strongly benefit from this technology, improving their overall capacity, assisting them to live an independent lifestyle.

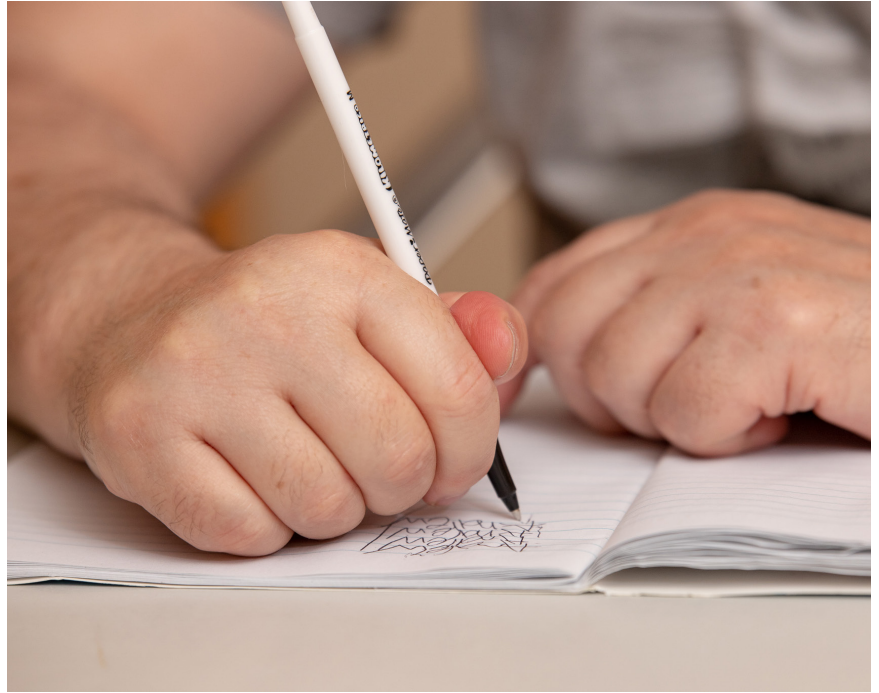
There are many more benefits of a multi-sensory environment, especially for people with disabilities, as it can provide a way of encouraging learning, motor development, cognitive function and social interaction skills.

The sensory rooms are not just solely for the use of people with disabilities, even though they have shown to have many benefits.

The sensory room will not only be available to all LAAS clients during the week but will also be made available for private bookings. This includes after hours and on weekends, allowing members of the public to access a sensory experience that is not available anywhere else in the region.

# Day Options Planning

On December 21, management will be holding a Day Options planning day where first-quarter activities and programs will be set for 2021. Once these plans are finalised, we will distribute to clients and families via e-mail. Moving forward, these plans will be available to view in the quarterly LAAS newsletters and via the LAAS website. Any planning/activity ideas are welcomed, and these can be submitted to Leah at [leah.cunah@laas.com.au](mailto:leah.cunah@laas.com.au) prior to December 21.



# Happy Birthday Peter!

Peter Nott celebrated his 50th birthday on Monday, 5 October. He chose to celebrate the day by inviting his friends and family over to his home for a barbecue and birthday cake. Everyone in attendance had a great time getting to eat delicious food and have a laugh together. Peter said that he 'enjoyed the day a lot'. HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY PETER! Please see photos below of the Peters birthday.



# Halloween Party

What better way to celebrate Halloween than with a dress-up party! Clients, staff and guests from the special school dressed up and enjoyed a fun pizza lunch followed by spooky monster jelly. Day Options was decked out with decorations made by the clients. Costumes ranged from Elvis to witches and wizards to vampires. Many games were enjoyed and attendees won prizes for the best costume, orange tossing and pinning the stem on the pumpkin. Please see the following page for photos.





# New Short Term Accommodation House

In early 2020, LAAS acquired a property in Waikerie. The property features five bedrooms, each with its own self-contained kitchenette and bathroom, previously used as an aged care home.

The property was quickly identified as a potential short-term accommodation (formerly known as respite) site and the first respite accommodation facility for LAAS.

After the property was secured, the logistics of planning and executing a respite facility came into effect.

LAAS envisioned a modern facility with the latest technologies and the comforts of home.

On 17 October, after many months of hard work, the initial vision of a modern respite facility became a reality. LAAS opened the facility by extending the property to clients, staff, stakeholders and community members.



The opening was met with an overwhelmingly positive response, with many attendees surprised by how inviting and comfortable the accommodation was.

Attendees commented that they had always thought of respite accommodation as a hospital-type facility.

They were impressed by how comfortable the rooms felt, how well equipped the property was and how well laid out it was, in addition to its accessibility.

Each bedroom also has its own outdoor access, allowing for privacy. All the bedrooms include smart



# House Features



televisions. Other entertainment features include Google Home Minis and gaming systems such as the Nintendo Switch and a Playstation Four; rooms can be tailored for adults or children.

A room has also been set up with a motorised bed and lifter for clients with limited mobility.

John Woodberry, one of the founders of LAAS, spoke regarding the history of the organisation; Sue Crispe (LAAS COO) and Jeremy Mills (GM) also spoke at the event.

For short-term accommodation enquires please call 8584 6569 and talk with Sue Crispe.



- 5 accessible bedrooms
- Ensuite in each bedroom
- Kitchenette in each bedroom
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Modern appliances & facilities
- Fully furnished property
- Hospital bed
- Interchangeable children's room
- Wi-fi
- Large parking area at rear of house
- Linen & toiletries provided during stay
- Large entertainment area
- Floor hoist / lifter









# Introducing Claude Bruno

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Strathmont Centre, staff trainer in the Intellectual Disability Services Council, deputy director in the devolution of the Ru Rua Nursing Home, director of service development at the Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home in Sydney, CEO of the Independent Living Centre and manager of the Disability Services Office, where he was

heavily involved in the establishment of disability services on the APY lands.

Additionally, he has also worked as the director of service development at the Julia Farr Centre. Before joining National Disability Services in 2019, Claude spent the most recent 12 years as the director of accommodation services within the Department for Human Services.

He was responsible for government-supported accommodation services, day options services, positive behaviour services, person-centred development and business services. He was also involved in ensuring the operational transition of accommodation services to the NDIS.

LAAS first engaged Claude two years ago to provide restrictive-practice training to all staff. This training is now a mandatory requirement for LAAS staff.

LAAS quickly recognised the standard of Claude's training. He is to present zero tolerance and duty of care vs dignity of risk training, which has also been made mandatory.

Please see the following page for a write-up about Claude's Restrictive Practice training and Zero Tolerance training.

Claude has a passion for assisting people with disability to have a better life and has strongly supported the reform of disability services to achieve this aim throughout his more than 40 years of industry experience.

He started his career as a residential care worker in the then Department of Community Welfare and has held various roles, including as a psychologist at

# Restrictive Practice and Zero Tolerance

**R**estrictive-practice training provides support staff with an understanding of what a restrictive practice is and the legal responsibilities of service providers and support staff to identify more empowering ways to support people with a disability according to the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

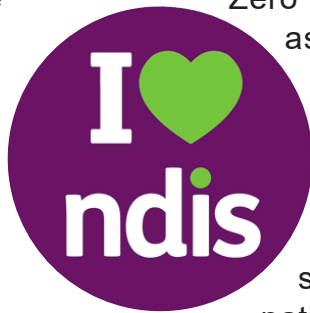
The training explores the five forms of restrictive practices:

- Physical restraint
- Chemical restraint
- Mechanical restraint
- Environmental restraint
- Seclusion

In addition to defining what a restrictive practice is, the training promotes:

- an understanding of the difference between authorised and unauthorised restrictive practices
- the identification of different forms of restrictive practices

- the fulfilment of reporting obligations in line with the NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incident Rules 2018.



Zero tolerance (ZT) training assists disability service providers to understand, implement and improve practices which safeguard the rights of people they support. Built around a national evidence-based framework, zero tolerance is:

- a way for organisations to understand what they can do to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and violence when it comes to people with disability
- a clear message that abuse, neglect and violence are not okay
- a way of thinking about abuse as a human rights issue, not a disability issue
- an organisational and

personal commitment to act on:

- anything that makes a person with disability be or feel unsafe
- anything that doesn't support a person's human rights
- anything that we could be doing better
- a collection of resources to educate and train staff at all levels to understand their responsibilities and responding to abuse



- a way of working collaboratively within and outside the disability sector to prevent and respond to abuse.

The zero tolerance commitment is a commitment to recognise, raise and respond to any deviation from the human rights of people using disability services. It is a personal and organisational commitment to always have our eyes open and always do better to support rights.

# ZERO TOLERANCE

Focus on rights, target abuse

EMC  
RELATIONSHIPS  
EQUALITY

Service Providers and support staff are involved with supporting people who may have difficulties with everyday life due to disability, ageing or chronic illness. They are responsible for protecting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people, while at the same time enabling positive risk-taking behaviour.

Every individual has a different 'risk appetite', or an amount of risk that they are willing to take. Similarly, organisations have different risk appetites that they will tolerate.

These impact the type and level of support a

consumer may want, balanced against the type and level of support that an organisation will provide.

When the risk appetites of consumers, families and organisations come into conflict, a moral dilemma may occur concerning the level of compromise each party is willing to make.

As a way to minimise the negative consequences that result from risk, it is important to balance the likelihood and extent of potential harm against the possibility and extent of potential benefit to all parties.

This may not just be in relation to the consumer and worker but may also include family members, other consumers, and other staff and community members. It is essential to clearly articulate all of the



variables in balancing harm against benefit so that bias is controlled as much as possible.

Once this analysis has been completed, a brainstorming exercise is done to identify risk-mitigation strategies.

Such strategies need to be based on the least restrictive options to meet the person's goals while, as far as possible, ensuring the safety of all parties. From the identified risk-mitigation strategies flows a plan of action which, when implemented, renders the balance of harm against benefit equal.

Claude is very generous with his knowledge and provides practical, helpful and effective person-centred solutions; from simple changes improving choice and control to highly complex situations where restrictive practices and positive behaviour support plans are utilised, Claude has experienced it all.



# Christmas Vocabulary

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the puzzle grid with the name of each Christmas item following the number and direction indicated.

1→  2→ 

3  4→  5→  6→ 

7  8→  9  10→ 

11  12→  13→ 

14→  15→  16→ 

17  18→  19→ 

20→ 



# A MILLION STEPS IN SEPTEMBER



Earlier in the year, LAAS undertook a healthy eating initiative whereby LAAS engaged a nutritionist to provide education around healthy eating and nutritious meal preparation.

In response to the healthy eating initiative, Day Options followed this up with a promotion in September which was named *A Million Steps in September*. LAAS asked all clients and staff if they would like to participate in reaching our goal of one million steps in one month.

Clients and staff took on the challenge with gusto. Each participant was given a pedometer to track their steps; this information was then recorded on our Basecamp app. All clients actively participated and clients with limited mobility recorded their support workers' steps against their totals.

Additional daily walks and actively tracking steps saw some participants taking up to 17 000 steps a day!

The winner for most steps in a day was Brett Woodberry, who achieved over 19 000 steps in just one day. Brett received a new pair of sneakers for his efforts. The staff award for most steps went to Damien. At the end of the month, we were delighted to have not only reached our goal of a million steps but to have surpassed it. Next September, we might need to set an even bigger goal!



THE GUM

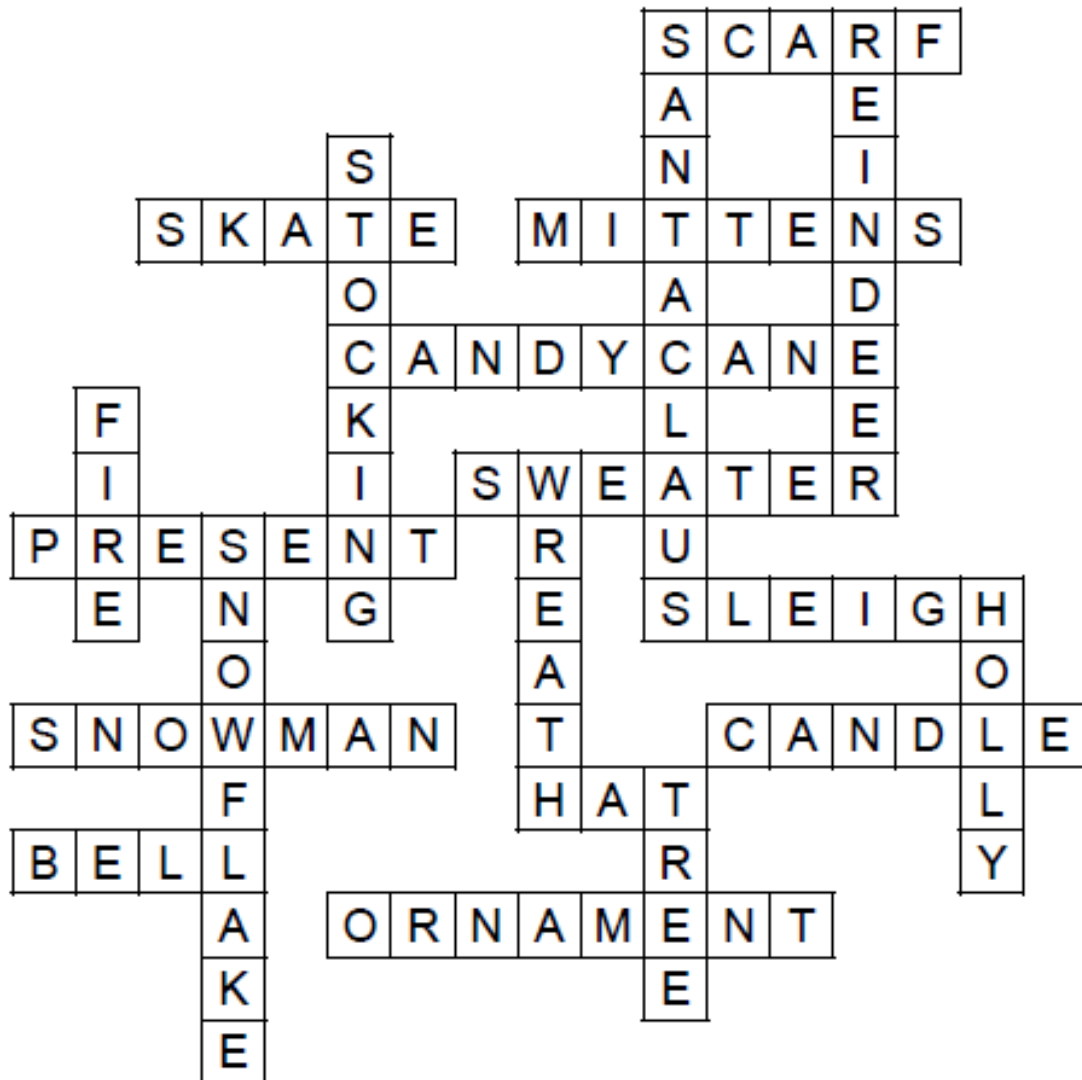


## LAAS thanks The Gum Tree

LAAS would like to recognise and thank the Gum Tree Organisation for their contribution to the community. The Gum Tree is a voluntary organisation who co-ordinate monthly events for people with disabilities living in the Riverland. LAAS thanks Aub, Lil, Trevor, Julie and committee members for providing social networks and opportunities for LAAS clients. LAAS clients especially enjoy the disco's, meeting friends and the scrumptious supper.

# Christmas Vocabulary

## SOLUTION



**New Waikerie short term accommodation house is now welcoming all stays!**



On behalf of LAAS we wish you all a

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

**And**

**A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**OUR CHRISTMAS CLOSURE HOURS ARE:**

**Head Office - 21/12/2020 - 11/1/2021**

**Day Options - 18/12/2020 - 13/1/2021**