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# LAAS Autumn News

Accommodation services | Day Options

*Featuring*

A New Look  
Day Options

Day Options  
**Planner**

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*Day Options  
Opening*

**Loxton Gumtree  
& LAAS**

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Handwashing 101



Unfortunately, Brent has been unable to take up his elected position on the Board due to other commitments. We are, however, fortunate that Karen Brown has now taken up this position.

This year is already shaping up to be busier than ever. We have already completed our annual Governance Training provided by Pinnacle HR consultant Aileen Robertson on the 24 February.

We hope to run some face-to-face family member engagement sessions in 2021 and celebrate last year's achievements. We look forward to hearing from family members regarding the future of LAAS Operations beyond December 2021 and the end of the Partnership with Enhanced Lifestyles as it currently stands.

The Edward Street Day Options Centre and Office is looking fantastic. The building has been well received by visitors and regular Day Option clients. There are more upgrades planned for the outside area of the facility to utilise all the space available in a comfortable manner. We look forward to hosting an open day for the Riverland community later this month.

Again, let me take this opportunity to remind everyone to send in their feedback. All feedback is welcomed and valued. It helps us strive to better the service and meet the needs of all. You can send your feedback via the website or call the team at the office for a form.

Take care one and all.

Pam Davis  
Chair

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2021.

The LAAS community held its deferred 2020 AGM on 5 February 2021, passed the annual reports and voted in the new Board.

We farewelled Tony Meissner and Kylie Scott. Tony has been a long-time serving Board Member, including the past chair. We are grateful for his dedicated service and commitment to LAAS. Kylie retired after one year's contribution but was highly valued over that time. We look forward to her continued involvement with LAAS as a full member. Sincere thanks to them both.

The 2021 Board consists of re-elected, continuing, and new Board Members.

Re-elected and continuing their service are:

- Pam Davis, three years to serve and elected 2021 Chair
- Rosey Sandow, three years to serve
- Cindy McDonald, two years to serve
- Sandra Mitchell, two years to serve

Newly elected to the Board:

- Gary Ooyendyk, 3 years to serve
- Brent Bennett, 3 years to serve

## Board Representatives

### Chairperson

Pam Davis

### Treasurer

TBA

### Committee Members

Rosey Sandow  
Cindy McDonald  
Sandra Mitchell  
Gary Ooyendyk  
Karen Brown

## 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



LIFESTYLE ASSISTANCE AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

# The Loxton Gumtree

LAAS have a long-standing relationship with the Loxton Gumtree. Clients have been involved in their various programs throughout the years, learning new skills whilst having fun along the way.

Lillian Mattner, a long-serving volunteer of the Loxton Gumtree, has provided some insight into their history.

In 1984, I was employed by Riverland TAFE to teach independent living skills to adults with an intellectual disability. The adults were mainly working at the Orana workshop and living at the Orana Hostel with some living at home with their parents.

One day I asked a student what she did on the

weekends and to my horror, she replied, "I stay in bed as there's nothing for me to do." I mentioned this to a group of about ten of my friends and like me, they were shocked.

We felt what was needed was a special club that offered weekend activities specifically for adults who have an intellectual disability, accompanied in some cases with a physical disability. So our journey began.

We called a public meeting and outlined our notion. Through this meeting, we gained support from all three service clubs (Lions, Rotary, and Apex), church groups, community groups, the Loxton Council, and parents.

The support was quite overwhelming and continues

to this day, especially from the Loxton Rotary club. Radio, TV interviews and articles in the local paper followed. Community members volunteered to be on a committee. We were off and away!

We applied to the then Department of Social Service for some funding and to our surprise and delight we were granted an interview to discuss our proposal. However, at that stage, we didn't have a name, constitution, or venue.

The venue problem was easily organised when the Church of Christ offered their large hall rent-free for our activities. The constitution problem was solved with several visits to a lawyer.

Funding was provided by a generous donor. The name Riverland support group for the disabled INC was chosen for our official business name. However, what informal name could we call our social club? On the night, our committee of ten was discussing a suitable name.

The meeting was dragging on and on. Finally at 11 pm, in desperation, someone said pointing to an indoor palm, "Oh, let's just call it the palm tree." Everyone chuckled, well why not call it



Image caption: Current Loxton Gumtree Volunteers



Image caption: Loxton Gumtree volunteers, taken in 1990

the gum tree? It's Australian, easy for our guys to say, and represents something strong that branches out. And so, on that night, the Loxton Gum Tree was born.

Our first activity in October 1984 was a BBQ with mini Olympics on the lawns opposite the Church of Christ.

The prefects at the Loxton High School organised this event, a volunteer bus driver collected people from Barmera, Berri and Renmark, while volunteers collected Loxton residents using their own vehicles.

About 45 disabled adults attended that first event, along with volunteers, family members and interested community members. The Mayor of Loxton, the late Peter Jackson, gave a heartfelt speech, giving both his and the council's full support.

A programme was drawn up for activities on alternate

Saturdays in the Church of Christ Hall. Table tennis, darts, indoor bowls, letter writing, cooking, craft and beauty care were available. Plus, the favourite afternoon tea or lunch (or both). Other activities included monthly discos, day trips to other Riverland towns, or the Mallee indoor cricket and birthday and Christmas parties.

The gumtree volunteer base grew to well over thirty, all of whom were passionate and dedicated. Sadly, over the decades, most of those first precious ten volunteers have either passed away, come or gone into aged care, or for various reasons are unable to keep volunteering.

However, thirty-five years on, the Loxton Gumtree still provides popular discos, annual Riverland entertainers night, a sporting activity (indoor cricket for decades and bowls playing alongside mainstream players) and, of course, the Christmas party.

Our President, Trevor Noble, is actively involved with the historical village, picnics at the village have been introduced, plus free entry to anyone with a disability and their carer.

The Gumtree is now run by a group of twelve dedicated volunteers, the oldest being 81.

Over the years, we have had a person with a disability on our committee. This has proved to have many benefits, both for our committee and the individual.

Because the Gumtree does not receive any funding and needs to pay \$1200 a year for insurance cover, our committee needs to raise funds.

Fundraising is hard work. Any financial help from community groups, such as Rotary, has been most welcome.

To me, it has been a pleasure, and privilege, to be part of the Gumtree family for thirty-five years. It has definitely been the highlight of my volunteer work.

I know that all our volunteers, past and present, have expressed the same sentiments – we all say that we have received back much more than we have ever given.

Lillian Mattner.  
Loxton Gumtree volunteer

# LAAS employees of the month

LAAS would like to congratulate Judy Channon and Kelly Millard for being nominated for the employees of the month. Both Judy and Kelly were nominated by their peers as they work well in a team and support the other staff in the house that they work. Judy and Kelly have been with LAAS for under a year and have shown great initiative and positivity. They both remain positive at all times and are always concerned about the welfare of the clients. LAAS has chosen to award them both Employee of the Month.



Image Caption: From left to right, Judy Channon, Kelly Millard

## Bingo Night



The Loxton Charity for All Bingo has kindly offered to hold a bingo night at the Loxton Club with LAAS to be the recipients of the evening. We have selected 20 MAY as the date for the event, so please mark this in your calendars and be sure to come along and help support LAAS! All are welcome. Eyes down will be at 7 pm. We are going to require assistance with organising the night, including caterers and donations for the raffle. If you are interested in helping on the night, please contact the LAAS Office mobile on 0499 907 675 and speak with Ethan Grosse, Administration Officer. Thank you all again and we are looking forward to the evening!



Working together  
to build a better  
future



# Website Portal Coming Soon



We are excited to announce that our website portal is currently in development.

The portal will be a central location point for you to access all organisational resources, online forms, and policies and procedures. These documents will be available to you at any time for your convenience.

All submitted forms from the portal will feed directly to the appropriate department at head office, ensuring a streamlined process.

We're very much looking forward the launch of our new website portal which will be a useful tool for all staff to utilise.

## What will the portal include?



### Online Forms

There will be several forms available including continuous improvement, incident & hazards, feedback and many more!



### Policies & Procedures

All documentation regarding the operations of LAAS.



### Staff Resources

Various HR documents will be available for staff to complete online.



### Member Resources

Documentation and forms for Members to submit.



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

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



# BECOME A LAAS MEMBER

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Join and make a difference in the organisation

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FULL MEMBER?

- Full voting rights at all General Meetings
- Eligible to join the Board
- Have a say in the direction of the Association







*The team at  
LAAS wishes  
everyone a  
Happy Easter*



# A New Look Day Options

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we used the closure of our Day Options as an opportunity to perform some upgrades to the facilities.

A new addition to our Day Options program which clients absolutely love is the sensory room.

Sensory rooms are designed to stimulate one's senses and help users become more aware of their surroundings, encouraging them to engage with the larger world around them. They provide a calming effect to help channel emotions and improve focus.

Those with intellectual difficulties can strongly benefit from a sensory room to improve concentration levels. Sensory rooms can be instrumental in motor skill, cognitive and sensory development.

LAAS' sensory experience includes LED water-fall lighting, waterbed, bubble tube, sensory wall installations, galaxy ceiling, weighted blankets, mirror stones, dream clouds and aromatherapy items.

"The LAAS sensory room is a safe and engaging space for people experiencing sensory issues," said our Chief Operations



Officer Sue Crispe.

“Everything in the space has been carefully selected to include captivating lights and soothing sounds. LAAS is thrilled to offer this experience to people with disabilities in the Riverland, it’s like no other in the region.”

The sensory room will also be made available for private bookings so that others in the Riverland community can engage with this unique experience.

We also had our Day Options common room upgraded which features sensory aspects within the interior design. This space is where clients can relax in their free time or enjoy social activities.

Other new additions include an IT room where clients can engage with technology for entertainment and educational purposes. A pamper room for health and beauty needs, and an arts room where clients can get in touch with their creative side.

Clients will get to test their cooking skills in a

newly renovated kitchen area with modern appliances and wheelchair-accessible benches. There they will learn to make healthy meals and understand the importance of a balanced diet.

We are looking forward to hosting an official open day to the Riverland community in the coming months, head to page 14 for the invitation!

The event will feature guided tours to showcase the upgrades made to the building and the enriching experience that LAAS provides to clients – plus plenty of items to give away.

We encourage all LAAS clients, employees, family members and friends to attend on the day. We’d love for you to come along so LAAS is strongly represented.

We look forward to showcasing our new Day Options experience to you very soon.

# DAY OPTIONS PLANNER

After the Christmas break, clients have been involved in a variety of activities with our new programming Layout

## Monday - Sensory Activities

LAAS clients begin the week engaging with a range of sensory-based activities. This includes spending time in our new sensory room – enjoying calming sounds and pictures, feeling movement and relaxation sitting on the waterbed or exploring the visual treat of various bubble tubes and light displays.

### **Other activities outside of the sensory room include:**

- » Nature walks outdoors, exploring sights and smells of nature.
- » Gardening activities – digging in the soil/planting seedlings.
- » Sensory doughs/sands – to feel and explore.
- » Smells and taste – making juices with fresh fruit to try.

## Tuesday – IT & Communication

On Tuesdays, there is a range of communication and IT activities. This is where clients spend time with staff in the IT room researching different topics and interests of their choice

LAAS has recently begun using the Proloquo2GO program. A communication aid that many of our clients are familiar with. We look forward to utilising this program and seeing more clients engage with it to assist with communication.

### **Other IT & communication activities include:**

- » Purchasing and reading through newspapers and magazines together – talking about current events and other items of interest.
- » Visiting local libraries to explore and borrow books.
- » Using cameras and smartphones/tablets to explore photography, including taking pictures and editing/printing.
- » Letter and card writing.

## Wednesday – Cooking & Crafts

Wednesday is always a firm favourite for clients who enjoy cooking activities. On some weeks, clients can expect to make a meal to share for lunch; in other weeks, it may just be healthy snack items that are prepared. Cooking activities focus on encouraging healthy recipe and ingredient choices as well as healthy portion sizing. We also encourage clients to be involved in the shopping process, including preparing shopping lists, locating ingredients in the supermarket and purchasing them at the register.

### **Craft activities include:**

- » Decorations/cards for the various holidays celebrated throughout the year.
- » Painting and drawing.
- » Researching craft activities of interest – shopping for required items together

Many of our clients come to us with ideas for craft activities they wish to do. We endeavour to include these requests in our programming each week to ensure interest and engagement.

## Thursday – Community Outings

On Thursdays, clients explore the Riverland region by attending local places of interest. LAAS Day Options clients spend the day out of the centre, enjoying a packed lunch out by the river, or purchase food from local restaurants/cafés.

We are always on the lookout for activities and events around the Riverland for clients to attend – including Chaffey Theatre shows and local festivals/activities.

We hope to include day trips to Mildura or the Adelaide Hills for some variety in the future.

## Friday - Health/Exercise and Pampering

Clients finish off the week with a day of health and relaxation. On Friday mornings clients attend the Berri gymnasium, where they have the entire building to use as they please. Trampolines, foam pits and other gymnastics equipment is available for clients to use.

In the afternoon, time is spent relaxing, either in LAAS's new pamper room or the sensory room, having a relaxing massage, foot spa, or nails painted. Clients also enjoy going to a local venue for a drink in the afternoon as a social and fun way to end a busy week.

**For any enquiries regarding Day Options programming or to pass on any ideas for activities/events, please contact Leah Cunnah at [leah.cunnah@laas.com.au](mailto:leah.cunnah@laas.com.au)**

Join us for our

# DAY OPTIONS OPENING

12 Edward Street, Loxton

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**1.00PM - 3.00PM | 30 APRIL 2021**

Come for a tour of our brand new Day  
Options program

Food & drink will be available on the day with  
plenty of give aways

We'd love to see you there!



# DAY OPTIONS DATES

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PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING DATES FOR  
DAY OPTIONS

**Anzac Day Observed - 26th April**

**Day Options closed**

**Day Options Opening - 30th April**

**Day Options closed**

**Mothers Day - 9th May**

**Queens Birthday - 14th June**

**Day Options closed**

**5th - 9th July**

**Mid Year Closure**



# Client Activities & outings





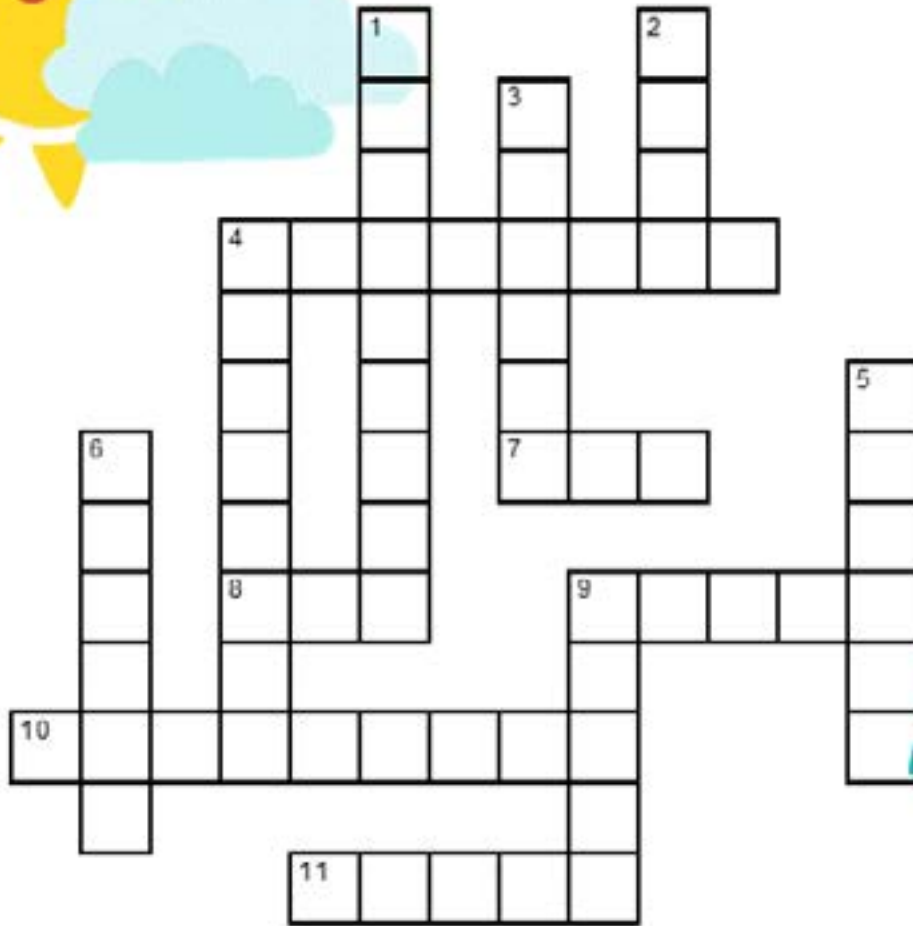








# Easter Crossword



## ACROSS

- 4. You might do this to eggs for Easter
- 7. A hen makes this
- 8. Used to color eggs
- 9. The hen's baby
- 10. Colorful candy you might find in an Easter basket
- 11. Peter Cottontail is one

## DOWN

- 1. Eggs might be made from this
- 2. Look for eggs
- 3. Easter Day event
- 4. Yellow or white spring flower that grows from a bulb
- 5. What the Easter Bunny brings
- 6. A pretty hat worn on Easter
- 9. Don't eat too much of this or you might get a belly ache





# LAAS Clients Take Part In Plant Drop

The Day Options clients got involved in a Community Movement that has been gaining momentum around Australia and has spread worldwide

The feel good movement is about kindness and gratitude. It's about sharing something for no other reason but to make someone smile.

LAAS clients have dropped several succulents and a peace lily with lovely little hand made notes around the community for people to find in the hope of making someone's day.

The 'Plant drop' movement was created by a man called Micka Brown who has given local page Riverland Plants and Cuttings Buy Swap Sell the green light to act as a Rural base for 'Plant dropping'

The plant drop movement has become so popular in Australia so that's spread to the other side of the world in America!

Originally, the group was called

Indoor Plant Drop, but Micka changed it to plant drop so outdoor plants could also be part of the movement.

Clients really enjoyed this, they had many questions about what we were doing. We are all crossing our fingers that someone who found one of our day options plants will post a picture on the local site.

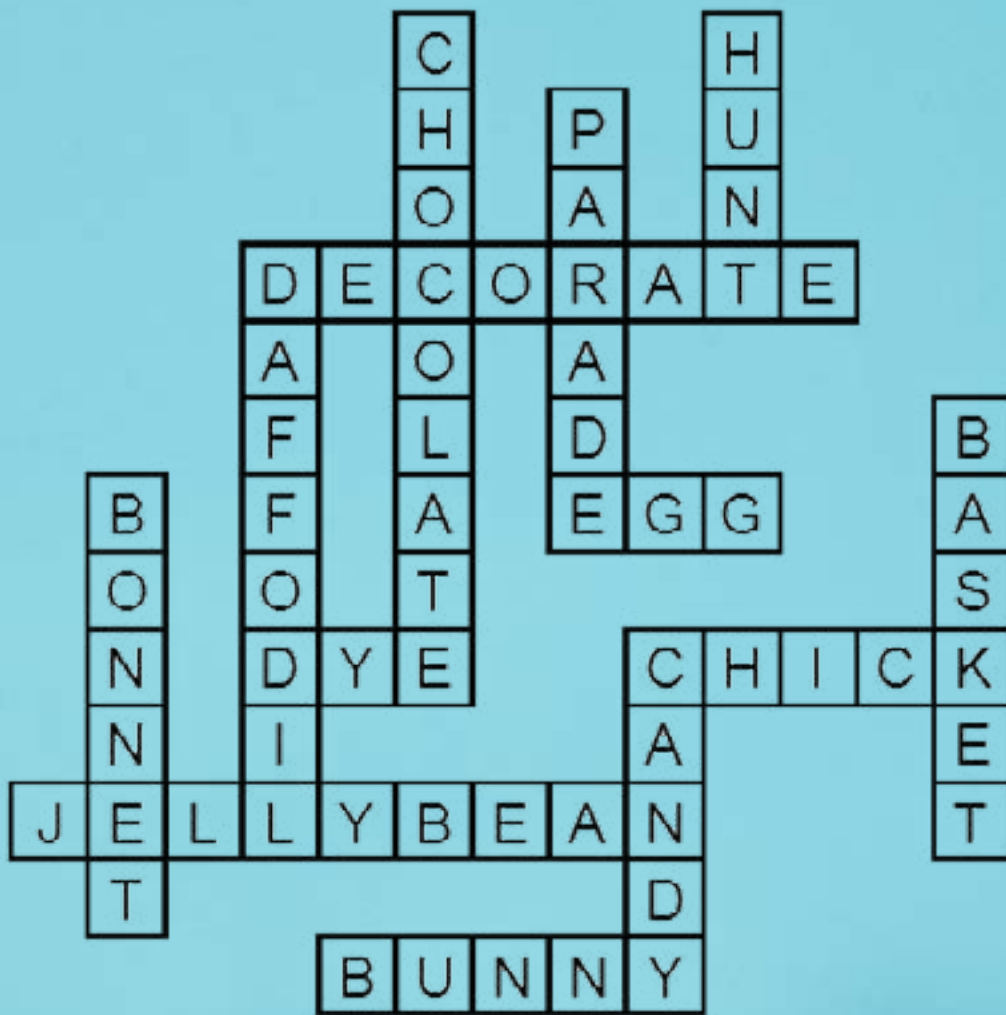
You can be creative as you like with the plants you would like to donate as well as the pots they are planted in.

The day was a big success and we look forward to more LAAS plant drops in the future.

If you would like to know more about Plant Drop, head over to their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/313797433392558/>



# Crossword Solution



# Handwashing 101

## #StopTheSpread

Proper hygiene stops the spread of germs

**01**

Wet your hands before applying soap.



**02**

Bring your palms together and rub soap all over the palms and backs of your hands, including between the fingers.



**03**

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.



**04**

Wipe your hands with a clean towel or paper towel and avoid rubbing too vigorously.

