



January 2017



CEO Comment

Martin Wren

It's a New Year – Sound the Charge!!

It's January 2017 and Sydney's Premier Disability Employment Service has been preparing for an even better performance than our record breaking 2016.

How can we improve?

Our focus will continue to be on ensuring that the work we find is sustainable and that we work to develop careers through our very effective Apprenticeships and Traineeship programs (Best figures ever in 2016!).

My staff are trained to 'Aim High' and I am delighted to see we consistently deliver outcomes that far exceed National averages for full time work and for work greater than 25hrs per week (in fact the only area where we are consistently 'beaten' is in work that meets only minimum (8hr) standards).



Other areas for improvement include raising the profile of our success through good news stories that show more employers the truth that people with disability can make great workers.

Finally (at least for Jan), we are opening four more Disability Employment sites (Tahmoor, Bowral, Goulburn & Yass) and two extra Transition sites (Parramatta & Hornsby). Staff are presently furnishing and staffing these offices, so if you have ever thought of a career helping change the world you could do worse than joining the terrific NOVA tea.

NOVA OFFICES

- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Caringbah
- Engadine
- Hurstville
- Ingleburn
- Katoomba
- Penrith
- Richmond
- Rockdale
- Rouse Hill
- Springwood
- St Marys
- Windsor

Fear not! People with a disability will contribute to your workplace

By Ann Bolch

'I wish we could clone Brian.'

That's what staff at Penrith RSL say about Brian Colton, who has worked full time for four years at the club. Staff and patrons alike regularly comment on how Brian's smile and pride in his work enhances their own experience. He has a genuine interest in people and always uses people's names.



With very little work experience behind him, in 2012 Brian began working as a grounds person at Penrith RSL, supported by staff from NOVA Employment.* Soon after, club staff began to notice his amazing people skills, so asked if he would like to try working with patrons inside the club.

Brian jumped at the chance, and hasn't looked back! He now divides his time between the original position as grounds person and his indoor role in customer service at the Star Buffet and gaming area collecting glasses and wiping tables.

It's rare for Brian to have a day off, he often accepts overtime and is enthusiastic about any new tasks set for him. Brian is assisted by NOVA support workers whenever he needs to learn a new task. NOVA provides post-placement job support to both the employee and employer for as long as required for the worker to fulfil the task.

This unlimited post-placement support stands NOVA Employment above other disability employment services. NOVA is on hand to ensure consistent work through any management, location or role changes, illness or any other life event. Effective post-placement support means people with a disability consistently maintain their role to the standard expected of their employer.

'So there's really nothing to fear,' says Martin Wren, CEO of NOVA Employment. 'The only thing that stops many employers from offering work to people with a disability is the belief that they lack the knowledge to properly integrate workers into their workplaces or that they might not be able to discipline or manage the performance of staff with a disability.'

According to Martin, this is far from the case. It's in NOVA's best interests to listen to employer concerns and assist the worker to meet employer expectations. If at any stage the position becomes untenable, it's also in NOVA's best interests to enact a smooth transition from the role to find the job seeker a more suitable position.

After all, NOVA knows that if employers are happy with a NOVA-placed worker they are more likely to return the next time they need staff, which is the case at Katoomba RSL. Manager, Nick Darias, was always interested in employing people with a disability as he believes everyone deserves a go. About his early experience in doing so, he says, 'NOVA made the transition a lot easier to manage than I expected.'

Nick now employs six NOVA-placed workers across various areas of the club, including in the bar, at the door, as cleaners and in maintenance, as well as driving the courtesy bus. 'NOVA are always co-operative and more than willing to assist me with staffing issues,' Nick says.

'It all comes down to matching the job seeker to the role,' says Martin Wren. 'Called the NOVA Job Match, we do our utmost to ensure that the skills, interests and abilities of a each job seeker align with the needs of the prospective employer. We do this because it's good for all three parties – the job seeker, the employer and NOVA. We're all aiming for sustainable employment.'

Clubs NSW has been instrumental in assisting NOVA to do this through both employment and sponsorship. In early December, Clubs NSW sponsored NOVA's Transition to Work graduation, where 82 young adults with a disability graduated with a Certificate II in Employment Studies. Seventy-five graduates already have award-wage work and seven are going on to further education. Currently 26 NOVA-placed workers are employed by Clubs NSW, six full-time and three in apprenticeships.

One apprentice exceeding her employer's expectations is Breannon Coglan, apprentice chef at Miranda RSL. When NOVA approached Head Chef, Andrew Harper, he had reservations about employing someone with a disability in such a fast-paced, demanding kitchen. 'I was concerned that the person would not be able to handle the role and that would become too challenging for me to handle, given how busy the kitchen is already,' says Andrew. 'But she's become a very capable employee who happily turns up on time everyday. I push Bree as hard as all of my apprentices and she responds with enthusiasm. Employing her was a good decision.'

Andrew says that any challenges from Bree's disabilities are met by creating a flexible and supportive environment. As well, 'NOVA is in constant contact to make sure things are progressing properly,' he says. For example, when Bree wasn't ironing her uniform properly, Andrew had a word with her and NOVA staff reinforced this learning by reiterating that taking pride in your appearance reflects a general pride in your work.

Over the past 25 years, NOVA Employment has placed thousands of job seekers into sustainable award-wage work all around Sydney. That's thousands of Brians and Breannons contributing meaningfully to society apace with their able-bodied peers. NOVA may not be able to clone Brian or Breannon, but they sure now how to prepare people for the workforce and match these eager workers to a job that needs doing.

Some NOVA links

Watch our latest video on NOVA's Youtube channel



Become a fan of NOVA on Facebook. Recommend us to your friends.



What's news at Can-Do-Ability?



Want some great employment tips?



We began 2017 still on the high of how well the 2016 graduates did last year: with each and every one of them in a great outcome!



novaemployment.com.au
Ph: 02 8886 5800
Fax: 02 9833 2499



novatraining.com.au
Ph: 02 88865800
Fax: 02 9833 2499



transition.com.au
Ph: 02 8886 5800
Fax: 02 9833 2499



deafjobs.com.au
Ph: 02 4632 3300
F: 02 4625 5955
TTY: 02 4625 8395

2017 sees us with over 200 trainees, so we expect a big year with new goals to achieve, new work placements to start and new trainees to get ready for work.

2017 also sees us taking on four new TTW Job Coaches in our Richmond, Hurstville and Penrith programs.

Welcome aboard to Laura, Lisa R, Lisa B and Roxanne!

2017 has also begun with the breaking of new grounds & territories; with the opening of two brand new outlets at Hornsby and Parramatta, exciting times.

The trainees in these two outlets are settling in well and are so enthusiastic about being part of our new premises and they can't wait to meet trainees from their neighbouring offices.

Our 2nd Year trainees across all outlets are keen and eager to continue on with work placements in their Job Choices as they look towards getting ready to enter the workforce this year.

Our Work Placement Team is being kept busy supporting our trainees in their chosen fields and industries, speaking with employers about possibilities of employment.

Welcome also to all our new trainees who will be of course experiencing some nerves as they settle into a whole new life and routine after 12 years of school.

It won't take long for you to feel like you're part of the furniture and like you've been here forever.

The Coordinators, Work Placement Team and the TTW Job Coaches are really looking forward to another sensational year ahead with 100% outcomes yet again and creating another group of taxpayers.

We wish all our trainees an amazing and successful year.