



# Annual Report 2018 -2019 Calendar 2019-2020



14 month calendar

# Board Report

**2018-2019 has been a year marked with considerable change for Access Australia Group (AAG).**

We said goodbye and thank you to two people that greatly influenced AAG; Dr Michael Langdon and Neville Sharpe. As the outgoing Chief Executive Officer of AAG, Michael has lead the organisation for many years through significant challenges, growth and triumphs. Michael oversaw the merger of the organisation with Continuing Education, the redevelopment of Pepper Green Farm, the inclusion of Our Shed Eaglehawk and implemented a strategic plan that has seen the number of people involved with AAG's suite of services increase dramatically. We thank Michael for his leadership and professionalism and wish him well in his semi-retirement.



AAG Board Chair  
Greg Westbrook

Neville Sharpe commenced as a member of the Board at a time in AAG's history that was particularly difficult. Neville quickly became chair of the organisation and under his dedicated and gentle stewardship the organisation and board grew significantly to where it is today. I acknowledge and thank Neville for the time, commitment and friendship he provided to AAG.

With the retirement of Dr Michael Langdon the AAG Board embarked on a thorough recruitment process to find the best candidate to lead the organisation. The Board was very pleased to appoint Liz March as its Chief Executive Officer. Liz previously held the role in the organisation of Chief Operations Officer and knows the organisation very well. We welcome Liz and look forward to the future under her guidance.

After 25 years in Mundy Street AAG now has its new home up and running at 18-20 St. Andrews Avenue. The Board is proud of accomplishing this strategic goal of owning its headquarters and we look forward to occupying this site to its full potential for many years to come.

In another significant future investment, AAG purchased 9 Hall Street Eaglehawk in response to the significant increase in demand for its Social inclusion programs. Whilst it is not expected to be operating until early 2020 the acquisition is another key decision by AAG to meet its mission of enabling people with disadvantage or disability to enhance their life outcomes through open employment, training and other opportunities.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all staff, clients, participants and stakeholders for their commitment to AAG over the past twelve months. We look forward to an exciting twelve months ahead.

# CEO Report

Access Australia Group is a complex and diverse organization with a clear focus on our mission to enable people with disadvantage or disability to enhance their life outcomes through open employment, training and other opportunities. In order to achieve this, we rely on our impassioned people; our staff, volunteers, students and community supporters. Acknowledging also the support that we receive from our government partners, business partners, customers, philanthropists and donors without whom we would not be able to deliver creative, person-centered quality services that are both innovative and effective.

In April we fare-welled Dr Michael Langdon as our CEO. Michael dedicated 7 years of his working life to AAG, realizing a number of significant achievements including the acquisition of Access Creative Studios (formerly Our Shed) and Access Skills Training (formerly Continuing Education).

Michael's vision for PepperGreen Farm has seen it develop from a produce garden and nursery to a place of tourism, community, inclusion and culture that provides skills training and employment for over 100 people with disability in our community. With a focus on diversification, AAG branched into the delivery of Employment Services in the Monash and Bayside Employment Service Areas in Melbourne and is achieving successful outcomes with young people seeking sustainable employment. Michael's retirement fell just shy of the move from Mundy Street into 18-20 St Andrews Avenue; another staged initiative that places AAG in a strong financial position for the future. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Michael for the vision and passion he has brought to the role and the organization.

Change is inevitable, and this past year has seen significant change. We head into 19/20 with a new Strategic Plan, Board Chair, CEO and Head Office and a focus that acknowledges and builds on our past and sets a clear and strong direction for our future.



**AAG Chief Executive Officer**  
**Liz March**

# Quality Report

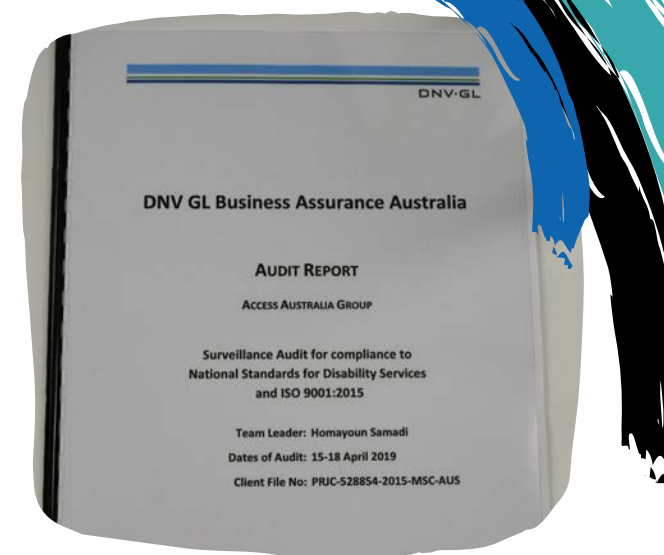
Access Australia Group (AAG) was externally audited in April this year and found to be compliant against the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) and the ISO 9001:2015 standards. AAG has been recommended, once again, for continuing certification.

AAG is transitioning from the Victorian Human Service Standards to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality Framework; a requirement for all Victorian NDIS organisations from 1st July 2019.

Improvements to the quality systems of AAG are a continuous process. Through internal and external audits, regular reviews of documentation, quality management reviews and feedback from clients and staff we are able to provide the best quality product to our clients, customers and students.

AAG staff have been a great help in assisting with the task of undertaking internal audits. This has ensured that the more than 30 internal audits conducted annually achieve compliance requirements for the various standards and audit actions are attained and implemented throughout the organisation.

Our Quality Manager is a stickler for process and in the last twelve months really enjoyed quality controlling documents, nominating people for audits and his favourite of all, monitoring, updating and creating policies and procedures. Striving to ensure high level compliance he has worked collaboratively with key staff to implement a range of guidelines and standards including AAG's Child Safe Standards and updated Codes of Conduct.





# ICT Report

It was a big year for the Information Communications Technology (ICT) Team with the move to our new site at St Andrews Avenue and the implementation of a range of efficient and enhancing ICT services including security changes to organisational printing. Remote access security was also enhanced through the implementation of conditional access Multifactor Authentication and Microsoft's Advanced Threat Protection.

The ICT team worked continually across all Access Australia Group divisions to ensure quality connectivity, service programs and support to our staff. With the goal to make ICT more simplified, they introduced condensed user email and website addresses and have plans within the next twelve months to combine all our current websites into one with the revamp ensuring ease of accessibility to our users.

With our Head Office move from Mundy Street to St Andrews Avenue, the ICT team worked tirelessly to ensure we would be fully operational by the 3rd of June; the physical move of all our ICT equipment and setting up staff quickly to ensure minimal disruptions to services provided from the site. With a great sense of humour they answer our calls and come to our rescue numerous times while protecting the organisation with continual security advancements to keep our organisation rolling.

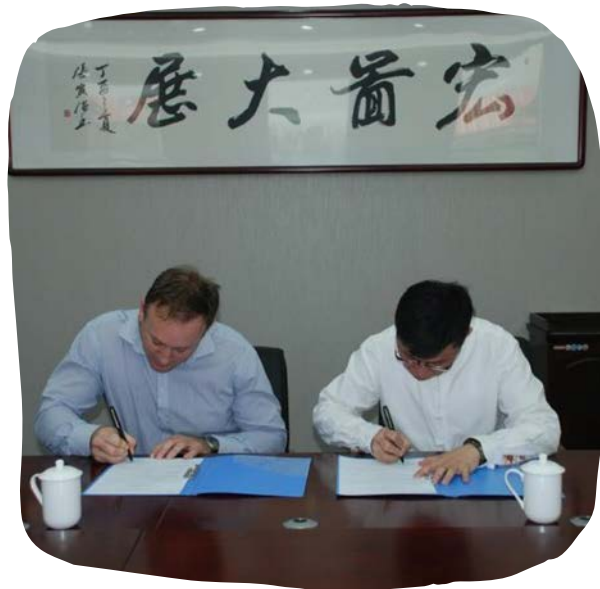
Check out our website at [www.aag.org.au](http://www.aag.org.au)



## Access Skills Training - International

Access Skills Training have been building relationships and exploring partnership opportunities with a number of schools in the international market to expand our training provision abroad. Interest has been established in the delivery of professional development courses which will lead to better job outcomes for international students, certificates and diplomas which create pathways to further study in Australian Universities and the opportunity for study tours.

Access Skills Training signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Chinese Institution Huake School to offer training in China. In June 2019 AST's Senior Director of Partnerships, Ben Robins visited Huake School in the North China province of Hebei. Ben talked to senior representatives of the school about our accredited courses and non-accredited professional development workshops. The discussions were extremely positive resulting in the agreement with the school to partner with AST in delivering training courses to Huake School in China.



# Access Australia Group Head Office move



Access Australia Group purchased the former Department of Justice building in St Andrews Avenue, Bendigo in early 2018 after renting the Mundy Street office for nearly 20 years. Renovations commenced to fit the building with appropriate consultation rooms, office space and a new reception area in early March 2019.

Total Fitouts were engaged to undertake the refurbishment task, facing a few surprises along the way like old tram tracks running under the floor and were able to implement the design of a space which would allow for natural light and enough new designated offices. Although it was a very busy time, the project met its deadline and we migrated from Mundy Street to our new home over two days, opening at our new site ready for business on Monday 3rd June 2019.

Our Head Office staff rose to the occasion going above and beyond to pitch in with moving, cleaning and setting up; showing true spirit and their passion for the organisation for which they work.

**18 - 20 St Andrews Avenue  
Bendigo  
Ph: 5445 9800**







## Access Creative Studios

**5445 9897**

At Access Creative Studios (ACS) we have seen a year of record growth and an unprecedented outpouring of artistic energy. Within the last twelve months, ACS hosted Behind the Curtain, an exhibition highlighting the very best of our participants' creativity, the proceeds of which went to support an animal rescue shelter servicing the Hepburn Shire.

We took part in the 2018 State Trustees CONNECTED Art Exhibition, with our brilliant work seen by thousands of people. We garnered a special mention for our outstanding artworks for our involvement. December 2018 ushered in Caroline Carey's solo exhibition at No Vacancy Gallery in Melbourne following on from her winning first place the previous year. One of her very best paintings went home with a very lucky owner.

In March 2019 we wowed Castlemaine in the biannual State Festival; our art made a splash at both the Bendigo and Castlemaine Rotary Art exhibitions and the doors to our studio were open to the community in the 2019 Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival where our ceramics group's Tree of Life delighted young and old. Our future projections are extremely optimistic and are buoyed by how well we are tracking; we anticipate further growth into the 2019-2020 financial year.

We employed some truly exciting new additions to our staff base and are looking to expanding our operations even further throughout the remainder of the year. Great things are coming in the near future!



*"I like coming here. I have fun and make good friends." Paula*

*"I come here to my art, my drawings. I really like the cooking too, like when we go out to Castlemaine for a trip. It is great fun!" Heath*





# NOVEMBER 2019

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## PepperGreen Farm

**Ph: 5445 9888**



PepperGreen Farm (PGF) Café and Retail are an exciting major development project at PepperGreen Farm in Thunder Street. The Farm kitchen offers fresh, simple and affordable menu options giving customers a chance to sample produce straight from the PGF "paddock to plate" with an ever-evolving specials board incorporating fresh produce from our garden wherever possible. With the introduction of system improvements we now take meal orders on iPads and have a new payment system.

Our Hospitality team are training to offer table service to improve their customer service skills and gain confidence and all have completed their Food Handling and Safety courses. The Café space is growing with regular social/community groups attending for their weekly coffee meetings.

The Retail space underwent a significant face-lift with new products being introduced from month to month with a focus on Community Handmade Products, products made at the Farm and by our Social Inclusion division, these include garden products, sustainable living, local produce, crafts and gift-ware which are all continuing to grow in popularity. The Farm hosted a range of external events including artists for the Blues and Roots Festival, the National Rural Planning Conference, the City of Greater Bendigo's UNESCO City Of Gastronomy launch and more recently, a visit from the Honourable Gayle Tierney, Minister for Higher Education, Training and Skills.

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# DECEMBER 2019



*"My husband and I visited PepperGreen Farm today for the first time. We had morning tea and a look around. Wow what a place! We were so impressed with absolutely everything. Great experience, well done"*



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# Access Skills Training (TOLD 4603) - Vocational Courses

**Ph: 5445 9880**

Over the 2018 - 2019 financial year, Access Skills Training delivered courses and certificates in a range of subjects including individual support, community services, conservation and land management, transition and work education, literacy and numeracy, disability and aged care. 2018/2019 saw the community services industry grow and this impacted on the continued growth in delivery of programs at AST. Our model of small interactive classes has contributed to all our programs being in demand, and this has been reflected by the expansion of the provision of classes in Echuca, Maryborough and Bendigo.

In March 2019, AST hit the radio waves to promote their training courses for the year. One of our Foundation Skills students, Chris Palamountain, kindly agreed to record a testimonial of the positive experience he had in completing the Transition Education course. Chris was super stoked when he entered the recording studio at Southern Cross Austereo in Bendigo, having prepared four pages of notes! He was a natural on the microphone and now Chris' positive experience is broadcast on Hit 91.9 and Triple M.



*"This class has allowed me to grow personally, it gave me the chance to meet other people and know I was always in a supportive environment". Natasha*

*"Massive recommendation to AST, if you are thinking about furthering your education this place is wonderful, I completed two years of studying with the team, the support is outstanding for all ages". Krystal*





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# JANUARY 2020

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*"Training at AST has been great. Thanks for having me". Josh*

*"The class is great and very helpful. Our teacher is very understanding, the trainer's knowledge was amazing". Tara*

*"The support within the class was outstanding, the teacher was so approachable". Shyehanah*

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26	27 Australia Day Public Holiday	28	29	30	31	



## PepperGreen Farm Catering

Ph: 5445 9890

The team at PepperGreen Farm Catering had a very busy and successful 2018-19. They were chosen as one of the City of Greater Bendigo's preferred providers for catering and introduced the Traffic Light food rating for catering options which meet the healthy eating standards. The orders for catering were consistent and contracts for catering were secured with regular partners choosing PepperGreen Farm Catering for their catering needs.

There was significant growth in the supply of pre-packaged meals. Our delicious healthy meals are in convenient and affordable package options suitable for NDIS recipients, people who are time poor and in assisting older people to maintain independence and still be able to eat well with minimal fuss and difficulty. A Facebook competition was held for Mother's Day which was extremely popular with the page competition post receiving hundreds of entries and the reach for post views exceeding 25,000 people.

*In 2018-19 PepperGreen Farm Catering sold over 1,800 pre-made meals, over 6,800 muffins and provided in excess of 6,200 food items in one yearly contract for a local business.*

*"We are writing to sincerely thank you for catering for the Loddon Mallee Regional Clinical Council Forum on the 3rd September. The food you provided was what we expected and the quality was excellent" Alicia*





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# FEBRUARY 2020

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## Access Employment Services - Disability

Ph: 5445 9800



We offer Disability Employment Services (DES) to Australian residents who have a disability, injury or health condition aged between 15 and retirement age. Over the past twelve months we have continued to provide a service which is inclusive and continually seeks ways to improve outcomes for participants. We have teamed up with our colleagues in AAG divisions to offer training and job skills training and applied for a number of grants to expand the support that we can offer.

Our DES service branched out this financial year to establish two new offices in Melbourne providing specialised youth disability employment services in Narre Warren and Moorabbin. The Bendigo staff also provided services to surrounding areas of Bendigo such as Kyneton and Castlemaine.

We are proud to share a good news story from our Employment Services division. Jasmine was unable to find work due to living in a small town with no employment experience. With assistance from her Employment Services Employment Consultant, Jasmine commenced an internship with Stoney Creek Winery and a training program so she could gain skills for the role.

After completing the Internship Jasmine was offered a part time position. Jasmine required some workplace modifications to maintain her position and was helped via Job Access through AAG to have a new chair and desk that suits her condition. Jasmine has worked part time for over six months and is enjoying her role and continues to learn the company's products and processes.



*"I would just like to say today is my first paid shift and I honestly can't thank you enough for everything you have done in this short period of time. If it wasn't for you, I would not have the courage and confidence I do today. You are amazing at your job! Thank you again".*

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## MARCH 2020



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*"I am very grateful for your support and the effort you are putting in to assisting me. I left there today feeling on top of the world and far more at peace and hopeful than I have in quite awhile, so that in itself is a huge positive."*

*"After all the support you have given our mutual participant and the hard work that's been put in there, I cant think of anyone else to support Brian"*



# Access Skills Training (TOID 4603) - Professional and Short Courses

## Ph: 5445 9880



During 2018-2019, AST delivered approximately 1800 nationally accredited and non-accredited Short Courses in our public sessions and to job networks, schools, businesses, sporting and community groups.

Our range of courses includes:

- Food safety for workers or supervisors
- Responsible service of alcohol (RSA)
- Preparing and serving espresso coffee
- Construction induction card (White card)
- First Aid (Level 1 & 2) and CPR update
- Computer training for beginner and intermediate levels
- Management of anaphylaxis
- Management of asthma
- Excel training in Level 1, 2, 3.

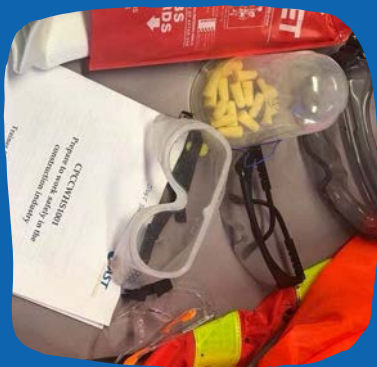
Training enables people to know what to do for those routine or critical moments and contributes to a safer workplace, family environment or community.

*"AST is the organisation of choice when it comes to refreshing my First Aid and CPR skills. Their online assessment allows me to complete the pre-practical training requirements quickly, efficiently, and at a time that best suits me. The immediate feedback on competency and areas of improvement is invaluable. The short courses are fast paced, interactive, interesting, and practical. As they are only 1-4 hours long, they easily fit around work and personal commitments. I would recommend them to all my friends and colleagues."*



*"I have done numerous first aid courses, AST is by far the most enjoyable, educational and professional"*





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# APRIL 2020

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5	6	7	8	9	10 Good Friday	11 Easter Saturday
12 Easter Sunday	13 Easter Monday	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Anzac Day
26	27	28	29	30		



## Access Employment Services - Transition to Work Ph: 5445 9800



Transition to Work (TtW) has undergone a restructure in staff during the last 12 months. We have a new Team Leader and three new Employment Consultants who are working steadily to give their clients the opportunity to gain entry into study, path internships and work experience to enhance employment prospects. The staff are also working hard to build on current and new long term relationships with existing and new employers. Our team members are currently working with approximately 35-40 clients each. Of our placements, approximately 50% of placements are studying and the other 50% are in employment.

One of our clients, Abbey, started an internship as a receptionist with a Real Estate agency in Phillip Island. Abbey and her consultant worked through Abbey's goals and aspirations and developed strategies on how to achieve them. It was great news when Abbey recently let her consultant know that she had, only after 1 year, been promoted to Property Manager.

*Abbey said "I had an idea of what I thought I might like to do, and with the help of Liz, I completed my Agents Representative Certificate and landed an Internship".*





## MAY 2020

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We welcomed new staff to our team at our growing site. The last 12 months were very exciting and rewarding with staff working very hard to gain new referrals and establish networks with Youth Services and local employers. From two clients in Narre Warren in July 2018, we grew to 40 clients with continuous referrals from local Centrelink Offices, headspace and self-referrals. We are very excited to be working closely with headspace and have commenced weekly appointments to evaluate potential clients. Utilising the government National Work Experience Program has given the opportunity for our clients to prove their abilities and work ethic to employers with very positive outcomes, especially being a youth specialist site.

# Access Employment Enterprises

Ph: 5445 9888



In the last twelve months our team has grown to nearly 100 people, with a wide variety of skills and abilities, working together at PepperGreen Farm and around Bendigo and surrounding areas. We have been taking care of commercial and private grounds maintenance, providing car wash services for private and fleet cars, painting survey pegs, delivering pamphlets and Bendigo's green 'organic recycling caddy liners', making beautiful wooden and metal furniture and garden items in our workshops and interesting craft gifts.



The team undertook special projects for different industries and organisations while also looking after the PepperGreen Farm market garden, cooking and serving in our café and assisting customers in our retail shop. We take enormous pride in the variety, creativity and quality of work; some of us have disabilities, all of us have passion and talents. We work together to make the world a better place for everyone.

Over the 2018-19 period we had a name change from Access Contractors to Access Employment Enterprises to better capture the great work we do and the skills of our participants. Some of our successes include:

- A number of new contracts for services
- Successfully tendered (third year in a row!) to deliver organic caddy liners for the City of Greater Bendigo
- Launched PepperGreen Farm Handmade Crafts and expanded PepperGreen Farm Handmade Workshop
- Secured seed funding for a plastics recycling project
- Commenced research into BioChar production in collaboration with the Commoners Co-op.



*"It gives me a reason to get up in the morning" Staff member*

*"Where he worked before, he just cleaned. He is so much happier now that he can talk to customers and have a laugh"*

*Parent of a staff member*

## JUNE 2020

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7	8 Queens Birthday Public Holiday	9	10	11	12	13
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*"Alex loves coming here, he enjoys being with his friends"*  
Parent of a staff member



*"His confidence has grown so much since starting work at PepperGreen Farm"*  
Parent of a staff member

*"I really like that I can do different things here"*  
Karen



# Access Employment Services - VCOSS Traineeships

**Ph: 5445 9800**

The Victorian Council Of Social Service (V.C.O.S.S.) devised a pilot project to offer younger people (15 to 24 years of age) traineeships in the Community Services sector. The traineeships run for a year, and in this time, the trainees obtain a nationally recognised qualification to continue their work in the sector. Access Creative Studios have been able to use this Victorian Government initiative to employ three staff and several other community service organisations are also keen to participate in this great project. As part of the project, each business who employs a trainee gains the support of V.C.O.S.S and Access Australia Groups Youth coach, who is able to monitor the workplace and mentor the trainees to ensure successful outcomes for all.



Several clients were doing a small amount of casual work with a local disability services provider; once the employer was made aware of the V.C.O.S.S project and the financial and personnel support options that were available to take on trainees, the employer took on three trainees. The trainees are ecstatic to be able to have gained full time employment - guaranteed for a year, and they will also be studying to graduate with a nationally accredited qualification as well. Positive outcomes for all.

**COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
TRAINEESHIPS**

**FULL TIME.  
PAID.**

**APPLY NOW.**





# JULY 2020

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## Our buddy Greg

Our calendar wouldn't be complete without a special mention to Greg. With regular visits Greg pops into our Head Office site to show us the great artwork he has created at Access Creative Studios. He loves to put a theme to his artwork from footy to special events, but has had an interest in animals and has captured this beautifully in his pieces. With a happy snap when he comes to visit, he has become a bit of an AAG Facebook celebrity.



# PepperGreen Farm - Monthly themed markets and Artisan Studios

## Ph: 5445 9888

PepperGreen Farm commenced monthly themed markets in April 2019 with each event focusing on topics of community interest including re-purposing and recycling, children's activities and gardening themes. The markets are held the last Saturday of each month and give visitors the opportunity to not only enjoy what's on offer at the market, but buy fresh produce from the Farm garden, view what's on display in the Artisan Studios or enjoy a bite to eat on our Cafe Tram. Two special market highlights were the visit from Costa Georgiadis at our April market and PepperGreen Farms first birthday celebrations in May.

This year has seen a range of exhibits shown in the Artisan Studios at PepperGreen Farm. Independent artists have displayed their collection as well as a number of pieces from our Access Creative Studios participants. One section of the studio housed the Bendigo Karen community group who utilised the space to hold cultural groups making traditional pieces such as looming items. This partnership not only provided the group with a much needed space to meet but allowed the community to watch their traditional looming practices when visiting the Farm or attending the Saturday market. The space is ever evolving and the coming year will see an exciting range of displays.



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# AUGUST 2020

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# Access Employment Services - EPIC

Ph: 5445 9800

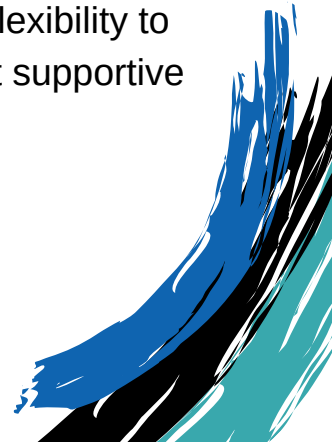


EPIC is Access Australia Group's NDIS-funded School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) program for young people with a disability. EPIC stands for Employment Preparation and Inclusion in the Community. The program is designed to build work skills and experience and then find participants a job in an open employment setting, as well as to provide opportunities for community access and social inclusion. Activities run five days a week at a number of our site locations including Lancewood, PepperGreen Farm and Access Creative Studios, as well as off-site in the community.

The EPIC program just completed our first full financial year and it was very successful. We have established a micro-business which recycles wooden pallets into hand-crafted furniture, which we then sell at markets and on consignment and we have established partnerships with Coles Kangaroo Flat and Bunnings Kangaroo Flat, who facilitate quality work experience in a retail setting. We are also very proud to have achieved our first open employment outcome when one of our participants obtained a position at Coles Kangaroo Flat. In addition to this, several of our participants are completing long-term work placements which look likely to result in job offers. Participants attend full-time or part-time and this has meant the flexibility to attend other opportunities to greater increase each participants skills and experience. Our dedicated staff have built supportive relationships with participants creating a great atmosphere for everyone.

*"My EPIC Job Coach has helped me gain experience in the motor industry which will hopefully lead to an apprenticeship."*

*"I love my job at Coles. I keep the shelves stocked so people can buy what they need."*



# SEPTEMBER 2020

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*"I have seen major changes in my son's maturity levels and motivation as a result of attending the EPIC program. He is now looking forward to being a paid employee."*



# Access Skills Training (TOID 4603) - VET for Schools

Ph: 5445 9880

The 2018/19 financial year has seen the Vocational Education and Training (VET) in School sector under the spot light with a new trainer qualification requirement coming into effect as of the 1st July 2019. This requirement has been the focus of our staff with compliance being a huge factor in the VET environment. We had course growth of 10% in the areas of Certificate II in Agriculture and Animal Studies and increased interest in laboratory skills which was driven by an industry workforce need.

During 2019 our focus has been on expanding interstate with contacts being made in South Australia and Western Australian. This has resulted in three new contracts with schools and the VET for Schools team being invited by Independent Schools Western Australia to attend an RTO Expo in Perth. AST developed some excellent new relationships during the trip which has resulted in a number of schools signing contracts with AST to commence training in 2019 and opening discussions for the 2020 academic year.

*"I have been very happy with AST's assistance, always happy to help with anything as required. They have been very supportive, a lovely group".*

*Karla Thomas-Baranage,  
Trainer, St John's Regional  
College, Dandenong*



*"We have enjoyed our first year with AST, and found the Vet in Schools team very helpful and responsive to our needs". Wayne Belcher, VET Coordinator, Maryborough Education Centre.*



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## OCTOBER 2020



*"Charlton College appreciates the support we receive in implementing our VET program; advice provided and support to trainers is first class!" Kelvin Baird, Principal Charlton College*

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# PepperGreen Farm - School Programs

**Ph: 5445 9888**



PepperGreen Farm (PGF) have delivered some incredible unique, inclusive and tailored educational programs to pre-schools, primary and secondary schools at the farm. Since the inception of our first programs, more than 400 students of various ages accompanied by teachers and parents experienced what the farm has to offer. Many schools have a curriculum focus on environmental sustainability, biodiversity, cultures, and climate change; we developed a range of programs with hands on experiences that enable children to better understand the issues that affect us now and into the future. PGF is in a pivotal space to share, develop and encourage our community leaders of the future to learn and practice some of the organic, sustainable values that we have in place.

We continue to grow and develop our programs through education, experience, training and the provision of possible employment pathways for students with our qualified horticulture teaching staff, in partnership with our registered training organisation and through work experience and traineeships. We received amazing testimonials and feedback to our programs and will continue to deliver these and more wonderful experiences in this unique heritage site and future green food hub.

Since opening to the public and visitors in April 2018, PepperGreen Farm has seen immense growth and change; here are some highlights:

- The number of budding gardeners has grown with an increase in supported employees, Social inclusion participants and volunteers experiencing and taking part in many and varied garden activities.
- Supported employees working in the garden participated in the National Agriculture Day at Bendigo Library gardens and the Bendigo Easter Festival Children's Event – which was a great success, creating a memorable experience for children who like to get their hands dirty!
- Kalianna students and teachers continue to volunteer at the farm assisting with weeding, picking and preparing produce from our garden for delivery to our local restaurants.
- PGF hosted 3rd Year Occupational Therapist students from the Australian Catholic University Melbourne; next year we will host 3rd and 4th Years. The students had the opportunity to work with participants to understand and observe their daily emotional and physical needs as part of their university placements and studies. The experience has been extremely valuable to participants and staff at the farm.



## NOVEMBER 2020



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Marist College Bendigo students participated through the Community and Ministry program where students attended the Farm to volunteer for an hour a week over the school terms.

Activities include; weeding, preparing garden beds and picking 1,000's of chillies to be sold.

Our volunteers continue to do fantastic work preparing, harvesting and maintaining our beautiful garden.





## Access Employment Services - Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN) Ph: 5445 9800



Jobs Victoria partners work locally to identify the needs of employers and support jobseekers into jobs that meet those needs. The JVEN program has steadily moved forward over the last 12 months, meeting all placement and outcome targets. Inter-agency relationships are strong with the Humanitarian Settlement Program referring several refugees and the Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporations having more clients showing interest in what JVEN offers. As the program moves into its final contract year, awareness of the program will continue to be promoted as a result of the positive outcomes that it achieves.

*"I would just like to say a big thank you to my JVEN worker at Access Australia Group, he was great, he really helped me when I needed it most. I am now full-time employed in a job I love. Doug still checks in on me from time to time to make sure things are well. Thank you so much, I highly recommend this program".*

*"With Doug's assistance, I was able to define a clear path to take back control of my mental health, begin to inculcate essential work skills and rebuild my confidence".*

Adam



# DECEMBER 2020



Diane Finch  
Manager  
Employment  
Services



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
					Christmas Day	Boxing Day
27	28	29	30	31		



## Corporate Services Ph: 5445 9800

The Corporate Services division were busy over the past financial year with new head office renovations and our move from Mundy Street. With a restructure to better align roles, additional hours were appointed to our Human Resources department. This extra support has allowed for a greater focus on staff well-being initiatives and exploration and better usage of our HR systems. The renewed Enterprise Bargaining Agreement was also a focus with a new four year agreement being negotiated. The Corporate team are a great bunch of dedicated staff who not only ensure the all corporate services including ICT, finance, client services, human resources and maintenance for the organisation across all divisions have operated effectively and efficiently but they have been the lead for staff social events, health and safety and well-being for all staff.



**Access Australia Group are a not-for-profit organisation who are registered to receive donations and bequests.**

We would like to acknowledge a \$10,000 bequest received from John (Jack) William Cochrane. Please contact us if you would like to consider giving a bequest or donation.

### Room Hire

Access Australia Group have Eco Pods available for hire for meetings, conferences, staff development days and groups. The rooms have been very well utilized over the past twelve months internally and by external organisations and the community.





## AAG's Staff



Milestone Employees

**10 Years**

Lynnette O'Brien – Group Leader, Vocational Programs

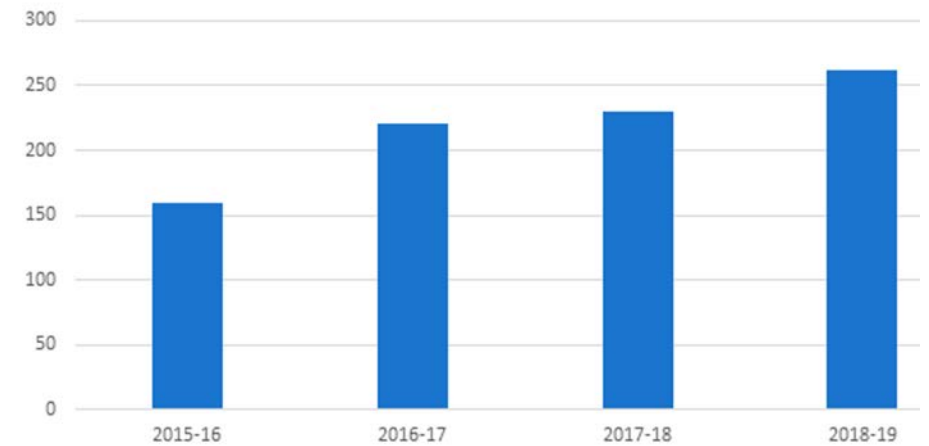


**15 Years**

Geoff Waters – Supported Employee



Staff Numbers





# Access Australia Group's Team Building Challenges

## Amazing Race February 2019





# Access Australia Group's Site

## City of Greater Bendigo

### Easter Festival

#### April 2019



# Access Australia Group's Site

## Annual General Meeting

#### October 2018





### Head Office

Site: 18 - 20 St Andrews Ave  
Bendigo VIC 3550  
Postal: PO Box 276  
Bendigo Central VIC 3552  
(03) 5445 9800  
[www.aag.org.au](http://www.aag.org.au)

Access Employment Enterprises  
44 Thunder St, North Bendigo  
Mon - Fri 9am - 4pm  
(03) 5445 9888

Access Employment Services  
18- 20 St Andrews Ave, Bendigo  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm  
(03) 5445 9800

PepperGreen Farm  
44 Thunder St, North Bendigo  
Mon - Fri 9am - 4pm  
Sat 10am - 2pm  
(03) 5445 9888

Access Creative Studios  
12 - 14 Sailors Gully Rd, Eaglehawk  
Mon - Fri 9am - 4pm  
(03) 5445 9897

Access Skills Training  
Lancewood 22 McLaren St, Bendigo  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm  
(03) 5445 9880

PepperGreen Farm Catering  
Cnr Bright St, Eaglehawk  
Mon - Fri 9am - 3pm  
(03) 5445 9890



ACCESS  
CREATIVE  
STUDIOS

