



Cathy at the unveiling of the Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program

Photo courtesy of Yarra Trams and Arts Project Australia.

## ABLE'S CATHY STAUGHTON FEATURED IN YARRA TRAMS ART PROGRAM

**As part of the inaugural 2018 Yarra Trams Community Partnerships program in Victoria, Able client Cathy Staughton was given the honour of having her artwork featured on one of Melbourne's trams.**

Through a partnership between Yarra Trams and Arts Project Australia, Cathy is one of two artists who currently have their artwork adorning a Melbourne tram, travelling routes 48 and 109.

Cathy's art is well known in the community and nationally, and now her distinctive style will be featured around Melbourne city through the tram network.

Cathy's tram displays a painting of St Kilda's Luna Park. According to Cathy, it is one of her favourite icons to paint, partly because it connects her to her childhood memories.

Cathy tapped into her artistic talent with the support of Able Australia. Since then, Arts Project Australia has supported Cathy to practice, exhibit and sell her artwork, while connecting Cathy with the contemporary art scene at a local and national level.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

These newsletters give me cause to stop and reflect. Since joining Able in November last year, my focus has been to meet as many staff, volunteers, clients and carers as I can to hear firsthand your stories and get a deeper understanding of what makes this organisation so special. I have valued your openness and honesty in sharing your stories with me.

It is this information that has informed and continues to inform the organisational strategic plan we are currently developing. The plan will become our 'road map', setting out the path we are to follow over the next three years. My challenge is to strike the right balance – to develop a strategic plan that will respond to the changing external environment, while minimising the impact these changes will have.

While the funding landscape in which Able Australia exists has fundamentally changed in the last 18 months, I am committed to ensuring we continue supporting people of all ages and ability – not just those covered by funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As an organisation, we will continue doing the work we're currently doing. In some instances however, we may need to adapt the way we deliver that work.

The success Able enjoys today is thanks to the thousands of people that have gone before me. For me to honour that legacy, I need to ensure our organisation remains future focused so that we can support thousands more for years to come.

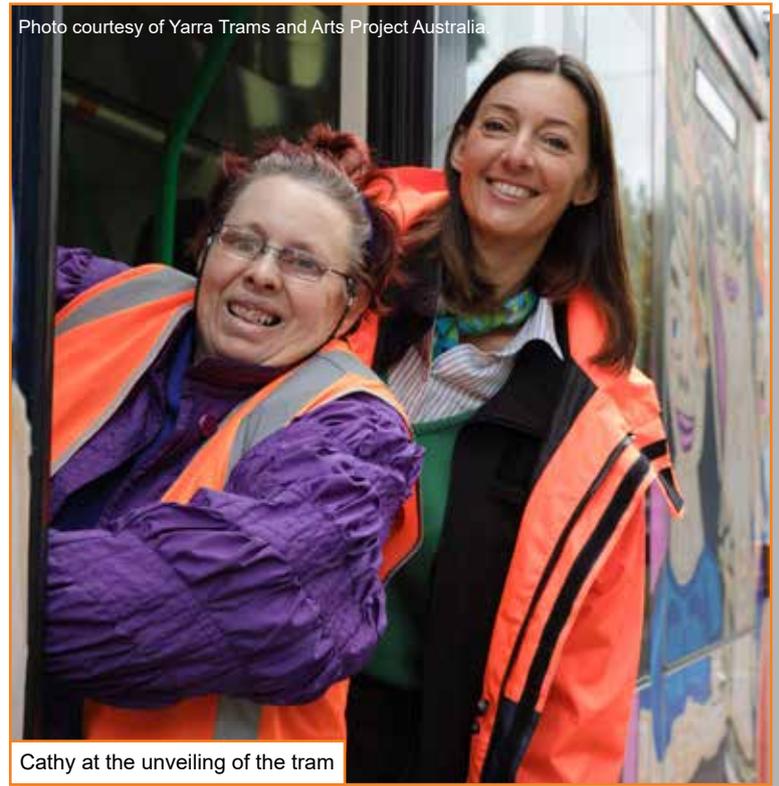
Kate MacRae  
Chief Executive Officer, Able Australia

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Arts Project Australia is a studio and gallery that promotes and advocates for artists with intellectual disability.

"I'm excited about the Luna Park tram," Cathy said about the experience. "It's a good tram, it's lovely and the picture came from a good dream I had."

The Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program offers \$1 million of in-kind advertising space to Melbourne based community organisations, taking in applications from any organisation which makes a significant contribution to diversity and inclusion in Melbourne.



If the Yarra Trams honour wasn't enough, Cathy's art was also selected to feature in the Salon des Refusés 2018.

The exhibition is an alternative selection to the Archibald Prize and was initiated in 1992, becoming one of Australia's most high profile and highly respected awards. The exhibition, hosted by the S.H. Ervin Gallery, has gained an excellent reputation that rivals the selection of the 'official' exhibition. Cathy's piece, 'Catherine Bell Lady Hot Dress', is featured at the Sydney gallery, and like her Yarra Trams piece, will take pride of place until the end of July.

For more information, and to see more photos of the unveiling of Cathy's tram, visit [www.artsproject.org.au/arts-project-tram-unveiled](http://www.artsproject.org.au/arts-project-tram-unveiled)

# FORGING VALUABLE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR ABLE

**A valuable connection between Able Australia and Melbourne based charity Hawthorn Community Chest has been ignited through their funding of an accessible trike for use at the Able East Lifestyle Choices program.**

Charli Goodyer, former Program Leader at Able East and now Able Intake Coordinator, saw there was an opportunity to purchase a robust, adult sized tricycle for clients to use. She saw it would give clients a sense of freedom and enjoyment. Through the generous support of Hawthorn Community Chest, Able was able to purchase the tricycle.

Stewart, one of Charli's main motivations to get the trike, showed off his riding skills last month when Jo from Hawthorn Community Chest came for a visit. Jo saw firsthand the joy her organisation's donation has provided the team.

The experience has started a fruitful relationship between Able and the charity which we hope to build on in the years to come.



Stewart on the tricycle at Able East's Lifestyle Choices program

## HELEN'S STORY

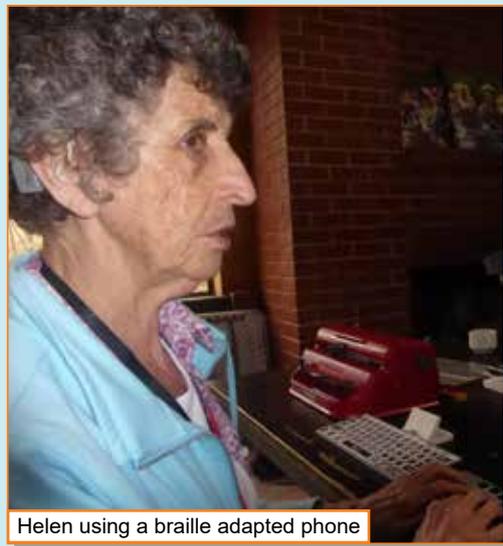
**Helen is a client in Able Australia's deafblind services. Six years ago, she had only just started to explore the idea of using a voice-controlled iPhone. Now, with Ablelink and a braille adapted phone, Helen's digital literacy and e-communications skills are changing her life.**

"It is some of these iPhone apps which enrich my daily life. Money reader identifies my notes, I use Talking Tuner to tune my cello and guitar, Tap Tap See helps me identify colours and objects, and the Guide Dog app is a GPS for when I am out and about with my guide dog."

Based in Melbourne, Ablelink incorporates a drop-in centre, training, and state-of-the-art adaptive communication technologies to support people with dual sensory loss develop their digital literacy skills.

With the support of Able Australia and the expert tuition provided by Ablelink staff, Helen now has vital access to the community around her, as well as the e-communication skills she needs to easily connect with friends and family.

Using this technology would only have been possible through the generous support of Mobile Muster. Phones donated for use by Able Australia are securely erased and reset by Mobile Muster before being given to Able.



Helen using a braille adapted phone

To donate your old smartphone to Mobile Muster for use in the Ablelink program, visit [www.ableaustralia.org.au/mobilemuster](http://www.ableaustralia.org.au/mobilemuster) for instructions.

## MEET ISAIAH LAHAI



### What is your name?

Isaiah Lahai.

### What is your role at Able Australia?

I am currently employed as a Disability Support Worker. It's a role I appreciate and take very seriously. Having a sister who is living with a disability and my love for humanity are key drivers behind my passion for working in this sector.

### Tell us a little about yourself.

I am a former refugee from the Republic of Sierra Leone. I arrived in Australia in 2006, and in 2014 I graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Social Work degree. I am currently a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

### What else do you like to do?

I am a public speaker and I enjoy sharing my refugee journey and stories with schools and the community. I believe sharing stories with the community is a powerful way to establish change in the society.

### Can you tell us more about your experience?

I have served as a People of Australia Ambassador, as well as a member on the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs advising the Tasmanian Premier. I am also a founding member of the African Communities Council of Tasmania.

## SUPPORT COORDINATION BRINGING NDIS GOALS TO LIFE

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can be challenging to navigate, but the new support coordination team at Able Australia are here to help. The team are in place to bring the aspirations and goals of NDIS participants to life.

Assessing options, choosing providers, negotiating prices and booking services are just some of what the support coordination team will be working through with clients and carers.

The team includes two senior support coordinators, Justin Elks, a former member of the deafblind team with vast experience supporting the deafblind community, and Peter Tully, well-known in Queensland for his long-running work supporting and advocating for people with disability. The team is rounded out by Sarah Fitzgerald and Sheila Brunner in Victoria and Josie Wilder in the ACT.

Able's support coordinators work directly with clients to create effective plans that accurately reflect individual choice, wants and needs. Able already has several clients that receive support coordination, and we are sure these numbers will grow over time.



Sheila Brunner (left), Sarah Fitzgerald (middle), Justin Elks (right)

For information on how to access support coordination through Able, contact [intake@ableaustralia.org.au](mailto:intake@ableaustralia.org.au)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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