

# COMMUNITY & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2018 | EDITION. 16

## A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO REBECCA

Since my time as CEO began 14 years ago, I have seen many changes within the organisation and the sector, however, we certainly now are experiencing a disruption to the sector unlike no other through the NDIS. We believe that the NDIS is a world leading approach to supporting people with disability, exceptional in its principles and intentions, however, the roll out has presented significant challenges. It has been a roller coaster ride for many stakeholders, but we continue to have faith that improvements will be made to ensure the intent of the scheme is realised for people with disability.

Recent years have seen significant growth in our services and we continue to devote substantial resources in staff development, structure and systems. We've been able to maintain our competitive advantage by way of continually critiquing our processes, redesigning our systems and developing innovative approaches. The Unisson team continue to support the vision and purpose through their diverse skills and experience.

I continue to be humbled by the recent results of our customer satisfaction survey. It is pleasing to note that clients, families and staff are all of one accord. They expressed their satisfaction in the quality of support and the responsiveness and engagement from Unisson. We continue to learn, adjust, refine and improve according to the voice of our stakeholders.

As I look back over the past 14 years, I can honestly say that it has been the most engaging and rewarding time in my professional life. It has been an honour to serve as your CEO. I have met a lot of wonderful people, with keen minds and beautiful hearts. I specially thank our Board of Directors for their tireless support of Unisson. But I will never stop being in awe of and grateful for the excellent face to face staff who support clients every day. They are the cornerstone of this organisation and to you, our direct support professionals, my absolute and sincere thanks for all the work that you do, simply brilliant. To the Leadership and Senior Management team, you have been the driver, navigator, and cultivator of growth both in clients and in staff. My sincere thanks for an excellent and fruitful



journey. To the Executive team who kept me inspired, challenged and focused, I am proud we maintained our partnership as equals, my sincere and deep gratitude.

There are many stakeholders to thank but top of mind goes to the amazing clients who trusted us with their goals and aspirations. To the families, friends and advocates who keep us honest and true to our purpose, thank you. To the government and its officers, thank you for sharing our vision and assisting in our quest to deliver positive outcomes to the people we support.

In closing, the journey will continue on so travel light. We need to be nimble and agile, drop the unnecessary baggage, adapt and embrace innovation as a friend, and continue being curious. Finally, thank you for a cumulative 33 years at Unisson, I've made a lot of friends and created wonderful memories, I am truly blessed.

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WHAT'S ON IN YOUR  
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# INTRODUCING OUR NEW CEO

DAVID KNEESHAW

## WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

My connection with Unisson has been a lifelong one as my uncle Peter Grigg was a resident at Gore Hill for over 50 years. My family has had a connection with Unisson for almost 70 years, with my grandfather setting up the first Parents & Friends Association and my mother retiring from the Board this year after 27 years' of service.

Peter was an important part of my childhood and I have fond memories of time spent with him and attending many of the Sunshine events. My family instilled in me the importance of taking people for who they are and of the right for everyone to have opportunities to have a great life.

In terms of my professional background, I started with

PricewaterhouseCoopers in Sydney as a cadet and left as a Manager 9 years later to spend some time overseas. While working for them I completed a Bachelor of Economics at Macquarie Uni and my Chartered Accountant qualifications.

After some travel I worked in finance roles with Penguin Books in London and New York for 8 years, before transferring back to Australia to work for Penguin's sister company, Pearson Education, where I worked in a Senior Leadership role for 6 years.

I joined the Executive team at Unisson almost 4 years ago as General Manager, Corporate Services, responsible for the support functions including Finance, IT, Property & Fleet. Over the last 12 months I've also taken over responsibility for our Supported Employment businesses, MailPlus & Mowmentus.

I joined Unisson shortly before the implementation of the NDIS and have played a significant role in preparing for the transition and then ensuring it went smoothly for both clients and for the organisation.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR APPOINTMENT AS CEO?

I am honoured to have been chosen to lead an organization that is so close to my heart and which plays such an important role in our community. Unisson is in great shape thanks to strong leadership over the last 14 years and I'm committed to ensure that the organisation thrives in the new NDIS world and extends its mission even further.

We have a fantastic team of dedicated staff who bring passion and commitment to work each day to enable possibilities for our clients to live a great life. I look forward to leading this team and ensuring their work is always well supported and focused on providing great outcomes.

## WHAT WILL UNISSON'S FOCUS BE OVER THE COMING YEARS?

The NDIS has been a game-changer for the industry and while it has provided some difficulties during the transition I believe the intentions are sound. The biggest benefits have been for the participants who finally have choice and control over the supports they need and who they want to provide them.

To respond to this we need to ensure that our services are adapting to meet the needs of those participants, both now and as they evolve over time. We need to ensure that we're providing a great experience for our clients at every touchpoint and that our services continue to be delivered at the highest quality. And to enable this we need to have a dedicated team of staff who are well trained, well managed and passionately connected to Unisson's purpose.

We will continue to help build strong connections for our clients in their communities and to advocate for their right to be included as active and equal participants.

And at the same time we need to ensure that the organisation remains sustainable under the new funding model and that our services are well supported by the right technology and processes.



## SUPPORT COORDINATION

Unisson provides a service called Support Coordination, where our experienced support coordinators work alongside you to plan your support. As an NDIS participant, we help you to understand your plan and connect you with the people and support that will enable you to live the life you choose.

We've developed a great reputation and relationship with the NDIA based on our extensive resources and efficient service. We'll maximise the hours of support in your plan while ensuring you feel heard and supported.

Whether you're preparing for your plan, reviewing your current plan or looking for support to start your plan, we can help. To begin your NDIS journey we can meet with you in person or talk over the phone to find out exactly what you are looking for.

- What is included in Support Coordination:
- A focus on meeting your goals
- Implementing your plan and coordinating supports
- A commitment to finding the best support services for you
- One-on-one meetings with us for personal support
- Navigating and getting the most of out the NDIS
- Mentoring and coaching
- Arranging emotional support
- Working with you to develop and build skills
- Assistance to monitor your supports and ensure you are getting the most out of your plan
- Ensuring you feel in control of your supports
- Assisting you to make decisions about the future



# MEET ONE OF OUR STAFF

## CHARLENE BALAZ, DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL

### WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO UNISSON?

I decided to take a different career path. Unisson was the very first job application I sent through after looking at a number of Disability Support Organisations and I couldn't help but seem intrigued at such a down to earth organisation which had the role of being active in supporting clients.

### WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT WORKING AT UNISSON?

I love that I feel everyone here at Unisson is just one big community which has inspired me to feel like it's my own second family. I also love how I am able to make a difference in someone else's life.

### WHAT WERE YOU SURPRISED ABOUT WORKING AT UNISSON?

I was very surprised at how quickly the people I support grew on me. I am very fortunate to interact with clients in such positive ways and help make a difference in their lives.

### TELL US SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT YOURSELF?

In my life I was taught one major thing; "The greatest thing you'll ever learn, is just to love, and be loved in return". To me, this quote isn't just about people around us, who come into our lives. It's about what we do in life that we love and find true happiness in.

My true happiness would be music. It is what brings my soul peace and harmony. I love to sing, play music on instruments and dance like a goofball.

I am able to share these moments with the people I support here at Unisson, singing while playing guitar and watching every one sing along with me is the best feeling I get, and I feel that we are all one.



## HR AWARD

### UNISSON DISABILITY IS THRILLED TO SHARE THAT WE WON AN AWARD FOR BIGGEST IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The award was for our implementation of Cornerstone, a global leader in cloud-based learning and human capital management software. This award was given to Unisson who demonstrated great impact in employee engagement with the implementation of HR software we called BOOM.

On the day, Unisson's HR manager Rashika Islam gave a presentation on how Unisson implemented the program and the follow on benefits it has made company wide. With Unisson's staff more engaged in the work place, it improves the connections we make with the people we support and work with. Well done HR team for all your hard work.



## TAX APPEAL

### A BIG THANK YOU!

We have been overwhelmed with the level of support shown by our community, supporters and families.

Whenever we reach out to you to support our organisation, the people we support and the work we do, we know that you always do what you can, when you can, to support us.

The results from the Tax Appeal we ran during the end of the financial year was a testament to your generosity and support and we would like to thank you for helping us raise over \$18,000 an astounding result.





## UNISSON WORKS

Since rebranding to Unisson Disability in November last year, we've been preparing to launch a new name and look to represent our supported employment businesses (Mailplus and Mowmentus); one that aligns with the Unisson Disability brand.

We undertook some market research with our customers, intermediaries and internal stakeholders. It became clear that bringing our supported employment businesses under the Unisson brand will:

- Provide greater alignment with the rest of our services and make it clear that our employment services are not separate from the rest of the organisation
- Build equity in our employment services by leveraging the Unisson name and brand values
- Allow for marketing and sales support to grow our employment services
- Enable better education, awareness and cross-promotion of our employment services internally and externally
- Give supported employees a strong brand to represent their workplace; one that they can wear with pride but remains independent from Unisson Disability

A lot of thinking and consultation went into selecting the new names. Two key things were taken into account; strategic thinking around how we can attract and engage commercial business to maintain stability for these services, and of course what our supported employees want and what will resonate best with them.

We are excited to announce that as of 2nd October 2018, Unisson's employment businesses will be known as Unisson Works.



Unisson Works will be the overarching name that describes all of our employment businesses. This name will be used when talking about our employment services with families, commercial customers and other stakeholders. For our supported employees, their workplace will be known as Pack Works (formerly Mailplus) and Ground Works (formerly Mowmentus).

### PACK WORKS

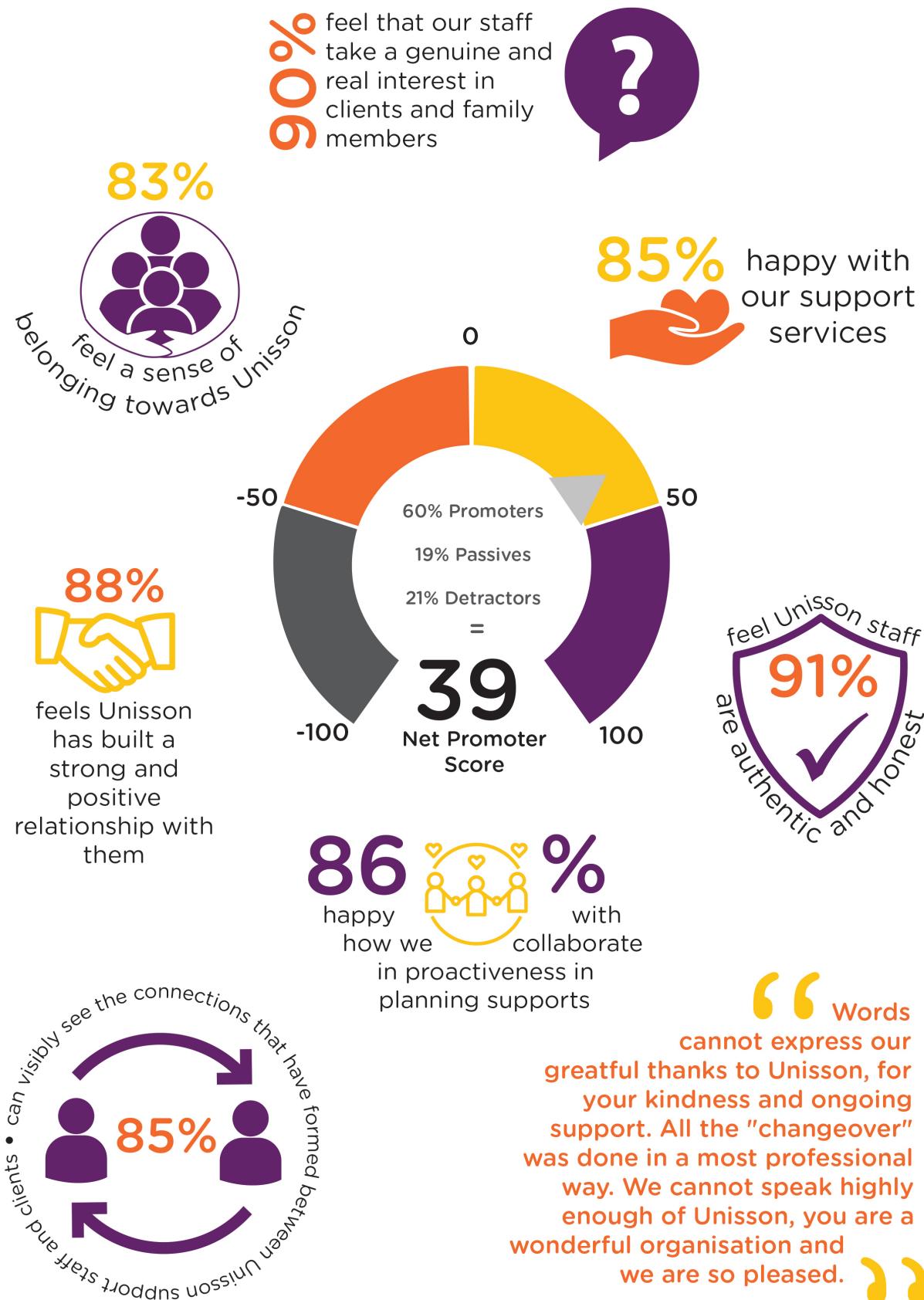
### GROUND WORKS

Just like when we rebranded from Sunshine to Unisson, nothing about the way our supported employees work or are supported to work will change. We have already announced the change to our supported employees and their support staff.

**If you have any concerns, please contact Katrina Jackson by sending an email to [info@unisson.org.au](mailto:info@unisson.org.au) or phoning 1300 266 222.**

# SERVICE SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Back in January 2017, we invited our families to provide feedback on our level of service in order to see how happy they were with Unisson. We recently completed another survey in July this year to see how we have improved, and were very pleased with the results! Take a look at the infographic below to see the highlights and what our families think of our levels of service and support.





# SELF-MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

## DO YOU SELF-MANAGE YOUR NDIS FUNDING?

Self-management can be confusing to understand but when done right it gives you the flexibility, creativity and choice to decide what supports you buy with your funds to best meet your needs.

The NDIA has created several resources to assist you in understanding the NDIS and self-management and we have collected them here in one place to help you find answers to the questions you might be having.

### SELF-MANAGEMENT WEBINAR VIDEO

The NDIA recently hosted a panel style webinar to talk about self-management, the video and transcript of the event is available online on YouTube. The webinar gives the opportunity to hear about self-management, how it works and the benefits from families and people who are self-managing their NDIS plan.

- [Self-Management Webinar video](#)
- [Self-Management Webinar transcript](#)

### SELF-MANAGEMENT GUIDE

The NDIA is committed to improving the experience for self-managers and have developed a NDIS guide to self-management for people who are self-managing, or interested in self-managing their NDIS funding. This guide will help people understand the benefits of self-management, roles and responsibilities and how to self-manage effectively.

This guide will be updated regularly to ensure it meets the needs of people self-managing their NDIS funding.

- [Self-Management Guide](#)

If you are interested in any of the resources or have further questions about self-management or the NDIS please contact us on 1300 266 222 or [info@unisson.org.au](mailto:info@unisson.org.au)

## PREFER ONLINE?



Are you sick and tired of receiving mail that clogs up your letterbox?

Or missing out on important events because snail mail takes so long to deliver?

Be kind to the environment and save a tree!

Send us your email address and receive your Community & Friends newsletter instantly online!

Call us on 1300 266 222 or email [info@unisson.org.au](mailto:info@unisson.org.au) to update your details.

## 70'S FRIDAY AT PYMBLE COMMUNITY ACCESS

Things got groovy when the clients and staff at our Pymble Community Access Program went back to the 70s for a day. It was a blast from the past when everyone dressed up in their best 70s attire and enjoyed a party with decorations, music, dancing and good food. We loved seeing how much fun everyone had - thanks for sharing!

Photography Credit: Orion Mitchell



# IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## CLUB ALL IN DISCO

Anyone aged 18+ is invited to make new friends and dance the night away with the famous DJ Andy at this all-abilities disco!

**WHEN:** Fri 5 Oct, 6:30 - 9:30pm

**WHERE:** Collaroy Plateau Youth and Community Centre

**COST:** \$15, including pizza + a drink

**RSVP:** [disabilityservices@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](mailto:disabilityservices@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)



## APPLAUSE: MUSICAL THEATRE CLASSES

Students of all ages (kindergarten to adult) learn to express themselves creatively and freely, verbally and/or non-verbally, building confidence in all aspects of their lives! Register with the code APPLAUSE4SN for a free trial class.

**WHERE:** visit the website [www.applausemta.com.au](http://www.applausemta.com.au) for a list of locations

**COST:** Under 18: \$264, Over 18 - \$341 for the term, plus registration fee

**CONTACT:** 0405 495 099



## INVICTUS GAMES

Sydney has been chosen to host the fourth Invictus Games. The Invictus Games Sydney 2018 will shine a light on the issues facing our wounded, injured and ill active service members and veterans. The Games aim to have a long-term impact by raising awareness of supporting programs and services in the areas of education, health and wellbeing, employment and adaptive sport. Events will be held across Greater Sydney, including on the Harbour!

**WHEN:** 20 - 27 Oct



## MINI MONSTER PLANTS PROGRAM

Explore the world of carnivorous plants to find out how they eat their dinner! Designed to support families of primary school children with additional needs. Siblings welcome!

**WHEN:** Fri 5 and Thu 11 Oct, 10-11am

**WHERE:** The Calyx, Royal Botanic Gardens

**COST:** \$20.50 per family

**CONTACT:** 9923 2727



# IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## EASYLINK TRAVEL TRAINING

A free service for adults and children who want to learn how to use public transport independently and safely - including any type of disability.

For more information: 9919 0700 [www.easylink.com.au/](http://www.easylink.com.au/)



## BINDIMAPS

BindiMaps is a smartphone app for people who are vision-impaired that locates users precisely in indoor spaces.

It employs a simple, natural-language audio system to describe where users are and what's around them, and the best way to get to their chosen destination.

For more information visit [www.bindimaps.com/](http://www.bindimaps.com/)



## GIG BUDDIES

Gig Buddies pairs adults (aged 18+) with a learning disability, autism or acquired brain injury with volunteers, to be friends and go to events together, including sport and live music. Pairs are matched based on similar interests.

For more information call 9419 6951 or visit [www.gibuddiessydney.org](http://www.gibuddiessydney.org)



## 'CULTURE IS INCLUSION'

The First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) has released a landmark report following a two year community directed research project, across Australia, on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. As an exploratory study, this research has laid out a business case to address the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

Read more [www.fpdn.org.au/cultureisinclusion/?utm\\_source=newsletter\\_2009&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=communitynet-e-news-8-august-2018](http://www.fpdn.org.au/cultureisinclusion/?utm_source=newsletter_2009&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=communitynet-e-news-8-august-2018)



First Peoples  
Disability Network  
Australia

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH E-LEARNING

The Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry (3DN) at UNSW provides free eLearning about intellectual disability to professionals, carers, and consumers. Their goal is to improve your knowledge, skills and confidence, leading to better mental health and wellbeing for people with an intellectual disability.

Read more: <http://www.idhealtheducation.edu.au/>



# ARE YOU SOCIAL?

HAVE YOU CONNECTED WITH US THROUGH OUR SOCIAL PAGES?

Our social pages are our platform for educating the wider community about some of the challenges facing people with disability. It is a platform that we use to share inspiring and insightful information from around the world and within your local community.

We invite you to follow our tweets, our Facebook page as well as our other sites and tell us what you think about our posts. If you're already our friend, please remember to comment, like and especially share the information we post. We need you to help widen our community and extend our social reach!



# JOBS BOARD

**ADMINISTRATION OFFICER - PROPERTY & FLEET** – Pymble

**TEAM LEADER** – Turramurra

**TEAM LEADER** – Western Sydney

**DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL ROLES** – Located across Sydney, Central Coast and Hunter Regions.

Visit [unisondisability.org.au/careers](http://unisondisability.org.au/careers) to apply.

# DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

WANT TO SHARE A STORY FROM A PREVIOUS EDITION?

We keep all the previous editions of our Community & Friends Newsletter on our website under the About Us tab. Visit [unisondisability.org.au](http://unisondisability.org.au) to view all our past editions.

