

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

# panorama

Monthly Issue **September 2025 #98C**



**Binowee Bayles for  
NAIDOC Week 2025**

**Treading The  
Boards, Splashing  
The Canvas**

**We Go To The  
Hawkesbury Show**

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### About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 70+ of our services in New South Wales, Southern Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria.

### Contact Flourish Australia!

1300 779 270 (option1) or  
flourishaustralia.org.au

Chair: Prof Elizabeth More AM  
Chief Executive Officer: Mark Orr AM  
Chief Development Officer: Peter Neilson

### About Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

### The faces behind Panorama...



Warren Heggarty



Grant Everett

### Subscriptions, questions, feedback, praise, curses?

You can ALWAYS email us at...  
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Prefer snail mail?

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### Disclaimer

Panorama's content is not intended as a substitute for the advice of any specialised or qualified professional. The views expressed herein are those of the authors, not necessarily of Flourish Australia, or any associated enterprises, their staff, management, employees, or service recipients.

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### Contributions are welcome!

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# Care for Carers



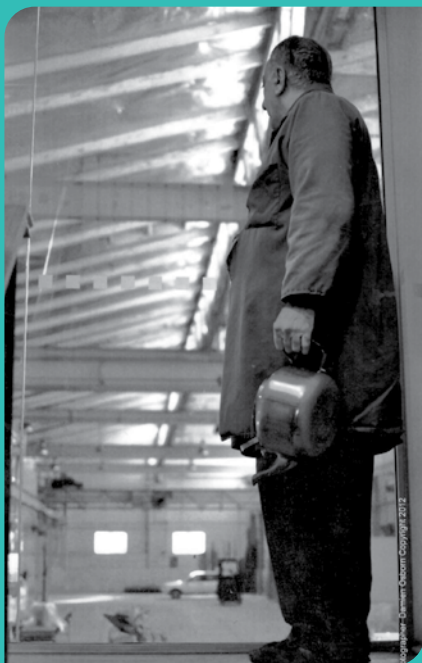
**Flourish Australia** is committed to working closely with families and carers in their important role of supporting people close to them with a lived experience of a mental health issue.

Using a family inclusive approach, we work directly and in partnership with specialist organisations to provide support and education services for families and carers.

A list of helpful resources and Carer organisations for family and carers can be found on our website:  
[flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers](https://flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers)

SCAN QR TO  
FIND OUT MORE





## In Panorama September 2025

The photo on the left was taken by Damien Osborne at the time of the closure of our old Prestige Packing Community Business in Redfern. It shows veteran employee Victor Pondikas saying farewell to the old place when it was shut down in 2012. Alas, now it is our turn to say farewell to Victor, who passed away in June.

But there was more sad news: we also farewelled John Hall AM, the former Chair of Flourish Australia. Read about Vic and John's great contributions in this month's Panorama.

Barrett is an absolute character with a passion for acting and art, appearing

in a bunch of stage plays and TV shows both in Australia and abroad.

We cover some of the NAIDOC Week celebrations across Flourish Australia services.

### Coming up in Panorama October 2025...

- We cover Flourish Australia's HUGE 70 year anniversary celebrations.
- Elly shares how she's doing fantastic in life in her story "In A Better Place Than Ever Before"
- We examine Busy Times at our Salisbury service following their big move.
- And more!

- Editor

**Spread Hope...**  
**Your Mental Health Journey**  
**will Inspire Others!**



### Did you know that sharing your own mental health recovery story can spread hope and inspiration?

Don't worry if you're not a writer – that's where we jump in! At Panorama, every story is valued! We're constantly on the lookout for stories from those living with mental

health issues. But hey, family members and caregivers, your stories matter too! Not sure where to begin? Send us a message, we would love to hear from you!

**Email:** [panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au](mailto:panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au)  
**or Call:** 1300 779 270



# NAIDOC WEEK 2025 AT FLOURISH AUSTRALIA

**Celebrating First Nations' Legacy And Future**

By Grant J Everett



**NAIDOC Week 2025 celebrated the history, culture and achievements of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with Aboriginals being the oldest continuous living civilisation on Earth. The theme this year was The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy, and it also marked half a century of NAIDOC in Australia.**

This week was marked by a diverse lineup of events and activities across the country, including art exhibitions, community festivals, sports tournaments and storytelling sessions.

In addition to many other events across dozens of services, Flourish Australia's Support Hub hosted a live streaming event with guest speaker, Binowee Bayles, a proud Aboriginal woman from Redfern NSW and a eighth-generation Sydney resident. Binowee's

experiences as an Aboriginal woman were at the core of her talk, and she shared the meaning and history behind NAIDOC Week. She explored the many ways we can all get involved - both personally and professionally - and the impact this engagement has on communities across Australia.

Binowee lived in the infamous Block at Redfern when she was a small child in the 80's and early 90's, so her parents decided to move her and her 8 sisters out of that volatile environment and up to Queensland to reconnect with their father's people, the Birri Gubba. Binowee embraced her culture growing up, and this has had a profound impact on who she is. She has since moved back to her Mother's community in Redfern where she shares her cultural knowledge and expertise as a free lance consultant.

She shared some of the generational trauma First Nations people

experience, such as how every female member of her family on her mother's side were taken away from their people and raised in orphanages or with adoptive white families going all the way back to the 1820's, a cycle that finally ended with her. She also performed a sacred song, which was a great privilege to witness.

Chief Executive Officer Mark Orr followed up Binowee's presentation by sharing how important it is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture should be celebrated every single day, not just one week of the year. For First Nations people who access Flourish Australia services, it is important for us to provide a supported, culturally appropriate environment and support.

All the Support Hub staff attended Binowee's presentation, and everyone else from across the organisation was invited to listen and take part online.



### How can we all support First Nations people?

Binowee encouraged us to find everyday ways to include Indigenous communities by simply getting to know them, learning about the culture, protecting sacred sites, and by enjoying artistic and creative works like books, plays, paintings and crafts. First Nations people have a rich and vibrant history they share through storytelling and the arts, and we should all embrace that.

A simple way we can all support First Nations people and play our part in reconciliation is to acknowledge the Land we are living and working on. The email signatures of all Flourish Australia staff acknowledge the Country on which their service is located.

We can also support Indigenous communities by advocating for their involvement in all levels of the workplace, society, and politics. Together, we can create a more inclusive, united future.

**LEFT:** Binowee Bayles, our amazing speaker for NAIDOC Week. **THIS PAGE, TOP:** The Support Hub staff greatly enjoyed Binowee's talk, and learned a lot. Photo by Mohammed Alkhub **BOTTOM:** Tim Fong and Binowee. Tim played an integral role in arranging this event. Photos by Warren Heggarty.



## ABOUT BINOWEE BAYLES

Binowee has cultural and community connections to many First Nations people across Australia. She takes part in a number of cultural ceremonies, including Welcome to Country, on behalf of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Binowee shares her cultural knowledge and performs traditional song and dance to showcase the strength of her culture and brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and world views together to solve contemporary issues. She has a deep commitment to creating a harmonious society by bridging cultural divides and promoting mutual respect to drive systemic change. By advocating for policies that support Indigenous rights and interests, Binowee is helping to reshape the narrative around Indigenous engagement in Australia.

Her vision is to create a legacy of respect and collaboration that will benefit future generations.

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## TREADING THE BOARDS, SPLASHING THE CANVAS

By Barrett

**Creative expression is a big part of my recovery and wellness, it's at the very core of me, so I do a lot of art at Flourish Australia's Newcastle service. Creating doesn't have to be a matter of being "good" at it, or measuring your work against others. It's about expressing yourself, to help others understand you.**

I like to paint, and I keep photos of all my pieces on my phone. I really like creating big pieces, and one of my favourites is a large watercolour I did of a windmill. I also have lots of plaster moulds that I use to make large marionettes. They stand at about a metre tall.

I use my lived experience in constructive ways through my art, because as an artist, I create art for other people. It's not just for me! My dream is to earn a living from my art.

I also play music, and today I'll be

rehearsing with the member's band at 2pm. I can play and compose on piano, and I can also play the flute and violin (I actually own a nice violin that I rescued from the trash), and I really want to get better at playing it.

My neighbours played their instruments really loud and really badly the other night, and all I wanted to do was knock on their door and show them how to play properly!

I love to learn about things like the sciences, such as biochemistry and quantum mechanics. I'm not an expert on them or anything, but I can assess things in my life through the scientific method. I was also really into studying the Titanic in depth for almost a year.

### A poor introduction to the mental health system

I haven't had the best experience with the mental health system. After some severe problems with

insomnia and a few other struggles that resulted from that, I had been referred to go and have a chat with a local psychiatrist at a mental health unit. Next thing I knew, they put me in a ward and wouldn't let me leave for 3 months!

So there I was, stuck in a psych ward. I couldn't believe it was legal to lock me up like this without committing any crime. It was an awful first introduction to the mental health system. I had to learn to go with the flow, though, and used my head to get out of there.

The mental health system is getting better over time, though. The NDIS has been a really good thing.

### The Flourish Australia difference

While I was in hospital, I was visited from Flourish Australia staff from the local service at Newcastle. The first person I met from there was Kate.

Once I was out of hospital, I checked out the service on Hunter Street, and I really liked what I saw. The groups and activities and supports on offer were all really great. We'll travel to places with the staff members as a group, or they might visit my home. I decided that I wanted them to keep on visiting.

When I started attending Flourish Australia, I had some goals. I wanted to be more independent, get my own place, study, and make friends. Most of all, I wanted to get back to work. I have achieved all of these!

On the subject of work, I think a lot of people who access Flourish Australia services would like to get a job, but the problem is "the tyranny of low expectations," where people with a lived experience get told repeatedly that they'll never achieve the goals they have in life, and so they end up believing it and giving up.

I've been involved with a couple of other organisations in the past, but I've stuck with Flourish Australia. It's so good to finally be getting support from people who know what they're doing!

At some point I'd like to make it down to Sydney to check things out at Flourish Australia's Buckingham House at Surry Hills, as well as some of their other sites. Long car trips are good for me.

***"I reckon everyone who works full-time should have a four day work week with a three day weekend. The 35 hour work week is the legal standard in France, and its implementation raised productivity by 79%."***

**- Barrett**



Many of the people who work for Flourish Australia have mental health issues of their own, so they can identify with what I'm going through. I'm sure that the support workers need support of their own to stay good at doing their jobs. I enjoy having a chat with the workers and the people who access services, and I found a lot of them know their stuff about music.

While I don't approve of putting people in boxes, having a mental health diagnosis can be a good starting point for the Flourish Australia staff to explore what kind of support might work for you.

At this point, I don't really need any more intensive support from Flourish Australia. Life is really good.

### **Treading The Boards**

I've always been a performer. I've always liked doing funny voices and faces and telling jokes and acting. Theatre is my key dream, my primary motivator.

I was a swing actor at Fox Studios for about 2 years, so I'd be keen to go back to that. I got that job on the spot as soon as I finished my

audition, so they really liked my energy! I've recently auditioned for acting work at Fox Studios again, and I also auditioned at Moore Park.

As a professional actor, I've performed in a lot of plays, everything from Shakespeare to modern stuff. I've done musicals, played both good and evil characters, performed in theatres both big and little, and even performed overseas in plays about characters and creatures from Indonesian and Hindu mythology.

I also perform magic tricks. I don't pull them off perfectly every time, but that's alright because I'm not a professional magician. I actually put on a magic show for a bunch of people just down the road from Flourish Australia on Hunter Street, and they had a great time.

One of my more interesting performance jobs was creating and maintaining a flea circus in London. You catch the fleas with blood, then place them in a glass dome with tiny little collars and tiny little props. People love them! The fleas do all kinds of tricks.

Just recently I've gotten some movie work in Sydney, which involves an early start and lots of travel, but it's so amazing to be doing what I love: performing!

### **Final Thought**

People all want a normal life. But what is "normal?" In a constructive sense, we should all be ourselves. We are all free under certain constraints. I've found there's no guidebook for life. You can never be sure of how things will go, so we need to be flexible and give it our best shot. The journey of a thousand kilometres begins with one step.

**LEFT:** Photo provided by Barrett.  
**ABOVE:** Photo by GDJ, Pixabay

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# Hawkesbury Show

## Penrith and Windsor NSW Services

By Warren Heggarty

**Flourish Australia's Windsor service and "WestClub" at Penrith both had outings to the local 2025 Hawkesbury Show at Clarendon NSW. The Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association holds the annual event which 'showcases the agricultural excellence of our district.' (Hawkesbury Showground, 2025)**

Panorama caught up with the crowd from Flourish Australia on the very edge of the fairgrounds. We found Anthony and Angela trying out some Hot Wheels. Not the type you might have played with as a child, but the grown up version that you can actually sit in and drive. And as this was an Agricultural Show, It had a tray on the back, that could fit a few hay bales.

But there was no time for work! Everyone had to get round and see

the exhibits and there were plenty of them.

Nearby was a barn that spun more than its fair share of yarns. All manner woolly creatures were represented, alpacas, sheep, goats, and there was even a spinster, an actual lady, not necessarily unmarried, who spun the yarn in the traditional way. Warren, the grandson of a wool classer and buyer spent an inordinate amount of time here and had to run to catch up.

Moving along, there were cattle, plump and very well looked after, raising money for rural mental health. Yes, these cows were working for OUR benefit, right!

Emergency services and the military were VERY well represented. There were some bush fire fighting engines, some air force hardware and some dangerous looking vehicles in camo.

We saw two police women stride up to make an arrest of one Mister Al Packer, fugitive mohair trafficker.

'Careful' said Police Woman One, 'They spit you know. 'Don't worry,' said Police Woman Two, 'I brought the spit bag.'

There were horses too, and a show-jumping field where we saw some young riders show their mastery of equestrian sports.

Many towns across Australia have shows like this, but the Hawkesbury Show is second in size only to the Sydney Royal Agricultural Society Easter Show. In other words, it is the biggest Rural Show in the COUNTRY.

And there is merchandise. You could spend HOURS looking at and trying on genuine designer hats by big names in millinery. All of the exhibitors seemed to be wearing hats, jeans, cowboy boots and plaid shirts.

The first show in 1845 was attended by over 3,000 people and included a ploughing match where 'the girls of the district gathered on every vantage point to watch the (29) ploughmen in action.'



# Museums 2U

## 4 Reminiscing

Museums can tend to be STATIC and therefore people with disabilities or those in aged care and so forth might feel excluded... and yet those same people may well be a museum's keenest visitors.

The solution is to take the museum to the people. One example of this is shown on the YouTube channel *idriveaclassic*, hosted by Steph (if you like vintage cars it's the best!) She showed an old caravan that serves as a living, breathing, moving museum. (*idriveaclassic*, 2025)



The ancient Sprite 400 Caravan is fully fitted with décor bound to bring back holiday memories of the good old days to the people in aged care or retirement homes it visits. A guide from the museum is included, to whip up some enthusiasm. 'It was donated by the relative of someone who had passed and now it is being used to bring happiness to other people!' says Steph.

Local councils in Australia often have this sort of 'Reminiscing' program. Exhibits are taken out to aged care homes, sometimes you even get to handle the exhibits and talk about the memories they evoke. Below is an example from my own local council. Go online and check out what your own council has.

<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Community/Art-and-Culture/Hurstville-Museum-Gallery/Learning-Programs/Senior-groups>

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Hawkesbury Showground. (2025). Show History. Retrieved from Hawkesbury Showground: [www.hawkesburyshowground.com.au/show/show-history](http://www.hawkesburyshowground.com.au/show/show-history)

Today, the biggest event at the Hawkesbury show is the Grand Parade of a 'diverse array of livestock' and 'machinery that features new and antique tractors. Plus there are amusement rides, live music and an animal nursery where people of all ages can get hand's on experience!'

Clarendon, in between Windsor and Richmond, is the home of the Hawkesbury Racecourse, as well as the Showground and it is also next to the Richmond RAAF airbase. Giant olive-green aeroplanes come in really close to land nearby.

**ABOVE:** A contingent from Flourish Australia gravitated to the HOT WHEELS exhibit. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Police 'arrest' an alpaca. **MIDDLE:** Some beasts raising money for mental health. **BOTTOM:** Didn't have time for the Ferris wheel. Blast! Pics by Warren Heggarty



# Doctor in distress

**Burnout is more than just 'working too hard'**

By Warren Heggarty

**Burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged or repeated stress. It can be accompanied by a feeling of pointlessness or numbness. There is a view that it is caused by 'working too hard or too long hours,' but this can be misleading. Many people work hard and for long hours at things they love and do not 'burn out.' What is really at the root of burnout.**

We know that there are professions that are prone to burnout, even to the point of people thinking of taking their own lives. Being a General Practitioner is one of them. Statistically, female physicians are particularly prone.

In a TV interview (available on YouTube see 'works cited') Dr S.J. said that one day at work she began crying. She had a feeling she was achieving nothing in her 50-60 hour work weeks. She felt she was also neglecting her family as well. (BBC Breakfast, 2024)

'All I could see were tasks, instant messages, more appointments being booked, and people constantly knocking on my door for other things to be done.' She

ended up driving to the seaside and standing there looking out to sea for 'six or seven hours' and was unable to return to her practice. (Waters, 2024)

## **A doctor without boundaries?**

She revealed that she actually IDENTIFIED as a doctor. That was who she was in total. So, her harsh negative feelings were not just directed towards her job but towards her whole self. This is like a person with a diagnosis of schizophrenia identifying as a 'schizophrenic'- it is no more valid to identify as your 'job issues' than it is to identify as a disease. People are more than that.

Being a mother, a wife and a hardworking doctor are hardly signs that you have failed in life! Working too hard can be addressed by learning to say 'No,' setting and sticking to your priorities (eg, your family) and enforcing your personal boundaries.

Charles E. Hummel wrote in 'The Tyranny of the Urgent' 'Hard work does not hurt us' if it is 'matched by a sense of achievement and joy.' It is 'doubt and misgiving' that harm us as we become oppressed by the pile of unfinished tasks. We sense uneasily that we may have failed to do the important things. (Hummel, 1967)

Other people's expectations can violate our boundaries. In Dr S.J.'s case, however, it is almost as if she felt that being a doctor did not involve having personal boundaries! Scarlett McNally, writing in the British Medical Journal says 'The culture in health care that expects doctors to be heroic and resilient to a superhuman degree with an intense workload, is toxic and increases their suicide risk.' (McNally, 2025). It is easier said than done but ultimately, we are the ones who have to say 'No' to unreasonable expectations.

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**ABOVE:** On the rocks...'Looking out to sea for 6 or 7 hours...' Photo by Warren Heggarty

**'Hard work does not hurt us' if it is 'matched by a sense of achievement and joy.'- Hummel**



# When is it time to talk about suicide?

## Insights from A.S.I.S.T Training

By Graham Seaman



**Preventing suicide is something that Flourish Australia is dedicated to, which is why our support staff undergo in-service suicide prevention training. We have on our staff accredited trainers including Peter Farrugia and Kara Lyons who present the A.S.I.S.T. course. We spoke to Peer Worker Emily Rotziokos from Queanbeyan about how she was able to apply in real working life those concepts she explored with Peter and Kara.**

Emily found that through undertaking this training she was able to grasp subtle signs that suggested it might be time to talk about suicide to a person she was supporting. She was prepared then to prepare a plan to keep the person safe.

'I must admit I had some doubts about the course before I did it,' Emily confessed to Panorama. 'I asked myself if it was right to talk about suicide directly. After doing the course I decided that it is beneficial. It is GOOD to do so.'

'A person who is thinking of suicide will put out "invitations" that can be precursors to suicide. One person who accesses our service seemed to me to be doing just that. I had only irregularly seen this person but I had formed an idea of what they were usually like. They had been doing it tough but I noticed that some of their actions, their physical

signs and their words and the feelings they expressed seemed to fall below the 'baseline.'

'Invitations' include things such as a person talking more than usual about bleak things, expressing loss, or expressing an inability to take a shower or to look after themselves as they normally would. There may also be stressful events.

The person Emily was talking to seemed more dishevelled than usual, their home was messier, their voice was more of a monotone. These were subtle changes. 'Before doing this training I don't think I would have explored these things further. I would not have made the jump and asked them if they had been thinking of ending their life.'

It is better to be annoying or embarrassed than to miss an opportunity to help someone.

### **PAL Pathway for Assisting Life**

As it turned out, the person WAS thinking of suicide and Emily WAS prepared. 'Following the A.S.I.S.T. model we made a suicide prevention plan together to keep them safe while looking towards future support.'

It is about engaging with and understanding the person at a time of uncertainty. 'If a person says something like "I don't think

I have the courage to continue" then you can turn that statement on its head. It expresses DOUBT about not continuing. If you let the person lead the conversation and leave space for their story, you will let them come to the turning point themselves. For example, you both discover that they are not fully committed to suicide.'

'I have a suicide prevention resources kit in a concertina folder. I have A.S.I.S.T. CRISIS cards available, which help give me structure as a peer worker. I strongly recommend to other support workers that they get a kit of their own together and keep it handy.'

Remember, this article won't make you an expert on suicide prevention, and the CARDS mentioned above assume that you have undertaken the training.

Thanks to Peter Farrugia for his assistance

**ABOVE:** It is about engaging with... a person at a time of uncertainty Photo (Plumpton Park bush track, NSW) by Warren Heggarty **INSET:** Selfie of Emily and feathered friend.

**This article is for people who have done or intend to do the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training which is available to support Staff of Flourish Australia.**

# FAREWELL TO VICTOR

*50+ year Veteran  
Employee of Flourish  
Australia*

By Warren Heggarty



**We were sad to hear that one of Flourish Australia's longest serving employees, Victor Pondikas had passed away in June 2025, aged 83.**

Victor was working with our community business at Marrickville right up until his passing. Readers of Panorama will have met Victor in our pages before, including on the cover in 2012. We interviewed him for the December 2019 story 'Working in the Clean Room'

Kate Paraha, site Manager at Marrickville said, 'Last year, in 2024, Victor celebrated 50 years of service to Flourish Australia, RichmondPRA and PRA, working until he was 83 years old. Both spectacular feats!'

'Victor was a highly valued leader in our team,' said Kate, 'and he is deeply missed by his all of his colleagues. He was known for his wealth of knowledge on the job, his swift and determined walking style, and for being on time for everything!'

Years ago, the Marrickville Community Business was located at



George Street, Redfern in 'The Old Renault Factory.' Here, Victor was in charge of the Wine Line, which was a pretty prestigious, high trust job. Members of The Wine Society would receive a regular pack of various wines which Victor and others on the team had carefully packed at the back of 'The Old Renault Factory.'

Following the move to Marrickville in 2012, Victor found himself donning protective clothing and joining the Clean Room Team. The clean room had a powerful air filter that removed even the tiniest dust particles. Their task was to pack hygienically various surgical dressings and similar items you would find in pharmacies.

Needless to say this was also highly responsible work. Former Sales Manager Lisa Sorenson said Vic was selected as leading hand because of his extreme reliability.'



'I think working here probably means a lot of satisfaction to [all]the employees,' Victor once told Panorama.

When asked how he personally liked working in the clean room, Victor said 'time goes quickly because you are always on the go, like Speedy Gonzales! You can never do to much work here!'

Well, Victor after all your hard work and friendship over five decades with us, we guess you have earned a rest! But we will miss you!

**ABOVE:** Victor at an employee picnic not so long ago. **INSET, LEFT:** Victor at the controls of the 'clean room' at Marrickville (from December 2019 Panorama). **INSET, RIGHT:** Victor and team on the Wine Line. Photo research Mohammed Alkhub, Kate Paraha, Warren Heggarty.



# SO MUCH TO LOVE ABOUT PRE-READ BOOKS!

## Part 3 of our Thrift series

By Warren Heggarty

**Do you like the smell of books? Have you ever seen people sniffing their books. New books have a peculiar smell about them, but second-hand books are downright musty. Some even have a bit of dust on their dust jackets.**

The reason why some people have too many books is so that when they run out of space they can donate (or even SELL) spare books to second hand book stores. This enables people on LIMITED budgets who don't own enough books to purchase them.

Second hand books are a means of time travel. Through them you might even be able to relive some parts of your life that didn't suck.

When I was a boy in the, ahem, seventies, I was an avid reader of the THREE INVESTIGATOR series. Apparently, they still publish in German where they are up to #149. But I missed the original series of ten that I started on. The problem was, being penniless I only ever owned

one. But then one day in the Padstow Second Hand book shop I saw nearly the whole series for sale for less than the price of one new book!

Most of the books you will find in second hand book shops are in fairly good condition, but those that are not are even cheaper. Public Libraries sometimes have jumble sales of out-of-date books. I once picked up a geography text book, Quarto size, full of maps and photos of exotic locations from PNG to Nunavut for a mere \$2.

A professor at my old university dumped a whole shelf of out of date books in the corridor with a PLEASE TAKE ONE sign. Among them Griffith Taylor's classic 'Urban Geography' (1949) with 300 city plans and diagrams! Seeing how much the world has changed since then is quite an eye opener.

Some of our readers prefer books where they don't already know the ending (personally I find that a bit nerve wracking, but to each their own). You can find plenty of old Agatha Christies, Wilbur Smiths,



Raymond Chandlers and the like in second hand stores. Browsing the shelves in an Op Shop or a even shadowy book exchange full of motes is a favourite past time of some people.

Some second-hand book shops will BUY. Don't expect to earn a living off it, but you can sometimes make a few dollars here and there, and create a bit of space at home as well. I once brought a bag of twenty or thirty mint condition books to a wily second-hand dealer who handed me \$20 for the lot. I could have negotiated up a bit, but I was trying to get rid of them, and she knew it. I wanted to make space for some NEW second hand books.

**ABOVE:** Literally Overflowing with literature. **INSET:** Wow! Almost the whole set of Three Investigator novels for less than the price of one new! Photos by Warren Heggarty

# Vale John Hall AM

## Former Chair of Flourish Australia



**1946-2025**

By Warren Heggarty

**The Chair** is the leading member of a company's Board of Directors. A Board is concerned with the governance, overall vision and high-level direction of an organisation. The Chair works with the CEO, who runs the day-to-day operations of the company in order to fulfill the vision of the Board.

**On the occasion of Flourish Australia's 70th anniversary in June, CEO Mark Orr AM wrote about our organisation's founders and the great legacy their successors have carried through in the years since. In particular, Mark mentioned Mr John Hall AM who had passed away only a week earlier on 16th June 2025.**

"John joined the Board of PRA in 1993, became its Chair, helped lead the merger with Richmond Fellowship, and then became the first Chair of the merged organisation's Board until 2014," said Mark. "He continued to support and contribute to the organisation until late 2024 when he told us he was unwell and would need to step back to focus on his health."

On 5th July, Flourish Australia's Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, had been due

to award John as a Life Member on behalf of the Board he once Chaired.

John was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list for significant service to community mental health and to business. He served as a Director of Flourish Australia (and its predecessor organisations) for over 20 years, until 2014. For 17 of those years, he held the position of Chair. This was a significant period of expansion in our organisation's operations.

Prior to that, John was Chair of Bank of China (Australia), CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (which is engaged in the professional development of people on Boards) and Austraclear, an "integral part of Australia's financial system" that facilitates physical debt settlements. His extensive experience as a Company Director also included five years with Hockey Australia from 2007 to 2012.

When PRA and Richmond Fellowship NSW merged in 2012 to become what is now known as Flourish Australia, John was elected to Chair the enlarged organisation.

His citation as Life Member of Flourish Australia reads "For meritorious service to Flourish Australia and exceptional commitment to the wellbeing of people with a lived experience of a mental health issue, their human rights, recovery and integration in the community."

Chief Executive Officer of Flourish Australia Mark Orr spoke for all when he noted John's "31 years of voluntary contribution, of belief in people and their right to quality and safe community supports. We will always be in his debt. We send our condolences and love to John's wife, Jenny, and their family.

"Vale, John. You will be missed."

**ABOVE:** John Hall. Photo by Neil Fenelon.





## Buck House Hospitality

### Creating new pathways to open employment

By Grant J Everett

Flourish Australia's Community Business at Buckingham House received a funding grant recently, and this was used to renovate their commercial kitchen and reopen the Buck House Café. These facilities will be used to create vocational pathways into hospitality studies for a number of supported employees, with students starting off with a Statement of Attainment in Food Safety Handling, followed by commencing hands-on kitchen work with a visiting teacher from a Registered Training Organisation.

Now that the Buck House Café and kitchen have been renovated and resumed operations, Members of Flourish Australia's Board and the Senior Leadership Team visited to enjoy lunch and coffee. And it sounds like they were all very impressed!

"A big congratulations to the Buck House, Employment Services Teams for getting the Buck House Cafe up and running again," said Mark Orr AM, our CEO. "Some of our Board Directors were delighted to be able to visit and have lunch there recently. Congratulations to the teams involved."

We'll be following up all these developments in our October 2025 issue!

**Photo:** Mark Orr enjoying an impressive lunch at Buck House.  
Photo by Neil Fenelon

# COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL COLUMN

By Tricia H and Jen L from the Council

**The Community Advisory Council represents the people who access Flourish Australia's services. Using our lived experience of mental health issues, we also assist and advise management.**

July has been such a big month! On the 7th members of the Council attended a function at Government House, Sydney (pic, top left) hosted by Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales (pic, bottom left). It was to celebrate seventy years of Flourish Australia's Services. You can Read Grant's full report in our Panorama's October issue.

The Council meeting for July was held soon afterwards. Members of the Senior Leadership Team made presentations on recent changes in the leadership, the "going live" of our new Flourish Connect data system, and the highly successful "PhysiCards" which support us to look after our overall physical health.

We heard that "Disability Employment Service" is to be renamed "Inclusive Employment Australia." Also discussed were Accreditation Standards, Taxation, and official car user insurance. Ryan from People and Culture gave us a rundown of the four pillars of the Employee Value Proposition: Impact, Inclusion, Reward and Life-Long Learning Culture.

We are in ongoing discussions With Lisa Gott, General Manager Lived Experience Leadership (pic, top right) about the Council itself. For example: what is the best way to bring new people in to serve on the Council to represent Flourish Australia's thousands of service users? The Council necessarily includes people who are on their recovery journeys, people who are likely on disability support and who are spread widely across the country, and we have our fair share of challenges that we look forward to meeting.

Remember to ask your key support worker who is your local Council representative, if you don't already know. More next month!

All below photos by Neil Fenelon (except Tricia on bottom right by Warren Heggarty)



# NDIS

Support for you, your family,  
and your carers.



We will walk alongside you  
on your recovery journey, as  
well as help you live in the  
community, learn new skills,  
and do the things that are  
*important to you*

## AT FLOURISH AUSTRALIA we can assist you to:

### Our NDIS services

Flourish Australia is a registered NDIS provider. We support people who have a complex mental health issue to live the life they want to live. We have been in business since 1955 and have assisted many people to:

- Find a job
- Undertake training or study
- Make friends
- Connect with their communities
- Sort out day-to-day issues
- Find a place to live
- Stay healthy
- And much more

The most important things to us at Flourish Australia are your health, wellbeing, and recovery journey.

## We are here to help

We know that applying for the NDIS or seeking support can be a confusing and intimidating process. Contact us and we will help you during all stages of the process.

📞 1300 779 270 ✉️ [hello@flourishaustralia.org.au](mailto:hello@flourishaustralia.org.au)

🌐 [www.flourishaustralia.org.au](http://www.flourishaustralia.org.au)

📱 Follow us @FlourishAus



Find out if you can  
access the NDIS



Think about your current  
needs, goals, and supports



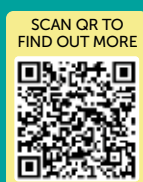
Meet with your NDIS  
planner and get a plan



Decide which service providers  
you want support from



Put your plan into action



**flourish**  
AUSTRALIA

Where mental wellbeing thrives

NDIS