

AWARD WINNING

panorama

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

Monthly Issue **October #103A**

**A Decade of Dedication:
Thank You, Elizabeth**

**Western Sydney's
Wonderful Winter Ball**

**Picking Up
Where I Left Off**

flourish®
AUSTRALIA

Where mental wellbeing thrives

NDIS PROVIDER
— SINCE 2013 —



Where mental wellbeing thrives

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 60+ of our services in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Contact Flourish Australia!

1300 779 270 or
flourishaustralia.org.au

Chair: Judi Higgin
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.

Publications People



Grant J Everett
Assistant
Publications
Officer



Warren Heggarty
Publications
Officer



Jasmin Moradides
Development
Projects
Manager

Peter Neilson
Chief Development Officer

Kylie Bolton & Kate Jones
Graphic Design

Contents

COVER: Professor Elizabeth More AM FAICD at a Buck House art group. PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

- 4** Picking Up Where I Left Off
- 6** A Decade of Dedication: Thank You, Elizabeth
- 9** Doctors with Disabilities
- 10** Western Sydney's Wonderful Winter Ball!
- 11** Social Relations Are Foundational For Good Mental Health
- 12** Books pop up for Indigenous literacy
- 12** Jobs That Are Hard To Fill
- 13** Community Advisory Council Column
- 13** AFL Aboriginal Power Cup
- 14** Recovery Games: Panorama's Puzzle Pages



Contributors include...

Tracey accesses services at Flourish Australia New Outlook, Wollongong

Tricia is a member of the Community Advisory Council

Contributions are welcome!

WE PROVIDE PRACTICAL

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 families and carers can be found on our website:
flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers

SCAN QR TO
FIND OUT MORE



In Panorama October 2026...

We wish all our readers a productive Mental Health Month 2026. The national theme this year is **Together We Thrive**. Panorama is planning to look at exactly what that could mean for you in a practical sense over the coming 12 months. Queensland's theme is **Build Community, Build Wellbeing**, while South Australia has **Find Your Way to Wellbeing**.

The NSW state theme is **A Little Connection Goes A Long Way** and what better way to demonstrate that than by having a BALL? The Western Sydney Winter Ball, that is! Thilaga G (pictured left in a glamorous strapless gown) was one of the many people from our Western Sydney services who came along to the Sapphire Room Club Blacktown, dressed to the nines to socialise,

dance, muck around with a photo booth, and just have a good time for the sake of having a good time!

In July, Flourish Australia's Board welcomed a new Chair in Judi Higgin. In **A Decade of Dedication: Thank You, Elizabeth**, outgoing Chair Prof Elizabeth More AM FAICD talks to us about the highlights of her ten year term as Chair. We are pleased to say that Elizabeth will be carrying on with her role at the Flourish Foundation Australia.

In **Picking Up Where I Left Off**, Tracey shares the many small steps she's taken in order to rebuild her life. With a little support from her Peer Worker, Tracey has returned to her Aged Care studies and mastered how to get around Wollongong, among many other achievements.

In article marking and celebrating NAIDOC Week, we learn about how Indigenous children are engaging

with literacy by enjoying easy access to quality reading material in **Books Pop Up For Indigenous Literacy**.

In **Doctors with Disabilities**, we explore the incredible stories of three women who have overcome serious physical disability to become health professionals. Dr Alexandra Adams is the first deafblind person in UK history to receive a medical degree, while Dr Angelika Trabert is an Anaesthetist and a Paralympian Equestrian from Germany born without legs.

And more!

Next Month In November Panorama

We will begin looking at the many presentations that Flourish Australia People made at the 2026 TheMHS conference. And we will start looking at how to use your kitchen to improve your mental health!

Spread

hope.
inspire others.

**Don't worry if
you're not a writer -
that's where
we jump in!**

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

At Panorama, every story is valued.

We're constantly on the lookout for stories from those living with mental health issues, but 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 or Call: 1300 779 270

FLOURISH AUSTRALIA

flourish
Where mental
wellbeing thrives

PICKING UP WHERE I LEFT OFF

REBUILDING (WITH A LITTLE SUPPORT)

By Tracey

In a story I think lots of people could probably identify with, my situation with my mental health and my drinking led to everything in my life just feeling out of my control, and I'm only just sorting through it now. With the right help, I'm rebuilding my life from the ground up.

There are so many different things you need to manage all at once when you rebuild your life, but now that I've had a taste of independence, I want more of it!

My sobriety from drugs and alcohol continues to be a very important aspect in my recovery, and it's going really well. It's been two years since I

had a drink, and attending Alcoholics Anonymous has been very helpful in achieving this. As the saying goes, "I'm taking it one day at a time."

I've made some friends at AA, and their support has been amazing. The other people in my support network include my Mum and Dad, my brother and my sister-in-law, and a couple of other mates.

Picking Up Where I Left Off

I feel much better in myself being sober, and it's so much easier to function and to get things done.

For instance, I completed Certificate III Individual Support at Wollongong TAFE, and plan to continue my



studies next year in a Certificate IV Ageing Support. I started this Cert IV a while ago, but I wasn't ready for it then. I've been studying hard to get ready for it.

I prefer to attend an actual physical TAFE building for my classes. I have studied online, remotely, but I find it easier to be on campus. It's great to have a real teacher right in front of you.

"THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS YOU NEED TO MANAGE ALL AT ONCE WHEN YOU REBUILD YOUR LIFE, BUT NOW THAT I'VE HAD A TASTE OF INDEPENDENCE, I WANT MORE OF IT!"

I am trying to get a job at present, though I'm currently volunteering at Warrigal to gain experience, build rapport and build a foundation to hopefully gain paid work.

My career goal from my studies is to become a Peer Support Worker for older people in Aged Care. I'd like to start off doing part time work with this, as that would make it possible for me to find better housing options.

New Outlook

I regularly attend Flourish Australia's New Outlook service, which is located just opposite Wollongong Station. There's lots to occupy my time and aid my recovery there, and all the staff are so lovely. People can visit New Outlook just to hang out and socialise over coffee and a nice meal (both made on-site very affordable), or they can attend music groups and art groups and lots of other activities, such as going on outings to interesting places. I particularly enjoy listening to the New Outlook band playing together. That's always good.

I've been a part of New Outlook's Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program (CPS) for the last 9 months, and I'm very happy with the support they've provided me all the way through it. I'm actually very close to graduating from CPS now, and I've loved it!

I originally self-referred myself to New Outlook for a few reasons: I wanted to resubmit my NDIS application in order to get a better support package, I wanted to work on my anxiety and stress regarding my TAFE assessments, and to put together a budget and a savings goal. My psychologist in the community actually recommended New Outlook to me a while back, as did my drug and alcohol counsellor,

but at that point I wasn't ready to commit to anything like that. But I'm so glad I did!

My Peer Worker from New Outlook, Charlotte, was very helpful with my NDIS paperwork, and she also wrote a letter of recommendation to provide step-by-step instructions for my psychologist, as she knew the right terms and wording that you need to use when you submit NDIS paperwork. I'm happy to say that the NDIS package I received really meets all my needs.

I've made some good friends at New Outlook, but I prefer to access services one-on-one, as I'm essentially an introvert who sticks to myself.

If you have a mental health issue and substance issues, I'd recommend linking up with the CPS at a Flourish Australia service. I understand there are many Flourish Australia sites that provide this program.

I have particularly enjoyed attending the Rainbow Group at New Outlook. I've been engaging with this gathering by getting involved in their events, trips, and little bits and pieces, like creating my version of the Pride flag in the art group. There are a number of people who access services at New Outlook who are LGBTQ+, myself included, and I think it's really great that the Rainbow Group is running at a number of other Flourish Australia services.

Bussing It

In the past I've had a lot of anxiety about public transport, so one of my goals with New Outlook was to get confident in using public transport around Wollongong.

I walked to the bus stop on Crown Street with Charlotte, and we caught the 55C Loop bus. We didn't

get off until we returned back to the start of the loop, so I was able to build a mental picture of the whole route. We walked to New Outlook from there, and I knew for sure that I'd be able to overcome my anxiety with buses.

The next time Charlotte and I did the bus ride, we got off at a café at Wollongong North Beach for a hot drink and a recovery conversation, then got back on the bus later. The third time I did the trip all by myself, getting off at the same café as before.

In the past I was always worried that I'd miss my bus or end up going in the wrong direction or something, but Charlotte's support has alleviated that anxiety, and I'm far more confident now. I can get to where I'm going without any worries!

Learning the trains is my next goal. There can be so many different platforms to keep track of, especially at Central!

ABOVE: Tracey, spending some quality time at Flourish Australia's New Outlook service at Wollongong. PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE. OPPOSITE: With plenty of fun to be had, nice people to meet and tailored support that meets your needs, New Outlook encourages visitors. PHOTO BY GRANT J EVERETT

**Flourish Australia
Wollongong**

**Dharawal and
Tharawal Country**

**New Outlook
3 Station Street
Wollongong NSW 2500
1300 779 270**



*Panorama
spoke to
Professor Elizabeth
More AM FAICD about
her decade as Chair of the
Flourish Australia Board and
her pathway there from
being a ballerina!*

By Warren Heggarty

A Decade of Dedication

Spontaneously, Elizabeth exclaims “What a lovely baby!” as a young mother and father cradling a child come out of a suburban Women’s Wellness Centre onto the sunny pavement. The proud parents engage in a brief conversation with Elizabeth before moving on. Turning to me, Elizabeth says of this encounter that it reminds her of her own fortune in having solid family foundations.’

And that, in turn, reminds her of Flourish Australia’s Women and Children’s Program and

its importance in preventing disadvantage crossing from generation to generation. Now that she has completed her ten-year term as the Chair of Flourish Australia, Elizabeth sees that program and its expansion as one of the great highlights. She is full of praise for the hard work and dedication of the people who have brought it this far.

Elizabeth includes everyone in the organisation in that accolade, but she is particularly grateful for the leadership shown by our CEO Mark Orr AM. “I often wondered how he was able to get so much done!” Elizabeth said. “We brought in Susan

McCarthy as COO to help with that workload, right on the eve of the pandemic.”

She also mentions Peter Neilson as Chief Development Officer, “working assiduously, especially on the expansion of the Women and Children’s Program. We now have the capacity to add two more cottages to the existing site, and we are working with Homes NSW on acquiring land for an additional site.”

The patrons of our organisation, the Governor General, Her Excellency Ms Sam Mostyn AC, and the NSW Governor The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, have both shown great interest in the Women’s and Children’s Program. Her Excellency The Governor General

hosted a special reception at Admiralty House Sydney where she met beneficiaries, and was central at our organisation's 70th birthday celebration.

Judi Higgin has now assumed the role of Chair of Flourish Australia, but Elizabeth will continue to head the Flourish Foundation Australia, the organisation's fundraising arm, one of the special aims of which is to expand the Women and Children's Program.

"I was fortunate," says Elizabeth, "in having taken on the role of Chair following the term of John Hall AM. I came to an organisation that already had a rich and enduring culture of commitment. Strategy is fine, but you have to be able to take people along with you. As one management guru emphasised long ago, 'culture eats strategy for breakfast!'"

The Council

Coinciding with her ten-year term (really closer to ten and a half) has

been the decade-long journey of the Community Advisory Council (The Council). The Council, of course, is made up of people who access our services and provides advice at the highest level.

"At the outset, meetings of the Council were infrequent because people had to be gathered together in one place. But a peculiar benefit of the pandemic was that we became more aligned in using digital communication like Zoom. The benefit of that is meetings can take place monthly now."

Mozzy W, who was Member, Chair or Co-Chair of the Council for much of that time, expressed gratitude for Elizabeth's work alongside the Council. "It was a pleasure to have her at our meetings," Mozzy says, "and to have her take so much interest personally in the Council. She was able to go to the other Board members and talk with first-hand knowledge of our views. She showed full commitment, and had an attitude

of 'I don't want to let you down.' She was always very lovely and easy to talk to. She was just the sort of person the Council needed to have as Chair."

Elizabeth says she found working with the Council of people with lived experience a privilege.

"Buckingham House at Surry Hills has been special for me, too," she says, because it is one of the oldest continuously operating services we have. It is also the home of our Exercise Program, which Professor Simon Rosenbaum - a Flourish Foundation Ambassador - was pivotal in helping us develop.

Other highlights of Elizabeth's time as Chair include the Resolve Program, the aim of which was to keep people out of hospital by providing an alternative. The cost of hospitalisation is very high, and

Continued next page



Continued from previous page

it had long been recognised that there were less costly ways in which a person can deal with issues in the community. The Resolve Program running across seven years showed that better approaches to mental health issues can actually cost less!

Classical Ballet

Born in Hungary, Elizabeth's upbringing reflects the migrant experience of many children. "Yes, I took funny sandwiches to school," she laughs. "In fact, once I had a birthday party for which my mother went out of her way to prepare the most beautiful Hungarian treats. But of course, the other kids were all wondering when the cocktail franks and bread with hundreds and thousands were going to come out!"

Elizabeth's Hungarian background rubbed off on her in one very important way: she grew to have a very deep passion for the arts. This included literature, music, dance, drama and other things. After finishing at Randwick Public School, she successfully auditioned as a pianist for the Conservatorium High School in Sydney. It was not long, though, before classical ballet pulled her away from that through a Scholarship at 16 to the Royal Ballet School in the UK.

"Sometimes I wonder," she says, "how a ballet dancer goes on to become an academic in the field of management." Ballet requires athleticism and resilience aplenty, as well as an artistic temperament. It can be brutal, "and your career is very short!" Elizabeth says. Retiring from ballet at 20, she returned to Australia, completed her schooling, and went to the University of NSW, eventually completing a doctorate in Drama. She also found time to be a singer in a band!

Senior Roles

Entering Academia, Elizabeth eventually occupied many senior roles, becoming Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Canberra and also at Macquarie University near Sydney. The award of AM (Member of the Order of Australia) came through her



work in Management Education. "Education," she says, "is a major factor behind social cohesion and behind democracy itself. Education is ultimately about critical thinking, understanding, and respect for difference. And yet recently there seems to have been a resurgence in people showing a lack of such qualities in the way they treat one another."

We know that movement, music and the arts are important factors in many people's recoveries, but what was it specifically that led Elizabeth to transition to an organisation in the mental health field? While working in Universities, she saw the problems of mental health as they affected both staff and students on campus. An increasing student suicide rate was something that affected Elizabeth in her leadership roles.

"Importantly," says Elizabeth, "the end of my term as Chair closely coincided with four new Board members taking office at Flourish Australia. They are all terrific individuals and I would have liked to have worked with them longer, although fortunately some have chosen to also be members of the Flourish Foundation subcommittee."

"70 years is a long time for an organisation to remain sustainable, a real achievement that happily coincided with my time as Chair. In that same year, 2025, we saw the launch of Flourish Connect, a

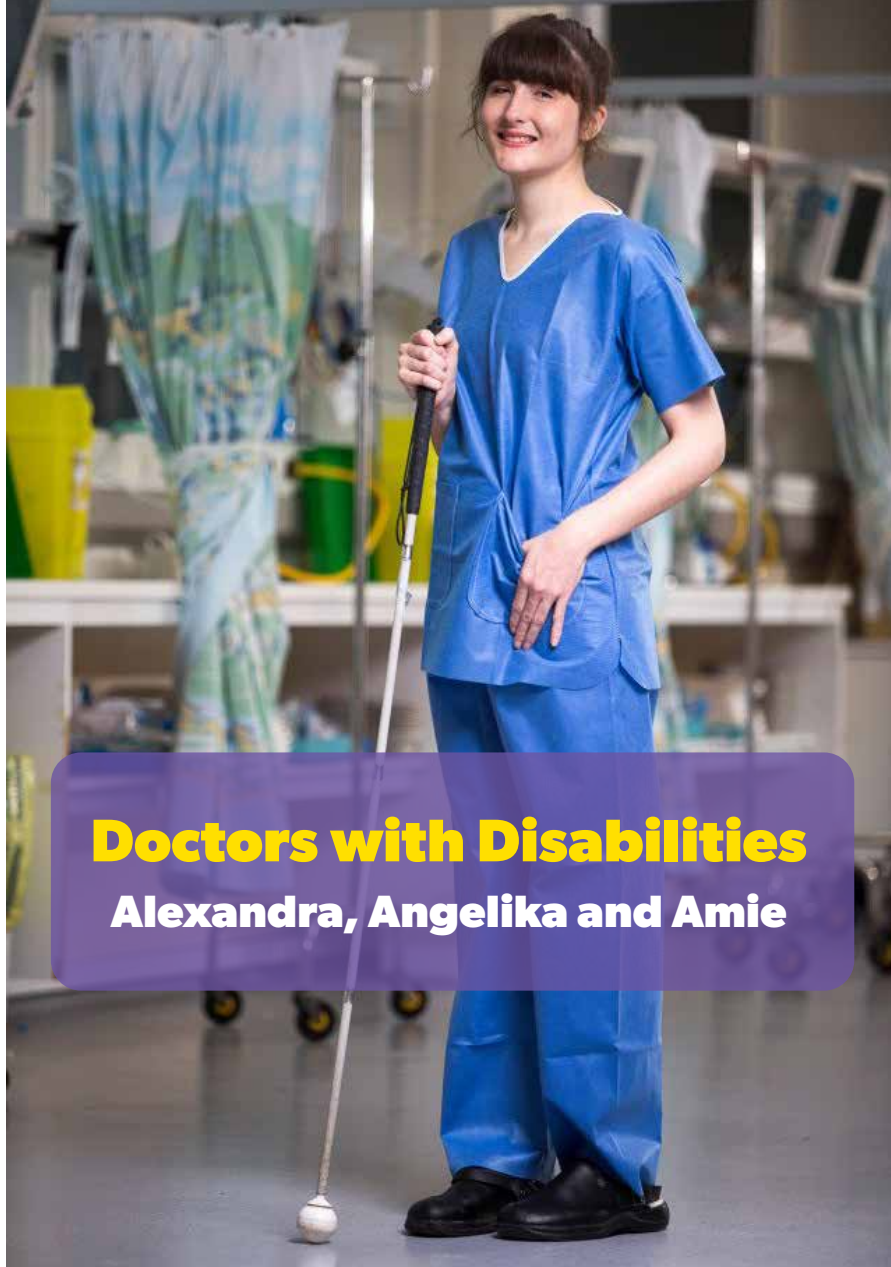
new transformative digital system that enhances and supports the important work of the organisation."

What does the future hold for Elizabeth? "Well, Amazon informed me that last year I had read 132 novels on my Kindle Unlimited membership," she laughs. She will, perhaps, have more time to enjoy her subscriptions to the Belvoir Street Theatre, the Sydney Symphony, Opera Australia, and the Australian Ballet. There is her continued involvement with the Foundation at this exciting time of expansion, and also work as a Commissioner with TEQSA, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. She is also, not surprisingly, looking for other things to become involved in!

"I love learning and I have learned so much in my time with Flourish Australia. What we do at the organisation is so incredibly humbling, and the opportunity to be involved and contribute is one of the greatest things in my life."

PREVIOUS PAGE (TOP): Professor Elizabeth More AM FAICD with some keen gardeners at Flourish Australia's Flowerdale service, Liverpool. PREVIOUS PAGE (RIGHT): A lovely portrait of Elizabeth taken during the same visit. THIS PAGE (BELOW): Elizabeth (far left) with H.E. The Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC and Mr Denis Wilson (second and third from right) and other VIPs at the Women and Children's centre. Peter Neilson is far right, Susan McCarthy third from left. PHOTOS BY NEIL FENELON

Thank you Elizabeth



Doctors with Disabilities

Alexandra, Angelika and Amie

In days gone by, we tended to see disability in terms of what it STOPS you from doing. That is slowly changing. Let's look at three people whose ambition to become doctors might have been considered fanciful a few decades ago. Yet think of the lived experience they bring to the profession of medicine!

In July 2026, Dr Alexandra Adams received her medical degree, becoming the first deafblind person to do so in the UK! Alexandra has severe deafness as well as a progressive mitochondrial disease which she describes as 'long term disability of the muscles' and is expected to lose her remaining sight. She also uses an oxygen tank to help her breathe.

She missed out on a lot of schooling between ages 14 and 16, having a number of near-death experiences

and ICU admissions. This also interrupted her aim of becoming a Paralympian, but solidified her desire to become a doctor.

On the 'This Morning' TV show in the UK, she told how her stethoscope has a bluetooth connection to her hearing aid, meaning she can hear your insides without having to put the ends into her ears!

So how does a vision-impaired doctor insert a cannula into a vein? 'When sighted health care professionals are taught' she explains '...they are actually encouraged to look away or close their eyes because the best [veins] are the ones you can feel.'

On her website (settingsights.co.uk) she says 'I still face the secret discrimination still overwhelming our modern-day society, every single day.' She says that the main obstacles to her becoming a doctor

were not her disabilities. 'It's always been the perceptions of other people- which I understand.'

Dr Angelika Trabert is an Anaesthetist from Germany. She was born without legs and with only three fingers on one hand but she loves horses. She is also a Paralympian Equestrian, having competed at the same London 2012 Paralympic games which Alexandra missed out on. She has won 24 medals for Germany. She has also served as a doctor in Guinea, West Africa. She is an inductee into the National Cowgirl Hall Of Fame in the USA.

Amie Stringfellow MD specialises in Sleep Medicine and Paediatrics in Texas USA. Like her mother and grandfather, she was born with Treacher Collins syndrome which means the bones of her face did not develop properly. Not only is this highly disfiguring, it also interferes with hearing, eyesight, nutrition, speech and breathing. Going through many operations as a child, medicine it seemed like an obvious choice of career!

So here are three people who are doing what they love at the highest level despite, or even BECAUSE of disabilities. It is true that high achievers often (not always) enjoy stable family lives, are encouraged by parents, and are able to afford what they need to excel. But with sufficient determination, if we work to our strengths, we can often surprise the world with what we CAN do. As Dr Amie's old home page says, it all depends on how you see yourself.

PICTURE: Dr Alexandra Adams, first deaf blind medical doctor in the UK. SOURCE: SETTING SIGHTS UK WEBSITE



Dr Alexandra



Dr Angelika



Dr Amie Osborn
(Dr Stringfellow) not
to be confused with
Ozzy's daughter!



Western Sydney's Wonderful Winter Ball!

Guests began arriving early in the lounge outside the Sapphire Room at Club Blacktown. The most noticeable thing was how downright glamorous everyone looked! And why not? This was not just another day at Flourish Australia, this was the Winter Ball.

The Ball had been organised so that people who access our Seven Hills service (mainly) could experience semi-formal dining and (if they so desired) dancing. Many of us who have experienced complex mental health issues do not get the opportunity to do these kinds of things. But if we are to follow our recovery journeys out of social isolation, this is a great way to do it. We are with other people who share similar lived experience with us.

Yes, there were nerves. A ball of fun often starts out as a ball of nerves. Those of us who are naturally inclined to anxiety in social situations often have to get over this hurdle at the outset.

Elspeth, Melany, Laura and the other staff from Flourish Australia's Seven Hills service were still preparing right up until the doors opened. Events are always a bit like that, no matter how meticulously you plan. But what a great event it was!

People who plan events know that it can be a little nerve-wracking. "We were aiming at a larger number," said Melany as she desperately tried to unpick a tangle of fairy lights. "But there are a number of people who dropped out at the last minute. I think, as the day got closer, they might have started to have second thoughts." Melany needn't have worried about numbers, because

the Sapphire Room was soon full of guests.

As we moved in, we saw that the seating was all planned out. Each of the ten or so tables had six people, and everyone had their own place and name tag waiting for them. Plus we had our own bar (alcohol free, as per Flourish Australia policy) a tea and coffee table, a photo booth, a DJ and a dance floor. And of course, balloons and fairy lights. It was good that the music was loud enough to dance to, but not so loud that it killed the conversation.

Three courses in social engagement

Each course had several choices, and we started with entrees of calamari and crumbed prawns.

The photo booth proved popular after that, and most of us queued up to have a go at making funny photos using the costume elements provided (sailor's caps, swords, gangster sunglasses, etc). Some people got up and danced before the main courses (lamb shanks and chicken schnitzel) were brought round.

We gathered for a group photo (there were so many guests that it was hard to fit everyone in, even with a "panoramic" lens). There were some words from our MC Melany, among others, then we had dessert of various sweet delights.

Everyone dressed at their best. Some wore eye-catching gowns featuring sequins and jewellery. Others were more subtle and understated in black, with cream or black jackets. Some took a lot

of time with their hair and makeup, others chose a more sporty look. There were floral gowns and shirts that gave a summery glow to the winter atmosphere. You really felt you were in a room full of individuals.

Really, it can't be overstated how valuable this experience is for people. It was not just a GOOD time. It was a useful and effective time that helped people get out of their shells in the company of people who 'get it.' Panorama heard this from all the people we spoke to.

Finally, a big thanks to Norman,

Cleo and Aaron of Seven Hills service who did all the hard parts of the planning over the preceding four months.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Those who wanted to be photographed give a hearty greeting to Panorama readers. Hayley W, Aaron S, Kristy S, Nicola B, Miss Suzanne C, Norman R, Angela A, Feroza M, Susie H, Karina C, James H, Cleo P, Cecelia M, Patricia D, Jesse P, Alexandra R, Rhys E, Jason M, Neal C, Susan R, Paul J, Sherri P, Laini N, Brad Mc, Belinda G, Sarah S, Tracey S, Victor V, Laura T, Eslpeth C, Melany W, Jaspreet, Rahan U, Stella L. PHOTO BY ROSLYN. BELOW: Turning on the glamour! TOP: Hayley W, Maria T, and Kristy S. BOTTOM LEFT: Thiliga G donned sapphire for the Sapphire Room! BOTTOM RIGHT: Jesse P sporting an eye-catching dragon motif. PHOTOS BY WARREN HEGGARTY

Social Relations Are Foundational For Good Mental Health

We have heard about the Government's desire to reduce the cost of NDIS, as well as the fact that it has cut spending on "Social and Community" activities for people with a disability from \$2 billion to \$1 billion. For this to happen, it might suggest that Australians may not fully appreciate how important "Social and Community" activities are, viewing them as a kind of decorative addition to the main business of "treatment."

PRA, a predecessor organisation to Flourish Australia, began 71 years ago as a kind of social dance club for patients at Callan Park Hospital. One of our founders, an "ad man" named John Kingsmill, wrote a book on it called "Dancing with the Patients." His brother had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and was one of those "patients."

The main effect of serious mental health issues is that they cause social isolation. This affects all relationships, including friends and families. To advance recovery, relationships and social isolation are the very things we need to work on. Employment is a major goal, but employment is a lot harder to come by if a person is isolated or has been out of the loop socially for a long time. The same with housing.

Everybody needs to learn how to socialise effectively to get along in life. A person isolated by mental health issues has already been robbed of opportunities precisely because of this delay or damage to their social skills. They need to be practised constantly. You can't learn this from a book (although Panorama has a go at giving our readers a bit of "theory" now and then).

Governments speak about "foundational" services that they hope will reduce demand for NDIS services. Yet in the non-clinical mental health field, you don't get more foundational than providing activities that develop a person's confidence in social settings.





NAIDOC Celebrations 2026 Books pop up for Indigenous literacy

By Warren Heggarty

Where can you buy books by Indigenous authors written in Indigenous languages, as well as English? The answer is Magabala Books, the publishing arm of the Indigenous Literary Foundation.

From 7th-9th of July during NAIDOC Week, in partnership with Hachette Publishers, they hosted a pop-up bookshop in the lobby of 207 Kent Street in Sydney.

Panorama went along and spoke to Jess, Christiana and another lady from Hachette who staffed the pop-up store and showed us around the books and merchandise on display. Everyone was so enthused about the great variety of books available.

Stan Grant was one of the authors whose name you might recognise.

Naturally, there were books by Bruce Pascoe of "Dark Emu" fame, as well as a number of titles by Melissa-Jane Fogerty like "One Word," but there was much more as well. There were Children's books, books about natural healing, animals, plants, culture, family, the environment and yes, POETRY too!

I am rather fond of frogs myself, and have connections to the Snowy region of NSW, so I could not resist purchasing "The Little Corroboree Frog" by Tracey Holton Ramirez and Angela Ramirez. Now all I have to do is to have kids so I can read it to them!

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation is a charity of the Australian Book Industry that works with remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

communities across Australia. It responds to requests from remote communities for culturally relevant books and resources to support communities to create and publish their stories in languages of their choice.

Ben Bowen, CEO, says, "Our communities and families are strong. They are the backbone of our culture and our first educators... our aim is to...anchor the ILF's literacy programs into the family and community structures."

Photo by Warren

Jobs That Are Hard To Fill

They say that getting a job is so hard these days. What if there were a labour shortage, and employers were scrambling for workers? In certain fields, that is exactly the case. In a so-called "employees' market," employers are often willing to pay you rather well, and sometimes even overlook incomplete education. So if Australia has labour shortages, why is it so hard to get work?

Some jobs with severe labour shortages include:

- Funeral Director/
Mortuary Assistant

- Underwater Welder (oil rigs and undersea pipes)
- Elevator and Escalator Mechanic
- AI and Cybersecurity Professional ("Digital Bodyguard")
- Tower Crane Operator
- HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) Technician

Not everybody can do these sorts of jobs, and not just because of a lack of skill. Personal temperament and the ability to tolerate stress, heights, enclosed spaces, etc, may close these opportunities off to a lot of people.

AI and Cybersecurity are obviously the Next Big Thing, but think about this: AI requires

Data Centres, and Data Centres depend on HVAC Mechanics! Likewise, with the world building ever-upwards, Elevator and Escalator Mechanics are in such high demand that the CEO of Otis Elevators has been virtually begging for workers.

The problem lies in what people are WILLING and ABLE to do NOW. One particular problem in Australia is that an ageing population is causing a "replacement gap," where there are not enough young people coming up through the pipeline. And this has been happening for many years in jobs that require long term training...such as Nurses and Maths Teachers!

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL COLUMN

With Tricia from the Council

Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council is an peer elected lived experience group that provides advice to Flourish Australia's Board and leadership team, helping shape the organisation through the voice of people who access our services.

Their big news from May and the Federal Budget was about changes to the NDIS. Naturally they focused on this in their Council meeting, which was joined by James Herbertson, General Manager, Services. The Council looked at a very full agenda of items in this meeting. First up, we discussed with Mohammed Alkhub, (General Manager, Business Excellence) the idea of a poster about the complaints process to give people an illustration to refer to when needed.

Megan Hancock (Chief Financial Officer) and Rebecca Enright (Payroll and Reporting Manager) discussed payroll changes for supported employees. The 'Go Live' day for the new system was 19 August 2026, which was still in the future at the time of the meeting.

Now that the Participant Portal is up and running, there is the question of what to call it. Assuming Participant Portal is not the most popular name! Consensus at the meeting was 'My Flourish.'

We are also involved in a review of Flourish Australia's Organisational Values. We have things like 'Trust,' 'Respect,'



'Hope,' 'Inclusion,' 'Integrity,' 'Diversity,' and 'Partnership.' But one value we were really interested in was 'Transparency.' This is a work in progress.

We were briefed on the changes due to the end of the CLS contracts, which of course will result in a lot of staff leaving the organisation in July. We looked at GROW as a possible organisation for people to join if interested. GROW is a community-based organisation that has helped thousands of Australians with their recovery from mental ill-health through a unique program of mutual support and personal development. Their program is based on 12-steps of personal growth of mutual help and support.

The Council spoke again about members assisting in interviews for Council membership, and to be available for other recruitment interviews as well. This will help develop our level of engagement and increase our confidence over time.

Our 10th Anniversary working group also reported. There were lots of ideas about a musical number too! Our next meeting will be covered in the November issue.

ABOVE: Tricia and Jen, members of Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council. PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

AFL Aboriginal Power Cup



Many people with mental health issues have disadvantages because of incomplete schooling. Low school attendance is a long term issue also for Indigenous children in the NT where attendance is the lowest in the country. Could footy be the answer?

For 19 years, Port Adelaide SA (Aussie Rules) Football Club has run a program for Indigenous kids called the Power Cup. It promotes school attendance employing both male and female indigenous footballers, like Shane Burgoyne, to liaise with the kids. (Taylor, 2026) "It gives the kids a great buzz to meet some of their idols, but also knowing that we want them to complete their education," said Shane(?)

Port Adelaide's Braedon Talbot, a Larrakia and Wagaman man from Darwin, has led an expansion of the program into the NT. As he told Paige Taylor of The Australian, the Power Cup's "main aim is for teens to set themselves up for a successful adulthood by graduating Year 12."

The Aboriginal Power Cup has been "woven into lessons at nine NT schools in 2026 with about 150 Top End students prepared for the annual footy carnival, including in art class, where they designed their own guernsey. The NT version is called the Santos Aboriginal Power Cup, and it took place in May.

Works Cited

Taylor, P. (2026, April 28). How an AFL carnival is helping Indigenous kids kick on at school. The Australian newspaper.

RECOVERY GAMES

Panorama's Puzzle Page

October 2026

Time give your brain a workout!

The Panorama Puzzle Pages aim to not only entertain and amuse, but to help you learn and retain some terms that you'll encounter when dealing with mental health recovery.

We have a FIND-A-WORD below, and a CROSSWORD and a SCRAMBLE of some long words which we challenge you to rearrange on the opposite page.

If you're having trouble figuring out a clue, every answer can be found in the articles in this issue. Let this serve as encouragement to really get the most out of Panorama's stories!

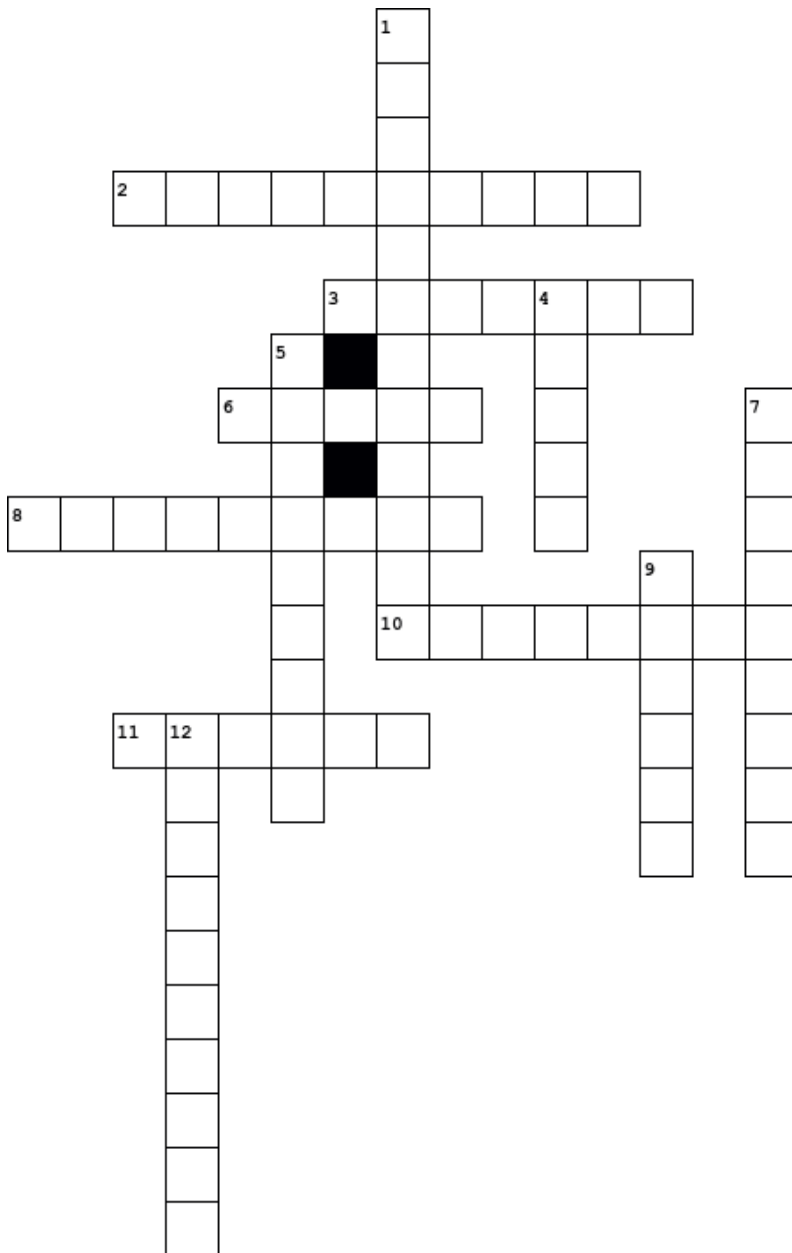
All solutions can be found in this issue's articles!

Panorama Find-A-Word

M A E B G Q E Q L R X B A H N I X R X D
E N F D P Q J D R G O L P N F Q B A P I
B G F O U N D A T I O N S P X K T H Y S
B E O B A P Z N R Y T C Y R P I B Q K A
Y L D Z A S I D E W G A C A P O E J I B
P I A W R M P N Y X R R H C S Z E T M I
R K P C E B I G Z Y Z I O T X T Z A Y L
E A Q R K M O E Y M V N L I L G S D J I
C O T F V T P N L D M G O S V T R E C T
O C V W F Q O L R O V Y G E Y S J A R Y
V H T I P X J W O L Z U I D K D N F N B
E M Y S Y H E E N Y C P S Y V G F B D Z
R H D Z G O C W V B M H T O E P Z L V S
Y N G F N P H Q P L J E R J J P U I B B
I W J V I R S X L M P I N B F R Y N J Q
V C O N F I D E N C E P F T E J S D G L
I V N Q J R C H S L F Q F W D S O M J F
S U R E M B W X L R X I R Y Y P N J W N
L J W X R A L E X A N D R A R S K L Q B
P A C J C H O D O K B K G V T P T V K P

DISABILITY
RECOVERY
DEAFBLIND
FOUNDATION
BLACKTOWN
CARING
PSYCHOLOGIST
CONFIDENCE
ANXIETY
EMPLOYMENT
PRACTISED
ALEXANDRA
ANGELIKA
AMIE

Panorama Crossword



Panorama Word Scramble

1. GHANIICR is to preside over an organisation, meeting, or public event
.....
2. UDIENGRIBL your life is possible with the right support
.....
3. DINGNCA is an excellent way to enjoy the company of others
.....
4. SGLNOCIIISA is a must for everybody for many reasons
.....
5. WRLAILARA is a coastal region in the southeast of NSW
.....
6. NETGTDINA is being somewhere you're meant to be
.....
7. Success requires us to OEIAGRNS
.....
8. Having a regular CEVOITNARSON about your recovery is essential
.....
9. We can all benefit from practising our ERCTIYAL
.....

Across

2. Tracey has learned to use the bus at
3. New Outlook has a group for the LGBTQ+ community
6. Professor Elizabeth More AM was Flourish Australia's for a decade
8. The Women and Program supports mums and their hubs
10. The Indigenous Foundation publishes books by Indigenous authors
11. The Ball was a glamorous event for people who access services at Seven Hills

Down

1. Social relationships are for good mental health
4. Dr Alexandra Adams is the first deaf medical doctor in the UK
5. is Tracey's Peer Worker at New Outlook
7. Alcoholics can be a key component of sobriety for many
9. Professor Elizabeth More danced classical at 16
12. NAIDOC Week celebrates people and culture

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

🌐 www.flourishaustralia.org.au

📱 Follow us @FlourishAus



Find out if you can
access the NDIS



Think about your current
needs, goals, and supports



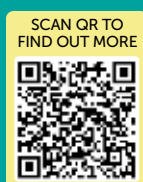
Meet with your NDIS
planner and get a plan



Decide which service providers
you want support from



Put your plan into action



flourish
AUSTRALIA

Where mental wellbeing thrives

NDIS