

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

# panorama

Monthly Issue **July 2024 #94A**



**EMPLOYMENT:**  
My Dream Job  
Going Full Circle

Your Annual  
Check-Up

Get the Support  
You Need

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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 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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### Contributors include...

**Brian** loves his new job driving buses. He's finally found his dream job!

**Chris Grumley**, Specialist Peer Worker, facilitated a workshop for five weeks to create the Peer Work Practice Framework, which aims to revolutionize peer work practice Australia-wide.

### Contributions are welcome!

#### Publications People

**Kylie Bolton**  
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**Grant J Everett**  
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**Warren Heggarty**  
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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 family and carers can be found on our website:  
[flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers](http://flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers)

SCAN QR TO FIND OUT MORE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*Flourish Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea and waterways upon which we live and work.*

*We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and recognise their strong and continuing connection to land, culture and spirit.*

*Panorama magazine would like to recognise all people who live with a mental health issue, as well as those who encourage and support loved ones. Our universal right to lead full and inclusive lives is the driving force behind why Panorama exists. We also recognise the strength it can take to share our stories. The impact of reading about people's journeys cannot be overstated. Sharing our experiences has the potential to change lives and we hope by reading true recovery stories, it gives hope, optimism and support to our readers, especially those on their mental health recovery journey.*



# SPREAD

# H O P E

## 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

# BEHIND THE WHEEL OF MY DREAM JOB

By Brian



**As I've always been interested in driving for a living simply because I love driving, my job network provider supported me in getting my Heavy Rigid Truck licence. But I wasn't interested in driving a truck: I wanted to drive a bus.**

Becoming a bus driver is all about your practical driving skills, so once I completed my driving course and provided Premier Buses with all of my information, like police records and a Working With Children check (WWC), they called me in to do a driving assessment. They took me out for a couple of days to make sure I could manage on the road, and after I proved myself, they put me down on the roster to do the school run.

I do the school run Monday to Friday, morning and afternoon. That works out to 17 hours a week, 3 ½ hours a day. Whatever days the kids go to school, I work. In time, more work will become available, and I'll be happy to increase my hours with normal bus runs.

This job has given me a purpose, and it gets me out of bed in the morning. I intend to do this job for a long time to come, and it's just a shame I didn't start doing this years ago, because I absolutely love it.

And I have even more good news on top of that: after just a few months of driving a bus, I've already been able to save up enough money to buy a car. That's going to make my life a LOT easier!

## Staying well

I have gone through hell with my mental health, but my life has been slowly turning around ever since I started attending Flourish Australia's service at Wollongong, New Outlook, about 5 years ago. In the beginning, I had suicidal thoughts because of all I'd been through in my life. But over time, the support from New Outlook has helped me to regain my confidence. I've been working on strengthening my mental health, and I can see that I've come a long way since I first visited the service.

I still see a psychiatrist and a GP for support with my experiences of depression, anxiety, and insomnia. Nowadays, I've improved so much that my depression and anxiety don't even require medication anymore. The only pills I'm taking is to help me sleep.

The support I've had from Flourish Australia has helped my recovery so much. They have been able to help me with anything I got stuck on, and they've just been absolutely fantastic. I also enjoy coming here to talk to people, as I've become close friends with some of the other regulars.

Even though I work Monday to Friday, I still find time to attend New Outlook at nearly every day. After I finish the morning school run, I get my bus back to the depot by 9am, walk down to the train station, catch the train into Wollongong, and it's a very short walk up the hill to New Outlook.

I'll spend a few hours there, then start heading back about 12:30pm. It's great I can visit between the



morning and afternoon school run and have a coffee, a chat, and relax so I can recharge. I'm actually at New Outlook right now as we speak, drinking a coffee!

Anyone can come visit New Outlook without being referred. The staff are really friendly, and can answer any questions you have about how things work here.

**What I've learned**

While I like sharing what I've learned about my mental health issues, I think that giving people advice about what they should do on their mental health journey is tricky, because everyone's mental health is unique to them. However, if I feel like I can help somebody with some advice about what worked for me, I'll gladly share it with them.

If somebody is going through a tough time, the benefit is that what they learn from their experiences might help other people going through something similar.

But no matter where you're at, I'd recommend finding a welcoming place like New Outlook for support. What they do here at Flourish Australia services really, really helps.

**A Lifetime of Searching for my work passion**

I've had other jobs before driving a bus, but I don't think I was ever really happy doing them. I did traffic control for a fair while, but you've got to put up with people who deliberately knock over the orange cones or yell at you or even throw things at you. And you work in all kinds of weather, so it might be really hot or pouring with rain. The worst job site I had was in the Nullarbor in the middle of Australia doing twelve-hour days in 45 degree heat. It wasn't very pleasant.

Now, I get to sit on a comfy seat in an air conditioned bus, and do what I love to do: drive!

**OPPOSITE PAGE: What's better than getting a job? Getting your DREAM job! PHOTO FROM RENEE HARDING.**

**RIGHT: Bus drivers are in high demand, and not only does it pay well, there are lots of perks.**

**PHOTO BY GRANT J EVERETT**

**Want to drive? You can do it!**

Whether you want to drive for business, convenience or pleasure, you'll need the right license first. Thankfully, these licenses are the same Australia-wide.

A Class R (Rider) licence lets you operate motorcycles and scooters.

A Class C (Car) licence lets you drive vehicles including cars, utes, vans, some light trucks, tractors and vehicles that seat up to 12 adults.

A Class LR (Light Rigid) licence lets you drive rigid vehicles weighing up to 8 tonnes.

A Class MR (Medium Rigid) licence lets you drive rigid vehicles weighing over 8 tonnes.

A Class HR (Heavy Rigid) licence lets you drive rigid vehicles with 3 or more axles and articulated buses.

A Class HC (Heavy Combination) licence lets you drive heavy combination vehicles such as

articulated vehicles with three or more axles and tow trailer combinations with a weight of over 9 tonnes.

A Class MC (Multi Combination) licence lets you drive multi combination vehicles such as road trains, B-doubles and prime mover, low loader dolly and low loader trailer combinations.

**Want to know more about License classes in NSW?**

**Scan this QR Code.**



**Flourish Australia Wollongong**

*Dharawal and Tharawal Country*

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# The Mental Health Benefits of Holidays

By Grant J Everett



**As I have learned how vital it is to get away on holidays for the sake of my mental health, I recently went on a trip with my wife and some friends, all of whom have a lived experience, so we could recharge our batteries.**

I find relaxing for a few days flushes out all the anxiety and tiredness that accompanies full-time work, and by the time I finish a holiday, I'm ready to get back to work. I feel better emotionally and mentally, and my head feels less full. Of course, you'd still get these same benefits holidaying on your own!

## Getting Around

The six of us stayed at a lovely home we'd found on an accommodation website for four nights at beautiful Kiama, a little beachside town with friendly people, a lively café scene, coastal views, and more. Kiama is the kind of place where people say hello and smile at you on the way past. Our house had beach view balconies, multiple bathrooms, a full kitchen, and comfy double beds.

We caught a train from Parramatta to Redfern, then a much longer train to Kiama station. For those of us on the pension, this only cost a total of \$2.50. For those not on benefits, it came to less than \$9. Our house was located literally a 5-minute car ride from the station, so waiting for our Ubers took much longer than the ride itself!

On the subject of Ubers, as Kiama taxi company shut down in 2023 and none of us drove, we used Ubers to get around. It can be a bit tricky moving six people and luggage, so we usually hired two normal-sized Uber cars with three of us in each. You can use the Uber app to automatically pay your driver when you get to your destination through your PayPal account. If you don't have a PayPal account, they're useful to have if you want to order food, buy things, or pay for things online...such as holidays!

If you'd like to save more money, it may be worthwhile checking what the local public transport is like through the Triplanner website. If you use public transport but never

use Triplanner, I highly recommend it. As the trains to Redfern from Kiama only run once an hour, this was important to keep track of, as getting stranded is no fun.

## Mod Cons

If your holiday house has WiFi (and I'd say most would) you can use this instead of your phone's data, so you can use the Internet for free. If you have streaming accounts like Netflix or Disney, you can use them on any device that can connect to WiFi, such as modern televisions, mobile phones, laptops, and tablets.

## Making The Most Of Our Time

It can be worth researching what you're going to do on your getaway, as even a relatively small, quiet place like Kiama has many sights and experiences.

The six of us mostly just enjoyed the local food and coffee and each other's company. Highlights included hitting Black Beach near Kiama town centre, then walking to the nearest ice creamery for soft drinks and scoops of gelato.



We browsed local second-hand bookshops, met people's dogs as they walked past, and got in some good incidental exercise.

As you'd expect from people on holiday, we ate out and got delivery a few times. But we also split a load of groceries six ways for a total of \$45 per person to keep costs down. This included two main meals (lasagna and broccoli one night, and chicken kiev's and mashed potatoes for another), full deli sandwiches for lunch, cereal, English muffins, soft drinks, snacks, ice creams, coffee bags, sweeteners and more. I ordered the groceries on Woolworths Online, and they were delivered to the house exactly as I'd requested.

While we were away, my spouse and I also visited her godmother further down the coast at Gerroa for three nights. Robertsons Pie Shop, a bakery famous for its diverse range of sweet and savoury pies, was a definite highlight. People travel from all over just to sample one of their amazing pastries, with coach tours stopping right outside. I personally had the best steak and kidney pie and curried beef pie of my life.

Jamberoo lookout was also stunning, with mountain views that rolled across the valley all the way to the distant coastlines.

### Our Palace Awaits: Splitting The Cost

Four nights at Kiama came to \$3000. This may sound like a lot, but splitting it between 6 people meant it was only \$500 a head, or \$125 per night. A LOT cheaper than any hotel room! We did have to pay extra to access the linen cupboard for our bedding and towels, so it might be worth seeing if this is the case with other properties.

As going away on even relatively inexpensive holidays will still add up to a pretty substantial amount, especially for half a dozen people, you will want to establish when people are going to pay their part of the holiday. As there is a cutoff point with cancelling accommodation, ideally everyone should pay their part or cancel BEFORE the point of no return.

Don't feel obligated to put yourself at financial risk!

### Searching

There are many, many accommodation websites out there. For instance, you have Booking.com, Trivago, Airbnb, Expedia, and Tripadvisor, to name just a few. Some travel websites can also help you to find coaches, trains and flights.

Some 3rd party booking websites such as Booking.com and Agoda give rewards each time you book, but it's smart to shop around. Always check with the accommodation's home website, if there is one, as it can be cheaper to book directly.

### Still not sure?

Does a holiday like this one still feel impossible? In case you didn't know,

Centrelink offers a once-a-year loan to eligible people on benefits, with the amount in question depending on a number of factors. If cash is short, getting a Centrelink loan can be a lifesaver. Your loan will be paid back gradually by deducting a set amount from your benefits each fortnight, and Centrelink does not require any interest.

This is the third year that my friends and I have gotten away for a friend's holiday trip, and we're all looking forward to 2025's already! If you haven't been on a trip for years, whether alone or with a group, what's stopping you?

**OPPOSITE PAGE: An absolutely amazing view...and the lookout behind my wife is beautiful, too! BELOW: The famous Robertson Pie Shop, and Black Beach. PHOTOS BY GRANT**



# Annual Physical Health Check-Up

**Do Something Before You Even Get Sick!**

By Warren Heggarty



**Panorama asked Jade Ryall, program manager of Back on Track Health: "What is the one thing that if we all did it, would have the biggest impact on our' physical health?" She thought long and hard. Then she said with great assuredness: 'Get an annual health check, because it could be the key to everything else.'**

Naturally, before you take that first step, it would help if you found a doctor you can talk to and trust; one who is aware that people with mental health conditions need to take care of their physical health just as much as anyone else. If not more!

## Indigenous 715 Health Check

Indigenous people can access a 715 Health Check. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all ages can get their free 715 health check at Aboriginal Medical Services and bulk-billing clinics. This health check helps identify whether someone is at risk of illnesses or chronic conditions. For more information on that, ask your support worker for an information sheet.

## Be prepared!

To get the most out of any check up, prepare for it. Elsewhere in this issue, we looked briefly at going through Flourish Australia's PhysiCards. They are a great way to prepare for a check up, with or without a support worker. No matter what method you use here are some things to keep in mind.

Book an appointment first and when you do ask for a long consultation. This is a standard item on Medicare designed for check ups. It gives the doctor enough time to go through all the necessary steps.

Think about anything to do with your health and your body about which you are concerned, or things you want to know more about. Things like your fitness, your weight, illnesses that run in the family and so forth.

## To Do List

If you access Flourish Australia Services, you can ask your support worker for a copy of the 'My Health Needs TO DO LIST.' This is part of the PhysiCards package and you can use it to keep a record of things you want to talk about with your doctor. Write it all down and take it with you to your appointment. It is so easy to forget things so you will be glad you did!

Annual check-ups are a good way of finding things that might not be obvious to you and might not even be on your list or among your concerns. For example, high blood pressure can be a warning of future trouble like heart attack or stroke, but you usually can't feel it. This is why doctors will check your blood pressure as a matter of routine.

Sometimes, even when you are feeling completely OK, a doctor will run preventive checks like a blood test. This can uncover hidden problems and allow them to be treated before they start making you ill!

If you don't have a doctor you are happy with, you can visit the National Health Services Directory website, and type in your postcode to find doctors in your area who can provide tailored support and advice.

Scan this QR code to find a local directory of health services



**ABOVE: A sphygmomanometer cuff in action. A regular physical check up with your doctor can identify problems, like high blood pressure, before they develop into something more serious, like stroke! IMAGE BY HAMILTON VIANA VIANA/ PIXABAY**





co-designing and taking part in our research programs.

We will bring you the results of the PhysiCard trials when the final results come through. In the meantime, please consider whether you might one day be interested in supporting the cause of better research and evidence. Emily facilitates a Research Advisory Committee which consists of people who access our service (See 'Making Research Real' in May Panorama.)

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LEFT: PhysiCards are an initiative of Flourish Australia as part of the Back on Track Health Program.  
 PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY

# 'PhysiCards' and people-driven research

By Warren Heggarty

## What are PhysiCards?

In line with recovery principles, we wanted to put individuals in control of their physical health. So we developed a set of 34 cards as prompts. For example we have a card for 'My Allergies' #29 (see picture at left). On the back of the card are some questions to ask ourselves about allergies. Then we have a My Health Needs TO DO LIST. Here we can record any issues we have with allergies under #29. Or we can simply tick the box. The idea is that we can go through all of the cards, pick out all the issues we have and take the TO DO LIST with us to the doctor. That way, nothing will be missed! If you access Flourish Australia services and are interested in PhysiCards, please talk to your support worker.

Scan this QR code to access our PhysiCards YouTube video.



PhysiCards are a way of helping us to keep track of our physical health needs, needs that are so easy to overlook when we are dealing with mental health issues. They are an initiative of Flourish Australia's Back on Track Health Program. Many of our readers who access Flourish Australia's services will have used them already. What you might not yet know is that over the past two years we have been carrying out a scientific trial to measure what kind of a difference they make in people's lives.

We know 'anecdotally' from listening to people who have used PhysiCards that they make a difference but we need to get more rigorous evidence. So we have run the two year randomised control trial. Very soon, we hope that our partners at University of Newcastle will be able to release final results.

The experiment (which keeps the identity of people anonymous) worked like this: We looked at two groups; one where people used the PhysiCards and another group where people DID NOT using PhysiCards. By comparing these two groups we can see and measure exactly how much of a difference the PhysiCards make.

Jade Ryall, Program Manager of Back on Track Health (BOTH) said that so many people have taken part in the trials, providing their time and their experience. Ultimately it will strengthen the evidence base of what we do. She said that Flourish Australia is keen to share the results of research and explain how it will benefit the people who access our services.

Dr Emily Hielscher, Senior Research and Evaluation Coordinator, explained that the evidence base we build from research like this trial helps us to provide better services. So we need to have as many people as possible with lived experience

# PEER WORK PRACTISE FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP: PROVIDING EVEN BETTER PEER SERVICES, NATIONALLY

By Chris Grumley



**Chris Grumley, Specialist Peer Worker, put out an invitation to Flourish Australia’s lived experience workers to contribute to the Peer Work Practice Framework currently in development. Sharing their lived experience expertise was a must!**

The Peer Work Practise Framework focuses on people employed by Flourish Australia in lived experience roles and positions, and explores how they can best utilise their lived experience to support other people’s recoveries in the most effective way. Additionally, it will support staff in non-peer roles and management to better understand Peer Work Practice.

This framework highlights the strengths our peer workforce, and how it works to create connections and reciprocity and mutuality with everyone we support. It will provide a very strong foundation for us to

build on in the future by defining and guiding how peer work is utilised and understood. This will serve as the next big step in what Flourish Australia offers to people who access services across the organisation by exploring the best ways that our peer workforce can practise and utilise sharing their lived experiences.

Developing the framework is a learning opportunity and an accountability tool. We have highlighted different support and development initiatives for peer workers, and we’ll be creating training modules based on the framework in the future.

### **How will this affect people who access Flourish Australia services?**

The nature of peer work practise needs to be properly understood and represented so that people who access Flourish Australia services have enough information to know

whether a service would benefit them or not, so that they can make an informed decision. A Peer Worker isn’t just somebody who has a title, but a person who really knows how to utilise their lived experience to support and strengthen others on their own recovery journeys.

Our peer workforce is moving towards better engagement and outcomes, and we are building on all the other things that makes our peer workforce so special. If we have a self-aware workforce who knows all about self-care and wellbeing and accountability, we can provide the right kinds of support and develop tailored initiatives to lift up people in the best possible way.

### **The Working Group**

Over the five weeks of our workshop, the people we had sitting in included frontline Peer Workers, senior positions like Team Coordinator Peer Specialists, and



**“Being the peer workforce for 10 years, this workgroup has shown how far we have come in the peer work sector but how there is still so much more to be accomplished. Flourish Australia is leading the way in creating peer support work as a specialised role, that comes with development and training opportunities to inspire hope and empowerment.”**

**- Renee Harding, Team Coordinator Peer Specialist, Flourish Australia Wollongong**

Fay Jackson, General Manager Inclusion. It was really good to hear those many voices, we had lots of important conversations, and all up we gathered twenty pages of notes. Every week, we’d identify how we were going to moving forward based on the previous meeting.

We had peer workers representing Flourish Australia services from all over, and we really wanted to know what they needed from the framework. Even if somebody wasn’t able to actively participate in every meeting, we could provide them with a copy of the minutes so they could keep up to speed. Participants were also welcome to contact me if they wanted more information or had anything to add.

With the pathways we developed, there are now many conversations going on about how we are moving forward with peer work, such as creating more specialised peer positions at different services. My role as Specialist Peer Worker, for instance, has only existed for 3 years.

**Flourish Australia & Peer Work: Forefront**

Flourish Australia’s 2014-2015 campaign “Why Not A Peer Worker?” brought in a wave of new peer roles at Flourish Australia and across the whole sector. In the space of 12 months, the organisation’s peer workforce experienced

hugely significant growth. Many organisations are utilising peer workers now, but Flourish Australia definitely holds leadership in the size of our peer workforce.

As peer work is a key focus of Flourish Australia, our strategic plan includes greatly increasing our peer workforce, with the aim of having 50% of our employees in frontline peer roles by 2027. In addition to that, 50% of Flourish Australia’s other employees currently identify as having a lived experience.

At one point, many people with a lived experience who accessed Flourish Australia services identified peer work as something they would like to do. But with recent initiatives like “hope in recovery” and “social citizenship,” we’ve found that people with a lived experience are considering other, more diverse options as well, which is excellent.

I think Flourish Australia’s peer workforce is at a really good place now, but we will continue to look at what other organisations have done, what we’ve learned from other

national guidelines and frameworks, and really transform our framework into something that can create a lot of positive change.

The Peer Work Practise Framework will help to solidify a lot of our values and practises as an organisation on a national level when it rolls out Australia-wide.

**Getting it out there**


Part of the process of creating this framework is figuring out how we are going to avoid this being yet another document that sits on the shelf, and instead be a work that instigates real change. We’re really going to spread the word before we release the framework, we want people to know about it and to be wanting it, so we’ll do a proper launch. This document has the potential to affect thousands of people, and we want it to have the biggest possible impact.

**Chris Grumley spoke with Grant J Everett**

**OPPOSITE: Chris facilitated this valuable Working Group. BELOW: CEO Mark Orr, AM**

**“The development of this framework is an important way to further formalise and explain our approach to peer work; to describe how we define, guide and support peer work practice. This is a great addition to work we have done previously on peer work values and our Why Not a Peer Worker?® strategy. Thank you to everyone who has joined the working group for the development of the framework, led by Chris Grumley, Specialist Peer Worker.”**

**Mark Orr, AM, CEO of Flourish Australia, describing Peer Work Practice Framework**





## Time For a Get-Together In Greater Western Sydney



Like the good sports they all are, they took the challenge in their stride.

It was great to have an occasion where people could mix with others from the broader Flourish Australia family. Naturally there was a barbecue but there were also activities to keep body and mind occupied. Not to mention mother nature.

Sarah Mitchell at Flourish Australia's Derby St Penrith service gave us a brief rundown of all the activities currently on the Calendar. Everything from sewing to fishing, and swimming to movies. Panorama hopes to bring you some stories focusing on this activities in coming issues! WH

**LEFT TOP:** People who access our Greater Western Sydney services mingled with Staff at the Harmony Day picnic. Panorama was reacquainted with Victor who formerly attended 'Embark Cottage' in Blacktown. And we also met new friends. Left to Right, Tammy, Ben, Alicia, Victor and Alexandra.

**LEFT BOTTOM:** Matt from Katoomba and Ogechi from Penrith attending the food service unit. Those are happy smiles!

**RIGHT TOP:** Grace under pressure. Belinda demonstrates a dignified descent on the slippery dip!

**PHOTOS** by WARREN HEGGARTY

One of the ideas behind Flourish Australia's services is to put people in connection with their communities. And that includes other Flourish Australia services as we saw in Panorama last year at Marrickville for Mental Health Month. This time it is Greater Western Sydney Region's turn. Flourish Australia has services at Seven Hills, Penrith, Blacktown, Windsor, Katoomba and Lithgow and all were invited to a picnic for Harmony Day in March.

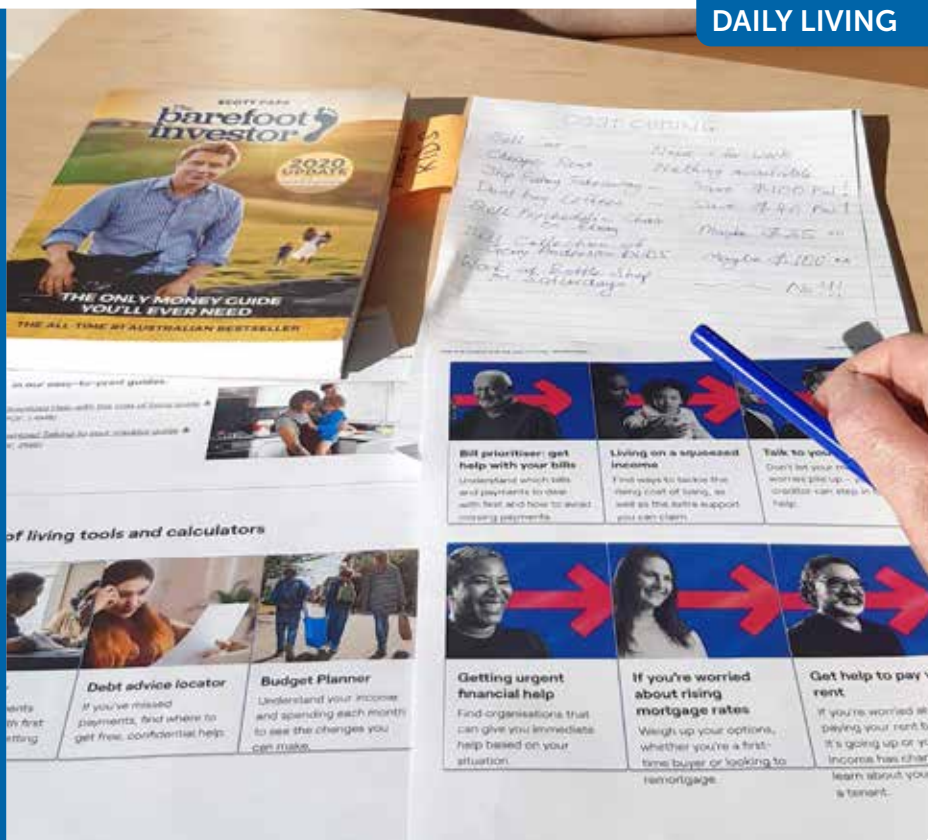
The venue was Tench Park in Jamisontown south of Penrith on the banks of the Nepean River, famous for its rowing regattas. Tench Park is fitted with a great playground which came in handy. Especially for the kids from the Blacktown Women and Children's Program who came with their mothers. The Gigantic Slippery Dip was a big attraction. But why should children have all the fun and excitement? We dared some staff members including Regional Manager Belinda Jenkins to see if they had what it takes to conquer the biggest slope in Jamisontown.



# The Support You Need

## May not Always be Psychological or Medical

By Warren Heggarty



**Often the support we need for improving our social and emotional wellbeing can be found outside of mental health services. This is why Flourish Australia aims to connect people who access our services with other services in the community.**

In a recent poll, 40 per cent of respondents rated their mental well-being as 'poor' or 'very poor.' Australians for Mental Health polled 1,781 people as part of their second National Mental Health Monitor. They found that the main negative impacts were family and money.

Currently Australia is experiencing widespread cost-of-living problems and a shortage of affordable housing. It is natural therefore that people are feeling pressures with money. 'Family' always rates highly as a source of negativity, but it rates equally highly as a source of positivity!

Worries about physical health are also quite pronounced these days. Given the recent pandemic experience which caused people to focus on illness, this is also hardly surprising. And just look at the vocabulary used in the Sky news article reporting this poll: 'Worrying,' 'exposed,' 'crisis,' and 'whopping,'

'damning,' 'distress,' 'struggling,' all appear in the opening four sentences.

18-to-34-year-olds especially considered themselves lonely and without connection to other people. The main culprits they cited were 'work' and... in the manner of a vicious circle- 'mental health issues!'

Work as we know, is like 'family.' It is as much a source of problems (that's why you get paid) and a source of satisfaction (you get paid and you get stuff done).

Australian's for Mental Health say 31 per cent of respondents find it difficult or very difficult to get professional help. Such professional help can be very expensive indeed and Medicare only covers ten psychology sessions a year. Which of course puts more financial pressure on people.

However, is the solution always to be found in mental health services? Or can we reduce wellness by getting other forms of support – like financial support, or relationship counselling. Neither of these require a 'diagnosis.' You won't need a psychologist if you can fix the problem that is stressing you.

Professional help aside, we can look to our own inner resources. We know that sometimes it seems

like we don't have the resources within ourselves to come to grips with things. That is why we seek support. But the experience of many people has been this: choosing one significant problem, resolving to do something about it and then carrying out our resolution will give us a sense of empowerment that spills over to other areas of our lives.

Often, the main thing holding us back is that very common feeling that we do not have control over our destiny. Anything we can do to discredit the idea behind that feeling will give us the momentum to take on our challenges.

Government Departments can provide free financial advice.

**ABOVE: Paul was always massively anxious about... everything. One day he sat down with someone and discussed how he could save money and it gave him a sense of power that spilled over other areas. PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY**

Scan this QR code to see the Financial Information Service page of the Services Australia website.



# Iron Discipline

## Is it the Stuff of Freedom?

By Warren Heggarty



Everyone who does not exercise HATES exercise. Admit it, you loathe it. Good, it is time to demonstrate your Iron Discipline by allocating a small amount of time each day to exercise. After you have done your daily routine say to yourself 'that was most invigorating!'

Iron discipline is a virtue and virtue is drawn from stories about virtuous people. There is no end of material to inspire you out there but Ryan Holiday has written a book precisely with the virtue of discipline in mind. It is called, surprisingly, 'Discipline is Destiny: the power of self-control.'

It has chapter titles like 'The strenuous life is the best life' which sounds deliberately Spartan, but it also has 'Stop being a slave' (to things like procrastination or alcohol). As Holiday's book progresses you will find chapters like 'Grace under pressure' and 'Be kind to yourself' and 'Make others better.'

It contains stories of heroic individuals from ancient times to the present who exemplify 'discipline is freedom.' Anyone who has given up smoking will know that by exercising that self-control and resisting temptation, you are freeing yourself from slavery to a malevolent weed!

Athlete David Goggins, who is seriously FIT said this in an interview with Chris Williams: 'Every morning starts with a run. That's because that's the one thing I hate to do more than anything in the world.' Here is Iron Discipline in action. If you start off doing something good for you that you do not want to do, the rest of your day will be relatively easy, and you will have earned it.

*Ryan Holiday, 'Discipline is Destiny: The power of self-control' part of the 'Stoic Virtues series' published 2022 in Profile Books.*

**ABOVE: It all looks so severe and oppressive, but remember, you need discipline to do things that YOU want to do!**  
**PHOTO BY INGI FINNSSON from PIXABAY**

**The biggest barriers to having a regular exercise routine are mental. You need to have a sense of resolve. It would be nice if you could do three hours in the gym every morning before 7AM like some sort of hero, but you are not going to, are you? So, pick something you WILL do. Do ten squats every morning before 7AM instead. Maybe later you will become the New Hercules.**

According to the theory of Evolution it took four and a half billion years to get to where we are now. Even the lowest estimate of the age of the

earth is nearly 6,000 years, which is STILL an enormous amount of time. The moral of the story is that things take time. That is why patience is a virtue.

Instead of envisioning yourself with muscles, first envision yourself as having the Iron Discipline you will need to develop those muscles.

One way to develop Iron Discipline is to pick something good for you that you hate and do it first thing every day. This demonstrates your power and mastery over mere feelings of 'meh' or 'couldn't be bothered.' Show your feelings who is boss. Show your feelings you CAN and WILL be bothered.

Scan this QR code to find out how David Goggins runs every single day.





# MOBILE MEDICAL ID

## How a Smart Phone Could Save Your Life!

By Warren Heggarty



**Imagine an emergency situation where a person has become unresponsive or is unable to communicate. We may not even know who they are! If it is a life and death situation, medics have no information about their medical history -allergies or dangerous drug interactions for example. This is a risky situation but what if there were a way to find this information out on the spot.**

There is. Some smart phones have a capability that you may not be aware of which could come in handy during an emergency.

We learned this at a Mental Health First Aid training session from two of the participants; Jasmine Rolfe team coordinator at Camperdown and Vipan Jagota, mental health worker at Ashbury.

Many phones have a capability whereby a stranger can use it to upload personal and medical information in a crisis, but only if the phone is set up for it.

If your smart phone is set up with the **Smart phone Emergency Medical Identification** tool (SEMID), first responders can access your identity and medical information on

your phone. Now they know who you are and what to look out for!

For example, if a patient needs medication, a first responder would be informed about whether the patient has any concerning allergies or if they are at risk for drug interaction. In days gone by a person might have worn a bracelet engraved with 'allergic to penicillin' but SEMID allows fuller details.

Information stored in a medical ID may include:

- Identification
- Height/weight
- Age
- Allergies
- Medical history
- Current medications
- Blood type
- Emergency contacts

### How to do it

Vipan gave us a demonstration on his Apple phone. From a locked screen you swipe up, click 'Emergency' down the bottom left corner, then click \*Medical ID down the bottom left corner. Now you can read whatever information the owner wants you to know in an emergency while all other information remains locked.

Entering the information onto a phone which has this tool is done through 'Settings.' Choose 'Health Details' then choose 'Medical ID' then enter your information. You can even note down if you are an organ donor.

Please note though, not all phones may have this same setup so you will have to check for yourself how it works on your own particular phone.

The University of Rochester did a study of this tool and discovered that where people had SEMID on their phone, the information was relevant and helpful in 75% of cases.

**ABOVE: Swipe up to save a life. Mobile Medical ID on your mobile can provide even more details than Medic Alert Bracelets. Though they don't look as pretty dangling from your wrists. PHOTO JESHOTS from PIXABAY**

Scan this  
QR Code to  
watch an  
instructional  
video on  
how to set  
up SEMID on  
your iPhone.



# YOUR JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT




Every year **1 in 5** Australians will experience some form of mental health issue.

Flourish Australia provides mental health specialised disability employment services (DES) supporting people living with a mental health issue to access sustainable employment.

**Flourish Australia DES locations:**

Bankstown • Broken Hill • Caringbah • Cessnock • Harris Park  
Hornsby • Liverpool • Maitland • Penrith • Seven Hills

To see if you qualify for our free service, please call us for a confidential discussion or visit our website for more information.

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