

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

panorama

Monthly Issue February 2025 #96B



Is Social Media Behind the Decline?

Buckingham House Art Exhibit 2024

Negotiating Rent Increases in Expensive Times

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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... panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au

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

Contents

COVER: Kieron Rowe presented a piece of creative writing at the Buck House art show. **Photo by Grant J Everett**

- 4 Road testing the DRIV-R app
- 5 Negotiating Rent Increases In Expensive Times
- 6 Lithgow Mental Health Month Open Day: New Traditions
- 7 Annual General Meeting
- 8 Pain and Gain: Curiosity Builds Confidence
- 9 Fear-Free Connection: The Middle Path out of Social Anxiety
- 10 The Restorative Joy Of Making Old Things New Again
- 11 January Recovery Game Solutions
- 12 Let's Talk About It: Buckingham House Art Exhibit 2024
- 14 Emotional Dysregulation
- 15 PhysiCards: Hearing

Contributors include...

Peter Kennedy loves restoring furniture, and taught himself to create art with a 3D printer.

Contributions are welcome!

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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





In Panorama FEBRUARY 2025

Rent is one of those essential costs that seems to be rising out of control. In this issue, Grant J Everett explores how you might be able to take the edge off the rent squeeze

by negotiating with the Landlord. We look at mental health month in Lithgow NSW, and Surry Hills, NSW, where Grant reports on the Buckingham House Art Show (see artist David Jenkins, pictured). Then it's down to Salisbury in South Australia where we talk to Peter who loves making old things new again.

In Olympic Park NSW we look at Flourish Australia's Annual General Meeting with guest speaker Dr Sam Bennett from the Grattan Institute.

The DRIV-R app has been featured in these pages before, but we publish here a story about its test phase that sounds very positive!

There has been a lot of talk recently about Social Media and moves

to restrict access by age. First Panorama asks, "Does Social Media encourage emotional problems?" How do we develop emotional intelligence, anyway? Then we ask whether Social Media is REALLY behind the apparent decline in society's mental health.

Coming up in March Panorama...

Next month we will look at Mental Health Month in Young with the help of some guitars, some rusty old pick up truck and some local Flourish Australia people. Plus athlete Matt Caruana and recovery stories from Evan and Lisa.

- 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
or Call: 1300 779 270



ROAD TESTING THE **DRIV-R** APP

The Future of Finding Recovery Goals!

By Warren Heggarty

In recovery, it is important that YOU are in the drivers' seat, so to speak. At Flourish Australia, we put the person at the centre. The newly developed DRIV-R app will allow people who access our services to explore their own recovery and identify what is most important to them.

You may have read about the DRIV-R app in previous Panoramas. It is a computer software application developed by University of Sydney, Flourish Australia and Helen Glover. The idea is to allow people to record and monitor their own recovery journey along four main domains.

1. Doing things I value
2. Looking Forward
3. Mastering My Mental Health Experience
4. Connecting and Belonging

These domains are from the Recovery Assessment Scale Domains and Stages, or RAS-DS for short. While the RAS-DS is an outcome measure, it is much more than that. Thanks to the new DRIV-R app, the RAS-DS it can be used as a recovery TOOL.

Currently, DRIV-R is being tested by people within Flourish Australia to see how well it works, and this testing stage will continue for a while yet. In the meantime, Panorama caught up with some of the people involved and asked how the DRIV-R road test was coming along so far.

Francy Vargas-Diaz is a Mental Health Worker with Flourish Australia's Connect and Thrive Program at Maroubra NSW. She is one of over 30 colleagues already trialling DRIV-R with people we support. Francy told Panorama that she can see definite benefits in using the DRIV-R app. "I like the way that people can compare their recovery progress over time, week to week or month to month. The app gives them a colourful visual representation of this that really helps them understand that they are progressing."

Francy also spoke highly of the RAS-DS resources that are a part of DRIV-R and cover every topic.

"I find that there is a big difference between sending a person away to read through resources on their own and going through it together with a staff member. The person

shows more interest if we go through it and discuss it together." We learn by doing!

Francy knows that simple things can make all the difference. Many people with mental health issues feel that nobody understands them, and this creates social isolation and avoidance that hinders recovery. The DRIV-R app helps to overcome this.

"I give high marks for this resource," Francy says. "There are lots of down-to-earth and relevant examples. People are likely to think, 'Hey, they're talking about someone like me!' It's well designed and helps people develop their OWN ideas to move forward with."

"In the future, I think we should introduce the DRIV-R app as soon as possible after we start working with a person. That would be a great opportunity for people to generate their own realistic goals to start working on right away. It can help people - and staff - to understand who they are."

ABOVE: Picture yourself in the drivers' seat. In the future The DRIV-R app could help you control your own recovery! PHOTO FROM ADOBE-STOCK



Negotiating Rent **INCREASES** IN EXPENSIVE TIMES

By Grant J Everett

With the cost of living increases we've all felt recently and as housing is likely your biggest yearly expense, it is vital that tenants understand how to negotiate rent and rent increases with their landlords and real estate agents.

Landlords and real estate agents EXPECT us to negotiate the rent when we first sign up, and ESPECIALLY when an increase comes around. The worst they can say to your request is no, but if you're a good tenant, it is in their best interests to keep you on. If you move out over an increase of \$30 or \$40, then the landlord is at risk of being the one who will lose money, not you. This is a prime reason to keep your home clean and in good condition, to always pay your rent on time, and generally be a delight to deal with.

Rent Check

To navigate the housing market successfully, you need to do your market research, and for tenants in NSW, using the Fair Trading Rent Check tool is a good start. This app can be used to get an idea of

what the average rent is like in your postcode for comparable homes, and while this is not an official rent valuation or recommendation from the NSW Government, it will give you a ballpark figure. For other states, you can get in touch with services like Consumer Affairs Victoria, Office of Fair Trading Queensland, or Access Canberra Consumer Rights.

Scan the QR Code below to see the NSW Rent Check tool.



When And How Often Can Rent Be Increased?

Rent increases can happen at different times and frequency depending on your rental agreement. However, the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants from having rent increases more than once in a 12 month period, and a tenant must get at least 60 days written notice of any increase.

Generally, your landlord or agent must state the proposed new

amount of rent, when the increased rent is payable, sign the paperwork, date it and properly address it to the tenant, and provide this on the renewal of your fixed-term agreement.

Disputing An Increase

If you think a proposed rent increase is too high, before the new rent rate starts you can negotiate with the landlord to reduce the amount of the increase or withdraw the increase altogether. If they agree to a lower increase, this new, lower rent increase is due from the same date the original increase was payable. You can also use information from the Rent Check app to guide your research and discussions with your landlord.

If you cannot reach an agreement with your agent or landlord, you have the right to lodge a dispute with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) within 30 days of receiving the rent increase notice. You will have to prove the increase is excessive based on the average rent for similar properties in the area, the state of repair and amenities provided, and the landlord's expenses. Other states have similar services, like VCAT in Victoria, and QCAT in Queensland.

Do you have a hearing with NCAT coming up or need other advice from your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service? Scan this QR Code.



Flourish Australia provides housing assistance through many of our locations, such as the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI), Community Living Supports (CLS) and Supported Independent Living (SIL), as well as being able refer people to other housing and homelessness support.

You can call Flourish Australia on 1300 779 270 or go to www.flourishaustralia.org.au/contact-us

ABOVE: PICTURE BY MOHAMED HASSAN, PIXABAY

Lithgow Mental Health Month Open Day: New Traditions

By Grant J Everett



On the 15th of October 2024, Flourish Australia's Lithgow service held a Mental Health Month open day opposite Lithgow train station in Cook Street Plaza, which is decorated by beautiful street art based on nature and First Nations culture.

A New Tradition

"Today was about raising awareness for the mental health programs and supports available in the Lithgow Local Government Area, which covers 4551 square kilometres, a huge area," said Marissa Scott, the Flourish Australia Mental Health Worker who arranged this event. "Flourish Australia's Lithgow service is right here in the centre of town, but rural and regional areas tend to have less services on offer. This is why I am passionate about raising awareness of how we can address the extra challenges felt by people who are living out here."

"This event coincided with Mental Health Month, so this was a good opportunity to bring the local community together, and hopefully start a new tradition," said Sarah Mitchell, Team Coordinator and Peer Support Specialist from the Penrith office. "The theme for Mental Health Month 2024 was *Let's Talk About It*, so our theme for today was *Let's Talk About It Lithgow!*"

The Flourish Australia team especially wanted to get the word out about their CPS, Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI), Community Living Supports (CLS), and NDIS support.

Working Together

In addition to Flourish Australia, Service NSW, headspace, and LINC (Lithgow Information & Neighbourhood Centre) all ran stalls on the day. These four local services partner in providing holistic psychosocial recovery support to the residents of Lithgow and surrounding towns, and they all handed out lots of information and literature about the services they provide, such as disability support, aged care, youth work, and counselling.

The Service NSW stall had a QR Code allowing people to sign up to the MyGov app, which allows users to do business with dozens of government services, from Centrelink to the Australian Taxation Office to Medicare, easily on their phone.

Wrapping up

Things wound up around 2pm when the Flourish Australia raffle was drawn and the prizes distributed.

"We received ten wonderful donations from local businesses to give away in today's raffle," said Marissa, "and if you put a money value on it, the prizes would be

worth around \$500 or \$600. We're very appreciative of their generosity."

"We've had some really positive engagement with people today, and handed out some referral forms," said Sarah. "As they now know what we have to offer, if they or a friend or a loved one needs youth support from headspace or housing support from Flourish Australia, they know where we are."

"This is the first time we've done anything like this for the Lithgow LGA, so it's early days, it's unknown territory," said Marissa. "We had a lot of locals walking through on the day, including young people and mums, but many people had never heard of Flourish Australia, which is exactly why we wanted to provide a space to spread the word. I'm really hoping that in future years we're able to make this event bigger and better."

ABOVE: Flourish Australia staff Marissa Scott, Margot McKay, Sarah Mitchell and Tulsi Shrestha.
PHOTOS BY GRANT J EVERETT

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Wiradjuri Country**

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Guest Speaker

Dr Sam Bennett from the Grattan Institute think tank was our guest speaker. According to Sam, Grattan Institute is independent, non-political and unbiased, and their focus is influencing the government on policy and reform. Sam and his team are conducting an independent review of the NDIS, which could have a far-reaching impact.

Sam's numbers showed most people in Australia with disability are not receiving NDIS support, and that there are very limited housing options for people with psychosocial and learning disabilities, but getting our most vulnerable citizens out of group homes and into their own places is an urgent need, as everyone needs agency in their lives. Better, safer, sustainable housing will require a large investment, however.

Sam encouraged us to keep delivering outstanding support in a time of difficulty by focusing on upskilling the people who access services, as well as addressing instances of alcohol and other drug abuse. Sam encouraged us to optimise our technology in providing the best level of support.

The Future

In 2025, Buckingham House will hold a Platinum celebration after providing hope and support at the same address for 70 years. Flourish Australia also has two new services opening: the one in Rockhampton, Queensland will also cover Emerald, Gympie and more, and there's also a service opening in Salisbury, South Australia. Paula also announced we have been granted a government mental health contract in Adelaide.

ABOVE Kelly from the 2024 Annual Report with Professor Elizabeth More AM. PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

Scan this QR Code to read the 2024 Flourish Australia Annual Report:



Annual General Meeting 2024

By Grant J Everett

The theme of Flourish Australia's Annual Report this year was HOPE.

Director Paula Hanlon shared that we are all the holders of hope, a very important responsibility, as hope motivates change, but hope often requires hard work, too.

More people took part in this meeting in person than last year, with 43 in physical attendance. Many Community Advisory Council members were there on the day, and some traveled a great distance. Paula described the Council as the "embodiment of hope."

Karen Jurss, Community Advisory Council Chair, confirmed the people we support feel heard, and receive enough support to move and grow. In the wake of COVID, the Council are now able to meet face to face rather than on ZOOM, a change they prefer.

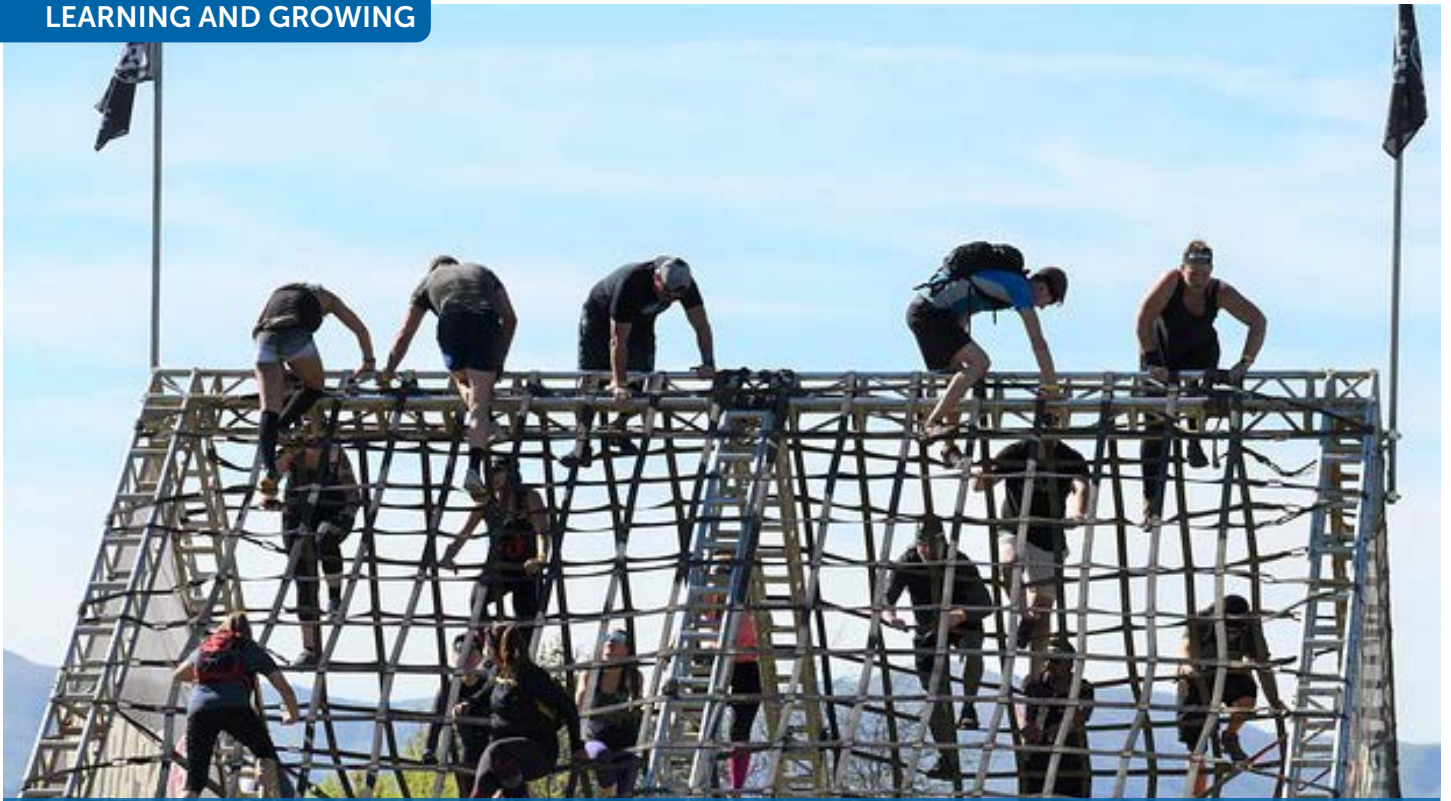
The financial report was presented by Board Treasurer Andrew Pryor. He reported a strong financial

foundation and a number of lucrative investments. Andrew spoke about the soon-to-be-launched Flourish Connect service, and how useful it will be. Another major focus this year was further strengthening the security of people's personal information..

Annual Report

The AGM was the official launch of our Annual Report. This publication contains 6 uplifting recovery stories, and we commend everyone who shared their journeys and successes. Kelly, who appears on the Annual Report's cover, spoke at the AGM about her experiences.

The Annual Report details a big and busy year, with some notable events including the incomparable Fay Jackson retiring from the organisation after 12 years, and how we lost Annie Sykes, a giant in the lived experience movement. Annie is sorely missed, and we pay our respects to her and all the other pioneers and trailblazers we have lost along the way.



PAIN AND GAIN

Curiosity Builds Confidence

By Warren Heggarty

There are two ways of approaching a difficult situation: avoid it, or learn to deal with it. The avoidance strategy has to be repeated anew every time a difficult situation arises. But learning to deal with it will prepare you for next time. And the more you learn, the greater your confidence.

When we are struggling with a challenge do we see it as a chance to learn and grow stronger, or do we get frustrated and complain? Or worse, do we seek out an easier game? Some people take the attitude that challenges are not sent to destroy us but to instruct us. Sometimes this saying comes across to us as being absurd, even mocking. But there is an element of truth in it.

And that is why some people SEEK OUT challenges: for the learning and exercise! (Holiday & Hanselman, 2016, p. 284). Seeking out challenges in order to learn is actually a skill in itself: curiosity. Curious people can analyse challenges and obstacles and find ways through.

A musician will be keen to find out if they can play a difficult piece and if they can't they practice until they can. Practice means working out the best technique to use as well as sometimes developing new muscles or new levels of physical coordination. Rockers, if you limit yourself to playing easy stuff, you will be playing the riff to "Smoke on the Water" for the next 40 years, but you won't be paid megabucks for it like Deep Purple. You may not even play it accurately, seemingly simple though it is!

One obvious benefit that overcoming challenges will bring you is in job seeking. When being interviewed for jobs you will often encounter a question along the lines of, "Tell us about a work challenge you overcame." Employers really value an employee who arrives at a difficult situation and then works out a way to get through it and learns from the experience.

In job interviews you can use the STAR method to describe overcoming challenges. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. For example, "I found a mistake in our advertised pricing (S), I had

to fix the error before it got to the customers (T), I had to work with the people who made the mistake to find out how it happened and how it could be prevented in future (A) and we fixed the advertisement and are confident now that we won't make that mistake again (R)." Go online and read more about the STAR method before your next interview. (Clark, Elliott, & Bojanic, 2023)

Meaning and purpose are important things in life and in recovery. Have you considered that without taking on new challenges, you may actually be missing out on the very experiences that provide meaning and purpose to life?

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Holiday, R., & Hanselman, S. (2016). *The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations On Wisdom, Perseverance And The Art Of Living*. London: Profile.

ABOVE: One of the best ways to overcome a challenge is to overcome it together with others. Sometimes the team seems greater than the sum of its parts! Photo by ROMY from Pixabay



Fear-Free Connection

The Middle Path out of Social Anxiety

By Warren Heggarty

One-on-one connection with other people, including dating, can seem like a very high stakes game. This can scare us off, but it doesn't have to be that way if you take the "middle path."

Recently, Brett McKay's *Art of Manliness* podcast featured Australian-born Clinical Psychologist Thomas Smithyman (McKay & McKay, 2024). They engaged in an interesting discussion on socialising, dating and anxiety. Smithyman had attended an all-boys school in Australia, but found himself in a co-ed college scene in America, where he found talking to girls very anxiety provoking. This led him on a quest to learn about what causes social anxiety and what we can do to alleviate it.

Humans have evolved certain characteristics that are meant to PROTECT us. Avoidance is one of them. Avoiding wild animals is easy to understand. But we can also avoid things that are not

obviously dangerous. Why? To protect our bodies, our minds, our social positions etc from the consequences of not dealing with them successfully.

Because humans are social animals, our reputations are valuable to us. Many people fear socialising or dating out of a fear of being scrutinised, judged and rejected. Many of us are particularly sensitive to this kind of scrutiny out of the fear that on some level or in some way we are just not good enough. Believing we will be judged harshly on what we feel we lack socially, we avoid socialising.

This is not just a matter of being shy or outgoing, introverted or extroverted. Smithyman says that many of us want to connect with people socially so badly, but we can feel such fear that we shut ourselves down. Some just accept this situation, because it is easier to say I they don't like something (socialising) than to admit that they are scared.

Avoidance is self-defeating, but being **Performative** can sometimes be a worse strategy. This is where you try to plug the imaginary gap between "who I can/should be" and "who I am." This can actually make you more self conscious, more anxious and more likely to struggle!

So what can you do about social anxiety? Smithyman suggests taking a middle path between extremes of **Avoidance** and **Performance**. We tend to OVERESTIMATE the likelihood that a one-on-one meeting or a date will reveal our inadequacies, and we also UNDERESTIMATE our ability to handle it if things do go wrong.

It's important to note that most people will not notice the things we perceive as our flaws. Even if they DO notice them, they may in fact approve of them ("My, what a charming accent you have!").

So how do we overcome this ?

"What people look for in a conversation," says Smithyman, "are warmth, curiosity and authenticity."

WARMTH means showing you are interested in the other person, what they say and what they do. This often causes the other person to automatically become more interested in you. CURIOSITY means asking questions that enable you to get to know them better, and also involves self-disclosure (but not too much!). AUTHENTICITY means just being yourself, not a performer, or some jazzed up clown version of yourself.

These things all come with practice. Smithyman says that many of the social skills he developed with his mates in high school were transferable to dating later on. Get to know them, let them know you, smile, use eye contact, and ask questions!

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ABOVE: Photo by Surprising_SnapShots on Pixabay

The Restorative JOY of Making Old Things New Again

By Peter Kennedy
(as told to Grant J Everett)



Peter has found fulfillment in a new hands-on hobby breathing life into old things, and brought his love for arts and crafts into a high-tech form...

Restoration

I've done a lot of furniture restoration in the last few years. Sanding, polishing, staining, just generally bringing old furniture back to life. I've been interested in this since high school, but only really gotten into it recently.

One of the first items I did was a table, and I'm working on restoring an old BBQ setting table that has wheels and draws. I have a dressing table that I'm upgrading with clear Perspex, and a lovely cabinet that I want to restore with glass panes. I also have an old miner's lounge, which is a combination of a bed and a lounge that you can fold and put on a pack horse and take from town to town. It has a lot of history and had a tough life, so I've been restoring that.

A large marble piece of mine got broken when I moved house, and I've been reassembling it with

metallic epoxy in the cracks, so where it joins together is all gold and glittery and looks really nice.

It's so rewarding making old things beautiful again!

3D Printing

I've always been a hands-on kind of person, and I've done lots of arts and crafts over the years. More recently, I've taught myself how to do 3D printing so I can design my own 3D models with CAD-CAM (Computer Aided Design, Computer Aided Manufacture) software. I can now create and print anything from jewellery to wall hangings.

I've given my models away as gifts, and selling them is the next logical step, so I'll market them, and see how I go from there. The way I see it, though, you should never do arts and crafts purely for profit: you need to LOVE doing it, as it's difficult to charge an amount for a piece that makes it worth the investment of your time and effort and materials. Even breaking even is hard. Some projects will take hours and hours and you'll never get that time back.

3D printers often use a PVA type plastic to print, but some can print

with wax, gold, all kinds of things. My printer is an expensive model, so it can use different types of mediums. 3D printers can be a bit frustrating sometimes, though! One time my printer filled itself up with gunk for no good reason, and I had to take the whole thing apart to clean it out.

The Joy Of Cooking

I love cooking. Anything I see in a cookbook, if I want to make it, I'll be able to.

My grandmother on my dad's side was a fantastic cook. She was German, and the scones she whipped up were amazing. We'd bring around a load of manure once a week, and she'd have fresh scones with cream and jam waiting for us. Might be why I enjoy baking so much!

I've created a chicken parmigiana recipe that I can do in a single frying pan, no need for the oven. So long as it gets the job done and the meal on the table, everyone likes an easy recipe, right? I've currently got silverside in the slow cooker right now, and that won't be ready until tonight. Just this morning I made a

lemon pancake with a crispy edge from flour and lemon drink.

I have helped out with the cooking at a few mental health services in the past, even if it was just a sausage sizzle. Everyone loves a sausage sizzle!

Study

I started off studying Electronic Engineering, but switched to a Diploma of IT. This Diploma led me through TAFE pathways into my Bachelor of Computer Information Science. This was the beginning to a new pathway into University, and my group was the first to graduate using this approach.

As I've had a lot of programming experience, naturally I've written my own software and apps. But making money from that can be disheartening, as there's so much competition for every conceivable idea, and people will do anything possible to get your app for free. Everyone loves to cancel their payment one day before the free trial period ends!

I've also done Photoshop courses, and for something different I was doing religious studies with an Online University. Online uni courses can be quite expensive, even when they offer discounts, so you really have to decide whether it's worth it or not.

Flourish Australia

The Flourish Australia staff from the Salisbury service regularly come visit me at my home, take me out on trips to places like the beach and for coffee, and are always very helpful if I need anything. Just recently they helped me update my NDIS paperwork. Even though I couldn't find my birth certificate or my parent's birth and death certificates, they were able to get everything sorted.

Flourish Australia has provided me with so much direction, motivation and inspiration in doing what I want to do, and will occasionally give me a little push if I need it. If I'm capable of doing something myself, they will encourage me to try it out first, but they always support me when life feels daunting.

LEFT: Peter Kennedy, spending quality time with his house mate.
RIGHT: An assortment of Peter's restored furniture!
PHOTOS BY PETER



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January Recovery Game Solutions

KEYWORDS

- 1. Endometriosis
- 2. Exercise
- 3. Journal
- 4. Mirena
- 5. Menopause
- 6. Peri
- 7. PhysiCards
- 8. Pilates

- 3. Socialising
- 4. Hobbies
- 8. Step
- 9. Travel
- 11. Hard

Across

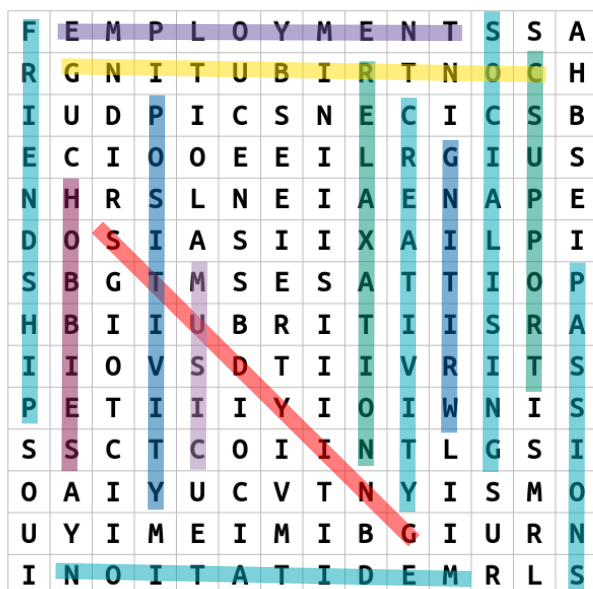
- 1. Independence
- 5. Education
- 6. Dreams
- 7. Mindfulness
- 10. Exercise
- 12. Carer

CROSSWORD

Down

- 2. Employment

Panorama Find-A-Word



- STUDYING
- RELAXATION
- MEDITATION
- EMPLOYMENT
- HOBBIES
- SOCIALISING
- PASSIONS
- SUPPORT
- POSITIVITY
- WRITING
- FRIENDSHIPS
- MUSIC
- CREATIVITY
- CONTRIBUTING

“Let’s Talk About It” Buckingham House Art Exhibit 2024

By Grant J Everett



After a long hiatus due to COVID, the hugely popular Buck House Art Show has finally returned for Mental Health Month 2024!

Formally kicking off at 7pm, over 80 art lovers visited the large display area at Buck House for this exciting event, so thankfully there was enough space for all of them to mingle. There was a great vibe with plenty of conversation going on, and the event was fully catered with trays of canapes and drinks constantly making the rounds.

Artworks of many different styles by dozens of artists who access Flourish Australia services had been hung beautifully, and many of the works were for sale. Quite a few pieces were sold throughout the night.

Congratulations to the Sydney Region Team, particularly the Buck House team and the marketing and communications team, for making this event happen.

David Jenkins

David Jenkins, who accesses services at Buck House, had three drawings on display.

“Bright is best,” David said. “All my art is colourful. It’s delicate, and deliberate. We actually had an

art group at Buck House just this morning, and we did origami paper folding. We learned how to make a crane, a whale, and a heart. It was really good.”

Also, not only did David play piano beautifully on the night, the piece was of his own composition. Talented guy!

Kieron Rowe

Kieron attends Buck House, and he presented a framed piece of writing that was an analogy of how people who are homeless or have mental health issues are often treated like pigeons, something people prefer to ignore, or even look down upon.

“Pigeons are the most maligned, institutionalised creatures I know of,” Kieron said. “They are simply ostracised, and to this day they are completely dependant upon humanity, cruel and heartless as we can be. Do you see the correlation?”

“I was much younger when I last wrote prolifically. I have won a few writing competitions, but I would much rather win people’s hearts. A number of people have asked me to write more. A sequel to the work displayed is on the way, and I hope to complete a book over the next year.”

“I enjoyed the artwork. Jaz Doyle’s piece stood out to me, being

reminiscent of the 14th Century iconographer Andrei Rubley.”

Kieron also acknowledged people with mental health issues during the formal talks of the night, right after the Welcome To Country.

Mark Orr AM

Much of the Senior Leadership Team were there on the night, including CEO Mark Orr AM and Board Chair Professor Elizabeth More AM, who presented on the power of creative outlets for people with mental health issues, how important it is to celebrate and encourage artists, and how art can transcend a person’s recovery. They particularly thanked the Buck House Connect and Thrive Team for making this night possible.

Nadia Jones

Nadia was selling copies of her book of collected poetry “Transmogrify” on the night.

“I got this opportunity through my awesome support worker, Cam,” Nadia told us. “He asked me if this was something I’d be interested in, and I said yes yes yes!”

“I was glad the art show included writers and poets, as all art is valid. Looking at a beautiful painting and reading a written piece is two entirely different experiences, and both are so important to tap into.

And while I was quite busy talking with people at my stall, I especially loved the beautiful First Nations dot painting by Graeme Yuke that kept catching my eye. I looked at it many times on the night."

"I also had the opportunity to read out four short poems, and live readings are something I love to do, even though I can feel a bit nervous.

Live readings feel like an outpouring from my soul, connecting me to my past self in an indescribably meaningful way. I would be so up for doing a live reading again!"

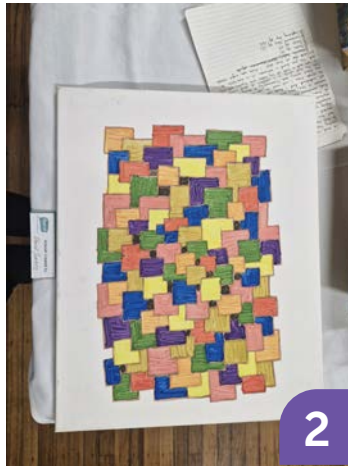
Nadia Jones shared her recovery and publishing journey in Panorama's October 2024 Monthly issue and the Summer 2025 Quarterly issue - Ed

LEFT: Incredible dot painting from Graeme Yuke. **BELOW:** 1. David Jenkins. 2 David's drawing. 3. David playing piano. 4. Nadia Jones, Poet, reciting four poems. 5. Painting, Jazmin Doyle. 6. Painting, Lynelle Dulaurens. 7. Kieron Rowe, with his written piece. 8. Painting, Tara Wilson.

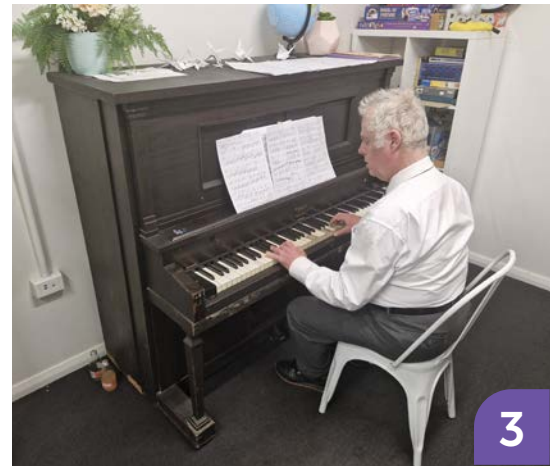
PHOTOS BY GRANT J EVERETT



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EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Does the media encourage it?

By Warren Heggarty



“Emotional intelligence means being able to read your own and other’s emotions, and being able to respond to the emotions of others in a cooperative, functional, and empathetic manner.”
- John Gottman

It is useful to be able to “regulate one’s own emotions (including controlling, expressing and modulating emotion) in a culturally and situationally appropriate manner.” (Tuning Into Kids, 2024) According to authors like Ida Rose Florez, emotional regulation is not instinctive, it is learned behaviour, and people need support to develop it appropriately. Teachers, parents and the social environment we live in play a crucial role in moulding our emotional intelligence. (Florez, Jul 2011)

Many modern social commentators consider that even adults today are often emotionally dysregulated, and that this could have serious consequences. Emotional lability, which is having difficulty controlling one’s emotions, is a sign of mental unwellness.

Do you think we get rewarded for oversharing and displaying emotional incontinence these days? Social commentator Paul Joseph Watson claims this to be the case. He says that we have been

indoctrinated to think that “insipid sentimentality” is the real deal.

“Some people live their lives vicariously through celebrities on reality television then base their own personalities on that.” (Watson, 2018)

Watson also claims that we are being encouraged to become more and more emotionally labile, which he asserts is akin to encouraging mental health issues. Emotional self-regulation is regarded as a sign of good mental health, but of course views will always differ as to how much self-control we should exercise. Or how much we need to “let it all hang out.”

A dramatic example is public reactions to deaths. The passing of the late Queen after 70 years on the throne might well be expected to produce mass public grief. However, are such mass displays really appropriate for celebrities, those who are famous for being famous? Watson refers to our seeming “inability to process the concept of death” by asking, “Are public outpourings of grief and canonisation of dead celebrities a sign that humanity has never been more afraid of its own mortality?”

In any case, it is vital to our collective wellbeing that we are able to regulate how we emote, at least in public. It is seen as a sign of

maturity and awareness, and leads to lower levels of stress (though “bottling it up” might cause greater stress in time). It also enables more satisfying friendships and lasting intimate relationships. Staying calm allows you to focus, concentrate and think when faced with a challenging situation, and helps with resilience in times of change and stress.

Perhaps it would be better for all of us if we watched less reality TV and spent more time learning about emotional intelligence, fostering calmness and looking towards the solution, rather than the problem?

Scan the QR Code to visit the Tuning In To Kids website.

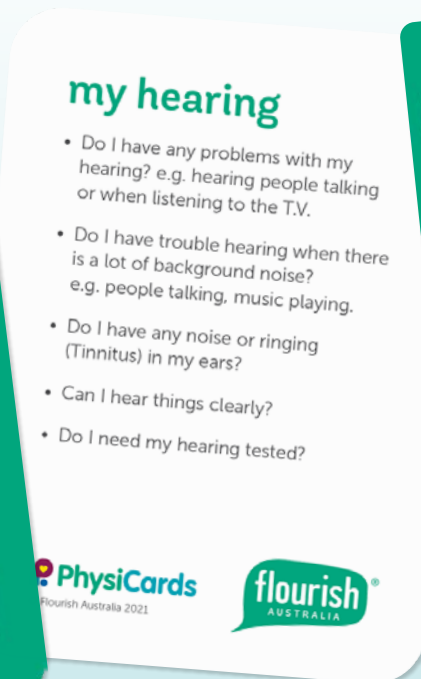
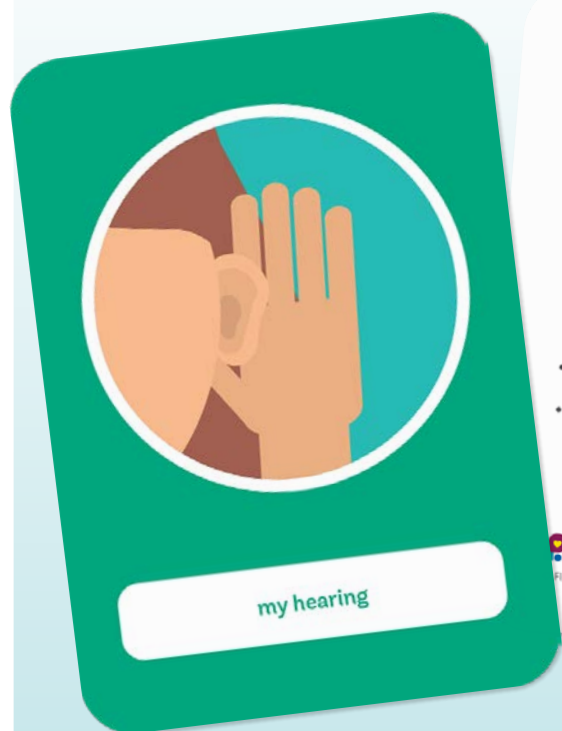


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Image By Htc Hnm, Pixabay

Back On Track Health



Flourish Australia's PhysCards® are an interactive, person led approach to reviewing, identifying and responding to physical health and wellbeing concerns.

If you access Flourish Australia services, you can use the PhysCards as an easy tool to help identify any physical health issues. Just speak to your support worker to find out more.

Hearing loss can happen at any time and has many causes, but is most common as you age.

Hearing can be affected by many things, such as infection, blockages, build up of ear wax (which can easily be removed by a doctor - it's FUN) or the hearing apparatus being damaged. More often than not, it is a relatively easy fix. A common problem is being unable to distinguish between several sources of noise, such as other people and the TV.

Two very unpleasant ear problems are earache, which can be very painful, and tinnitus, or ringing in the ears. Get your doctor to keep an eye on these things to make sure you receive proper treatment so your hearing is not damaged.

Swimmer's ear

If you swim regularly, you are a champion! Make sure, however that your ear canal is kept as dry as possible. Some of us are prone to otitis externa or "swimmer's ear." You can get it from sticking things in your ear that are not clean, but wet ear canals are perfect for fungus and bacteria that cause inflammation. If you get an earache, make sure you

see a doctor. Swimmer's ear can be prevented by using ear plugs, caps, and ear drops. Talk to your chemist about what suits you best. Swimming in salt water may help as well.

Deafness as a disability

People are either born deaf or acquire deafness through illness or injury. An interesting book you might like to read is "Think Again" by Australian Olympic decathlete Dean Barton-Smith AM, who is deaf. Barton-Smith tells of how he had to overcome other people's low expectations. He wrote, "I really relate to this quote from the Editor in Chief of TIME magazine: seeing success in someone who looks like you, thinks like you, grew up like you, can change the course of a life." This is why it is important for people with disability to share their stories!

Barton-Smith found that on the sports field he was able to excel and be recognised for it, unlike the classroom where teachers were of the opinion he would not amount to much. He went on to occupy such roles as CEO, board member and Chair of various organisations.

Loneliness

Developing hearing problems can contribute to feelings of loneliness because it makes communication more difficult, leading to isolation. A study by the National Acoustic Laboratories with the University of NSW found that elderly people with hearing loss were twice as likely to have higher levels of loneliness than those who did not. On Hearing Australia's website, Pdraig Kitterick of NAL said "...the risk of loneliness increases if their hearing problems affect their ability to communicate with people and take part in everyday activities." This makes it important that we detect our hearing problems early and take action to address them before it gets to this point!

Scan the QR Code to read this article on the Hearing Australia website.



Barton-Smith, D. (2018). Think Again: the inspirational journey of the world's first deaf Olympic decathlete. Melbourne: Barton-Smith Enterprises.

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.

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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



SCAN QR TO
FIND OUT MORE



Where mental wellbeing thrives

NDIS