



employment **options**

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020-2021

2020-2021

LEARN EARN AND LIVE  
EVERYONE DESERVES A WORKING FUTURE

# ABOUT EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Our ability to belong and live with purpose is intrinsically linked to our capacity to learn, earn and live. But with more than one million young Australians currently unemployed, and additional barriers for the more marginalised, some people need greater support than others to fully participate in the workforce.

For more than 30 years, Employment Options has empowered marginalised young people in South Australia to transform their lives and lead a life of purpose.

Being sustainably employed is more challenging for young people who lack adequate resources and support networks. Learning difficulties, disability, mental illness, poverty, substance abuse, absence of positive role models and the influence of generational unemployment or traumas at home can also make it disproportionately harder.

Employment Options help people aged 14 to 30 to build their capacity to set and achieve their goals for a thriving future. We do this by nurturing trusted partnerships to help each person:

- overcome their barriers
- realise their own potential
- safely shift self-limiting beliefs and behaviours, and
- access the tools and support they need to explore and shape the future they imagine.

With YOUR support, we can continue to make sure every young person in South Australia has a real pathway to an inspired and purposeful life.

## OUR VISION

Creating pathways to living a life of purpose

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To support diverse young South Australians, transform their lives by developing the confidence and skills to learn, earn and live.

## OUR VALUES

### Authenticity:

We live and breathe our culture of being genuine and real from our board and our leadership team right through to our service delivery team.

### Belonging:

We welcome people in and accept them as part of our community with kindness and empathy.

### Integrity:

We act consistently with the values we uphold.

### Learning:

We learn from our clients and each other to produce better outcomes and greater impact.

### Unconditional positive regard:

We demonstrate an ongoing belief in a young person's potential to achieve their goal.



## CONTENTS

- 01 Chairperson and CEO'S Report**
- 02 Who Did We Help?**
- 03 The Year In Pictures**
- 04 Transforming Lives to**
- 05 Learn, Earn and Live**

- 06 The Year In More**
- 07 Pictures**
- 08 Thank You to Our Supporters and Partners**
- 09 Farewell to Trish Crosby**
- 10 Connect With Us**



# FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD TRISH CROSBY AND CEO MICHELLE BRAHAM

We share the Employments Options' Annual Report with considerable gratitude to all staff and volunteers across our organisation who have all been relentless in their actions to keep young people engaged in our services and safe over the year.

The decision to continue to support our clients during COVID caused considerable strain on organisational resources from people to finances. Our two key programs, Youth Space and Working Futures experienced significant growth however the cost-of-service delivery was higher than expected.

In March 2021 we conducted a Complexity Survey of 274 service users across a range of programs which mapped barriers such as family dysfunction, financial distress, homelessness, mental health concerns, disability, drug and alcohol abuse, generational unemployment and low educational achievement to name a few. The survey identified that:

- 82% of service users had a co-morbidity of 5 or more significant barriers
- 66% had 10 or more significant barriers
- 40% had 15 or more significant barriers

We know all South Australians have experienced the impact of this crisis, however, the ongoing and persistent disadvantage faced by our service users has been amplified during covid.

Despite the challenges of the year, we remain firmly focused on our core passionate belief that "everyone deserves a working future". We've emerged as a trusted partner that continues to offer quality services. In this report you will see the highlights of great moments from 2020/2021 of which we are grateful to be a part.

The new financial year will bring different challenges as we implement the 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan. The Board has worked hard to position us for the future ensuring we continue to help those at-risk young people who have disengaged from education and employment.

We are proud of Employment Options' achievements over the last 12 months and have every confidence that the coming year will be even better.

Thank you to our community partners, Staff, Management and Board for your commitment and hard work.

## TRISH CROSBY CHAIRPERSON



## MICHELLE BRAHAM CEO

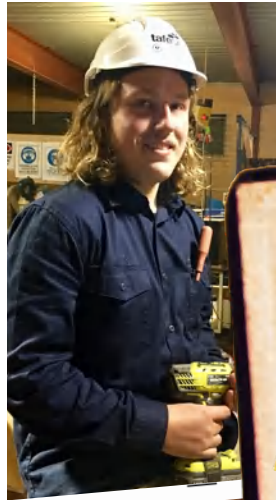


## 2020 - 2021 BOARD MEMBERS:

- Tobias Crush, Deputy Chairperson
- Jacqui Coates, Treasurer
- Doug Layng, Public Officer
- Peter Mansfield, Director
- Nick Schumi, Director

# WHO DID WE HELP?

## Service Users



## Construction Squad

## Student Internship Placement Program



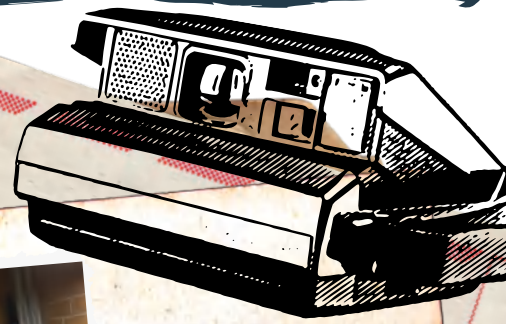
## Youth Space



## NDIS Services



# THE YEAR IN PICTURES



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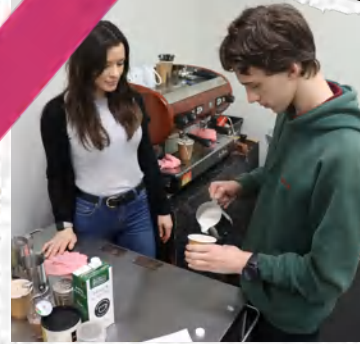
NDIS  
Business  
Mentoring



Welding Skills

Youth Space MTA Toolbox Donation

Rule The Tools

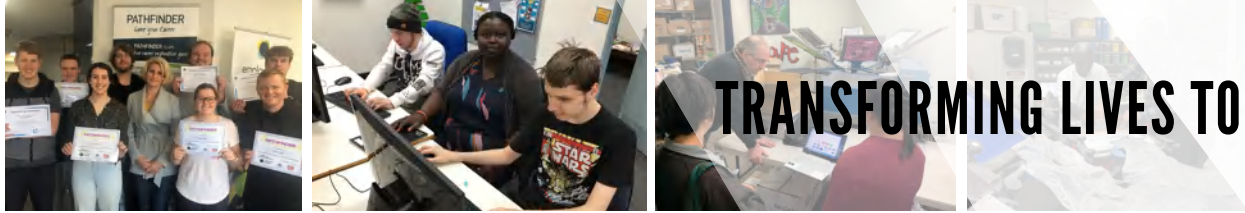


Youth Space  
Coffee Club



Living Skills  
Kitchen





**Youth Space**  
Learning for life

## DOWN AND OUT TO FLY IN AND FLY OUT!

Brett\* had what we call a rough start in life and used drugs and alcohol to self-medicate his trauma and mental condition. Being easy to anger and not wanting to be at school, he was referred to Youth Space as an alternative learning solution. Whilst Youth Space provides a more relaxed learning environment, rules and expectations are still in place. Brett found it difficult to fit in and a conflict with staff meant he was unable to attend on site.

Brett continued to meet with his case manager and sought mental health support. Over time, he learnt to manage his anger and frustration. His case manager said, "Brett made the decision to make changes in his life, and while we were there to assist, he did the hard work".

Feeling better about himself, Brett was able to start learning and finished several SACE subjects including Maths and English, earned a White Card and gained his Learners permit. This new sense of confidence motivated Brett to enrol at Tafe SA where he was awarded a Certificate II in Engineering.

Brett is now an apprentice with a mining contractor and has future aspirations to be a FIFO worker in the mines. When asked about coming to Youth Space he says:

*"I love you guys"*

## A GRACEFUL TRANSITION

Grace is an exceptional Artist with Down syndrome, visual Impairment and hearing impairment. On completing Year 12, Grace was presented with few, if no, employment pathway options. In talking to Grace and mum Monica, it was clear that there was an opportunity to transform Grace's Handmade Cards to self-employment and then scale this to a business.

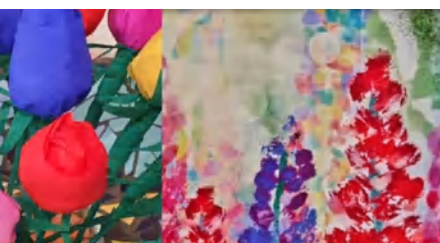
Grace chose to use her NDIS funding to engage an Employment Options NDIS Business Mentor to assist her turn her hobby into a business. With the help of her experienced and skilled entrepreneur and business mentor, Grace was put in contact with an experienced screen printer and expanded her product offerings from handmade cards to t-shirts, and tote bags.

Most recently, Grace put her designs on framed prints, which were very well received. Grace added a shopify.com account to her ever increasing presence on Facebook to provide her customers with easy purchasing options. Grace also provides casual employment to a young gentleman with disability. She donates 10% of her profits to Tutti Arts. Grace is going from strength to strength including exhibiting her work in cafes and studios.

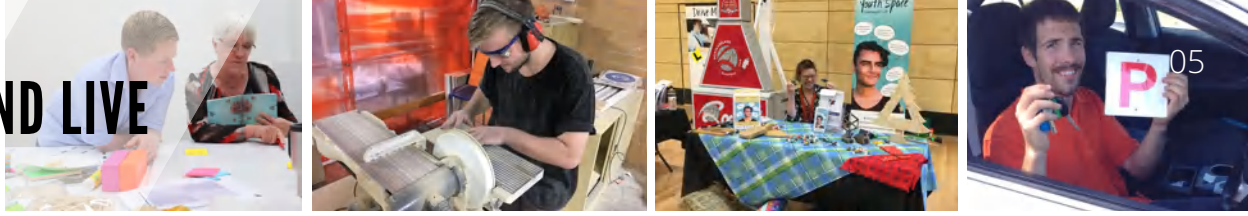
Grace's biggest challenge now is keeping up with the demand for her beautiful designs. Grace's framed prints are so popular that several of her framed prints were sold before her planned official launch!

You can view and purchase Grace's works at:

[www.graces-handmade-cards.myshopify.com](http://www.graces-handmade-cards.myshopify.com)



# LEARN, EARN AND LIVE



## LIFE CHANGING

Jack\* aged 20 joined Construction Squad feeling like life was leaving him behind. Since leaving school, Jack had been unemployed, become increasingly lonely and not sure how he could make positive changes.



Construction Squad is a project funded by the Australian Government's Regional Employment Trials. An inhospitable area at The Station in Murray Bridge was transformed into an amazing interactive and beautiful garden for the community to enjoy. Jack became an important part of the team, always willing to do the hard work, learn new skills and help others. Feeling like he was contributing to the community gave Jack a renewed sense of confidence and less resistance to exploring different careers.

The opening of the new Bridgeport Hotel provided Jack with the opportunity to learn basic skills for the Hospitality Industry. His hard work and persistence paid off and he gained employment at the Bridgeport Hotel. Jack expressed his appreciation and thanks by saying:

***"Construction Squad changed my life"***

## BREAKING THE CYCLE

Dileepa remained jobless at 23 despite having done well at school and going on to university achieving qualifications in Finance and Accounting. He was frustrated with being told that he needed work experience to get a job, but couldn't get a job to gain work experience. Dileepa is not the first young person to be stuck in this cycle as many employers demand experience as a pre-requisite to employment.

Dileepa joined SIPP, Employment Options' Student Internship Placement Program designed to provide practical skill development and work experience for university graduates. SIPP is voluntary offered at no cost and provides participants with structured mentoring to build the core work-readiness competencies to gain employment. Mostly SIPP is 12 weeks or a 200 hour placement however so determined to prove himself, Dileepa stayed for 16 weeks.

Rick, Dileepa's mentor at Employment Options, reflected "Dileepa was prepared to do the hard work and go that little bit extra. I could tell he would be successful in gaining a job in the finance industry because he is that good".

Funnily enough, Dileepa started work just down the road from us at an Adelaide based accountancy practice. We love seeing his big smile and wave on his way to work. Dileepa said of his experience:

***"I am very grateful for the experience and mentoring support Employment Options gave me - its helped me feel more confident and learn the skills I needed "***





**THE YEAR  
IN MORE  
PICTURES**



**CAREER  
EXPO**



**INTERN  
FAREWELL**



**OUR LEGEND  
SMILER - TeAo**



**PRACTICAL  
LEARNING**





# OUR LEGEND SMILER TeAo

Smiler has volunteered at Employment Options for over 6 years. As a retired Carpenter/Joiner with decades of experience and knowledge he helps our young people navigate the world of work. Smiler regularly spends 3 days a week mentoring young people in our workshop to develop skills in woodwork, metalwork, welding, and Life.

Smiler is such a LEGEND that in May 2021 he received the Premier's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service.



# THANK YOU

## TO OUR

# YACSA

## SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



## LIGHTHOUSE



## YOUTH PROJECTS INC.

## MatchWorks

## BUNNINGS warehouse



Employment Options extends a BIG THANK YOU to all our supporters, partners, collaborators, donors, volunteers and funders for working with us in achieving positive outcomes and impact for our young people. There are too many of you to list, however, we name some of you below.

In Murray Bridge we would like to thank the Rural City of Murray Bridge, The Team at The Station, RDA Murraylands, Mission Australia, Madec, Job Prospects, SureWay, Community Bridging Service and the team at Bunnings.

In relation to our Employment and Career Services, we would like to thank the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, The Department for Innovation & Skills, SkillingSA, Christine Willersdorf, The Rural City of Murray Bridge, Kym Jones Exhibitions – Adelaide Career Expo, Career Partners, Bunnings, Connect the Dots career services, Anglicare SA and Career Partners Plus.

For supporting our Youth Space services we thank all our 20+ school partners, The Department for Education, The Department for Child Protection, Smiler TeAo, Petra Kirby, University of South Australia, Flinders University, TAFESA, Henry Malaszczak, Paul Millar and Bev Webber.

For our NDIS Services we would like to thank the NDIA, The Careers Place, The Growing Space, Determind2, Peter Wilson, Maxima, Interact, Support Squad, Plan Partners, My Plan Manager, My Ability Australia, Connect the Dots Career Services, Bapt Care, Feros Care, Mission Australia, and MacArthur Community Care.

Thank you to our co-located partners, Light House Youth Projects Inc, MatchWorks/Gen U and Muowe Designs.



# THANK YOU,

## TRISH CROSBY

### FOR 26 YEARS OF SERVICE

Trish announcing her retirement from the Board prompted me to find out about her long commitment and involvement with Employment Options. She has been a strong supporter and contributor to our history and forms part of the heritage we want to honour.

It all began in January 1995 when Trish secured a 6-month contract as a receptionist to cover a maternity leave absence at Hills Employment Options as we were formerly known. Trish lived in Milang and her job with the Department of Education had been transferred from Murray Bridge to Adelaide which meant she was doing a 90-minute commute each way from the Hills. Fortunately for Trish and Hills Employment Options the short-term placement became permanent.

At that time, we were a provider of the Commonwealth Government's SkillShare program which aim was to support young people into employment. SkillShare was a pre-cursor to the current Employment Services – back when there was still a CES.

Trish's abilities were quickly recognised with her rising through the organisation to becoming the Administration Manager. In 1998, Hills Employment Options and Southern Fleurieu Skills Training Project amalgamated to become what is now Employment Options. At this time, Trish also became a Board member to represent the views of people living in the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island.

Over the next 10 years Trish held multiple jobs in the organisation before retiring as an employee for the first time in 2008. She continued her role on the Board and returned as an employee in 2010 before retiring again in 2012.

Trish has seen Employment Options change and pivot over the years as Government contracts come and go. When asked about her motivation to be part of Employment Options for such a long period of time, she explained her strong belief in what we stand for and do. She is particularly proud of the staff dedication and commitment that lives on at Employment Options.

It is with sadness and fond memories we say goodbye to Trish Crosby, our Board Chairperson, long time Board member and past employee.

Michelle Braham, CEO



# CONNECT WITH US



**employment options**

everyone deserves a working future



40 Sturt Street, Adelaide SA 5000



eoinc@eoinc.com.au



(08) 8388 6600



[www.employmentoptions.com.au](http://www.employmentoptions.com.au)



@EmploymentOptionsAust



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