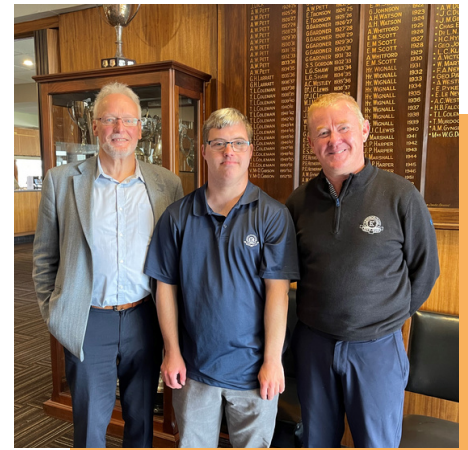


Community Employment Partnership

Inclusion, Diversity and Work Changes Lives



Mike finds work through Warwick's golf club connection, Darren

Belonging Matters is a not-for-profit, education and advisory service that was established in 2003 by people with disabilities and their families. The main purpose of Belonging Matters is to assist people with a disability to belong and contribute to the social and economic fabric of the community. Belonging Matters has been recognised as a leader through a National Disability Award in Social Inclusion and through its various partnerships with the University of Melbourne and the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations.

Since 2021, Belonging Matters has partnered with various Rotary clubs in various areas of Melbourne to develop jobs for people with intellectual disabilities and Autism. As Rotary has a strong history of community service and Rotarians have vast business networks, it has been an ideal partnership to change the poor employment outcomes for people with a disability. The partnerships also provide a foundation of shared values and ethics as exemplified by Rotary's Four-Way Test.

Why is the Community Employment Partnership important?

Employment is important for all people – it gives us a sense of purpose, financial security, improved wellbeing, relationships and friends. "What do you want to be when you grow up?" is a question all parents ask their children.

Yet, people with intellectual disability are one of most under-employed groups in Australia, often locked into segregated settings or a permanent cycle of training. Just 16% are employed in the open job market, and only 5% report their main income as paid employment. Alarming, 45% of people with intellectual disability are currently living below the poverty line. This leads to social isolation and fewer opportunities to develop work skills, resulting in a lifelong dependence on social welfare.

The Community Employment Partnership is working to reverse these statistics. Already there have been jobs secured through the networks of Rotarians, for example at an airport design company, local swimming pool, women's health service, golf club, real estate agent, local MP's office, animal welfare centre and IT business.

Benefits of employing people with an intellectual disability and Autism

Everyone Benefits!

People with intellectual disability and Autism want to work and have the same opportunities as other citizens.

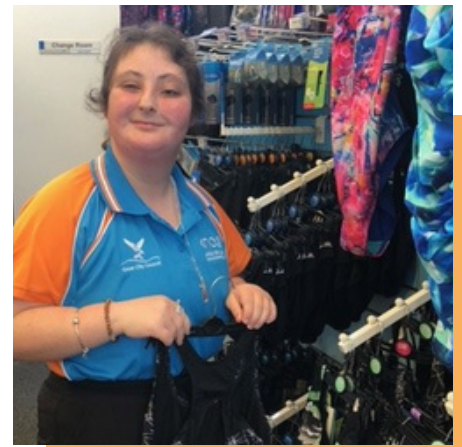
Like everyone else, they have strengths, interests, and abilities to contribute positively to the workplace.

Employees with intellectual disability and Autism are hard-working, dedicated and often require less support than employers anticipate.

Research has shown there is very little difference in productivity or contribution from hiring people with a disability. Yet the difference in workplace culture can be hugely beneficial. Comparison studies have shown that people with a disability:

- have fewer accidents at work,
- create a positive workplace culture,
- have fewer days off and less sick leave,
- increase customer and staff loyalty,
- have lower hiring costs.

(Graffan, J., Smith, K., Shinkfield, A., Polzin, U, 2002).



Thanks to Peter's connection, Rachel works at the local pool

In addition, workplaces that represent diversity in the community are more likely to attract a diverse range of customers. A diverse team and inclusive workplace culture can also increase innovation, solutions to problems and inspires creativity.

This collaboration is based on the very successful Inclusion Alberta and Rotary Partnership which was established in 2000. This collaboration has created over 600 jobs for people with intellectual disability and Autism. Canadian Rotarian, Wendy McDonald, received a Service Above Self award in 2020 for her ongoing work in the partnership.



**WATCH
VIDEO**

Mike and Keysborough Golf Club

After searching for inclusive employment for years, with the assistance of the Community Employment Partnership and Rotary Central Melbourne, Mike landed his dream job at the Keysborough Golf Club. Watch video <https://youtu.be/72aN-k-Pfd8>

How the Employment Project Works

It starts with a conversation....

Belonging Matters want to work with Rotary to develop employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Autism, using a customised employment process. The primary role of Rotarians is to tap into their vast business networks and introduce Belonging Matters to business contacts who would be willing to have a conversation about employing a person with intellectual disability or Autism. As people's interests and skills are diverse, we would love to talk to all types of businesses.

Belonging Matters will make a time to discuss potential opportunities with individual business contacts. There is no obligation to employ a person. If interested, Belonging Matters will work with prospective employers to develop employment opportunities. Belonging Matters will then coordinate a 'match' with prospective employers and employees, and provide the necessary ongoing support to ensure success.

A steering committee is usually established with each club to guide and direct the partnership. There is no cost involved. Belonging Matters will provide information, presentations and updates to Rotary clubs, districts and committees on a regular basis and promote success on social media.

How can your club help?



Invite us to speak
at your club



Talk to other Rotarians
about the Partnership



Introduce Belonging
Matters to business

If you would like to hear more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership



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