

Summer 2025 | Edition 58

COMMUNITY LIVING & RESPITE SERVICES

Community News



A message from our CEO

Welcome to our Summer 2025 Community News.

As we approach the end of the year, it is a wonderful opportunity to get together, reconnect and celebrate our community. We've had two fantastic occasions to do this recently with the CLRS Client and Family Christmas Party held at Apex Park in Echuca and the celebration of International Day of People with Disability.

Our annual Christmas Party was a hit with a BBQ cooked by Kiwanis and a tasty ice cream treat for everyone from The Port Ice Creamery. Thanks to our Daily Living and Defined Programs team the evening was filled with laughter, great food and a special visit from Santa.

We were also proud to join with other local organisations in celebrating International Day of People with Disability, at Echuca East Recreation Reserve on Tuesday 2 December. The theme for this year is '*fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress*', which reflects

our commitment to empowering individuals and families to live the life they choose, in a community enriched by the inclusion of all. This was the first time local organisations have come together to deliver this event and we look forward to partnering with them all again next year.

Looking ahead we are excited to welcome Dr Jordan Nguyen, and his remarkable robot 'Kubo', as our speaker at our 18th Annual Fundraising Dinner, on Thursday 5th March 2026. Dr Nguyen is renowned for his work to make our communities and environments more inclusive spaces, and he is committed to reducing the barriers for people with disability which separate them from their community. We would love you to join us for an inspiring and entertaining evening. We only have a handful of tickets left so get in quick.



Leah Taaffe

CEO

Community Living & Respite Services

www.clrs.org.au

18TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER



Thursday 5th March 2026
MOAMA BOWLING CLUB

Guest Presenter:
Dr Jordan Nguyen

6.30PM
Doors Open 6.15PM



Community Living
& Respite Services

TICKETS \$145.00 | SCAN FOR TICKETS

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM:

Online | www.trybooking.com/DGAMD
Enquiries | Gillian Noelker 5480 2388 or events@clrs.org.au
Raffles and Auctions on the night



www.clrs.org.au



18th Annual Fundraising Dinner Sponsors

A massive **THANK YOU** to our incredible 2026 Annual Fundraising Dinner sponsors. Please support them by shopping local and supporting local businesses.

Event Sponsor - [Moama Bowling Club](#)

Major Sponsor - [Riverine Herald](#), [102.5 Edge FM](#), [Riverboats Music Festival](#), [Murray River Council](#), [Forty Winks](#), [Echuca Carpet Court](#), [Mawsons](#), [AWM Electrical Echuca](#), [Echuca Toyota](#), [Complete Scissor Lift Hire](#), [Ausure Echuca](#) and [CED Group](#).

International Day of People with Disability

Here are some photos from the event held at Echuca East Rec Reserve on Tuesday 2nd December 2025.



By the banks of the *Murray River*

RIVERBOATS

MUSIC FESTIVAL

Echuca-Moama • Yorta Yorta Country • February 13-15 2026



IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

ANDREW GURRUWIWI BAND • BAKER BOY
BLEAK SQUAD • CASH SAVAGE & THE LAST DRINKS
THE COUNTERFEIT FT. FREYA JOSEPHINE HOLLICK
DAISY KILBOURNE • EMMA DONOVAN: TAKE ME TO THE RIVER
FELICITY URQUHART & JOSH CUNNINGHAM
FULL FLOWER MOON BAND • THE LIVING END • MERPIRE
NORWOOD • PAUL DEMPSEY: SHOTGUN KARAOKE
QUEENIE • THE WIDLINGS • XAVIER RUDD
& MC BRIAN NANKERVIS

RIVERBOATSMUSIC.COM.AU



Riverboats Music Festival 2026

Riverboats Music Festival is on February 13 - 15 2026. They are one of our Major Sponsors and we are proud to once again be the community partner for the Riverboats Music Festival for 2026. We are grateful to their incredible support of our organisation and to have been their community partner since 2015 is pretty remarkable. It shows their passion and commitment to supporting people with disability in our local community.

Volunteers needed

We are looking for volunteers to wear our bright blue t-shirts and sell raffle tickets and items from our Op Shops across the weekend. Volunteers will be rostered for a 3 hour timeslot of your choice, which then gives you access to the festival.

Friday 13 Feb time slots

- 3pm to 6pm
- 6pm to 9pm

Saturday 14 Feb time slots

- 10.30am to 1.30pm
- 1.30pm to 4.30pm
- 4.30pm to 7.30pm

Sunday 15 Feb time slots

- 9.30am to 12.30pm

To register as a volunteer - [Click Here](#)

To buy tickets to this fantastic local music event - [Click here](#)

CLRS Client and Family Christmas Party





Mental Health & Wellbeing Local - MIND

Free support in your community



Who are Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals for?

People aged 26 years and over who are experiencing mental illness or psychological distress, including those with co-occurring substance use issues.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Greater Bendigo-Loddon-Campaspe is funded by the Victorian and Federal governments

How do I register for Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals?

All support is free, voluntary and easy to access – you do not need a referral from your doctor to access help.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Echuca is located at 222 Ogilvie Avenue, Echuca.

Phone number: [\(03\) 5412 6600](tel:0354126600)

Opening hours are

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 9am to 5pm
- Tuesday and Thursday: 9am to 7pm
- Saturday: 9am to 1pm

Face to face support, phone and telehealth services are available and walk-ins are also welcome.

For free support in your local area visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal

If you need help in your language, call TIS National on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter, then ask to be connected to Local Service on 1300 375 330.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are not crisis services. In an emergency which is life-threatening or where there is immediate risk of harm to anyone, call Triple Zero (000). For 24-hour crisis support, call [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14. Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders can also call [13 YARN](#) on 13 92 76. 13 YARN is a 24/7 national crisis support telephone service staffed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information visit - [Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Bendigo and Echuca \(servicing Greater Bendigo, Loddon and Campaspe\)](#) | [Mind Australia](#)

CLRS Board Members Retire

Acknowledgement of Service

In October we farewelled long-serving Board members Wayne Jenkin and Erin Langman, whose leadership and dedication have left a lasting legacy. Wayne's steady guidance through challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the October 2022 floods, was instrumental in shaping CLRS's resilience. Erin's strategic insight and financial stewardship have been invaluable over her nine-year tenure.



Strategic Framework

The new strategic framework was launched by the Board at our AGM in October. This framework will guide our work until 2030. Our [Strategic Framework 2025–2030](#) builds on our strengths and continues our focus on ensuring our clients are at the heart of every decision we make.

It has been shaped by the voices of those we support and employ, by our values and our achievements. As part of this strategic framework, we have developed a deeper

Understanding of our values and built our strategic priorities from these values. As an organisation we are excited to have this guide our work into the future.



RESPECT

We focus on our clients and value each person's uniqueness. This guides an environment that fosters meaningful connections built on trust and mutual respect.

Our Strategic Priorities Are:

- R.1** Embrace a culture of participation, where individuality is celebrated, and person-centered services are embedded across practice.
- R.2** CLRS recognise the value of community engagement. CLRS will continue to nurture engagement that results in positive collective outcomes that achieve impact.
- R.3** Recognise our staff as essential partners in achieving client outcomes, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and resources required.
- R.4** Strengthen CLRS's role as a trusted leader in advancing disability inclusion, by actively contributing to community planning and decision-making.



COLLABORATION

We champion collaborative partnerships with our clients, staff and community. We empower the use of our collective voice to achieve shared goals and create meaningful impact.

Our Strategic Priorities Are:

- C.1** CLRS will advocate for a system that improves the outcomes for our clients, their families and community.
- C.2** Nurture a collaborative environment grounded in teamwork and open communication, where our staff and clients are empowered to contribute ideas that drive positive outcomes.
- C.3** Consider opportunities to expand current service offerings and develop aligned, complementary services.
- C.4** Partner with our clients, ensuring they have the information and autonomy to make informed decisions about their services and any associated risks.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We foster a culture of transparent communication and shared responsibility. We learn from experience and strive for improvement, celebrating our shared successes.

Our Strategic Priorities Are:

- A.1** Achieve long-term sustainability through financial management, innovative fundraising strategies, and strategic partnerships, enabling the delivery of high-quality respectful services.
- A.2** Use technology to become more efficient, effective and innovative, ensuring that we use our resources responsibly.
- A.3** CLRS are committed to upholding regulatory compliance and actively seeking opportunities to enhance best practice and influence sector change.
- A.4** Operate with integrity and transparency, providing our clients with clear and accessible information about our work. We value their input and enable their active participation in decision making processes.



FLEXIBILITY

We are adaptive and embrace change. We enable resilience and agility to best support clients and each other.

Our Strategic Priorities Are:

- F.1** Actively seek opportunities for client involvement in service design and development to ensure flexibility and responsiveness.
- F.2** Through exploration of emerging technologies, we will enhance flexibility for our staff and clients.
- F.3** Sustain resilience through an adaptable culture that uses reflective practice to transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring CLRS remain responsive and relevant.
- F.4** Nurture our staff to feel connected to outcomes by involving them in decision making and learning from experiences.

From all of us here at Community Living & Respite Services, we wish you a Merry Christmas.

