



House Herald

Feature:
UpperCrust

Inspiring stories:
Live it up

Regional Reports:
People, places
& news.

Events:
City2Surf

You may have read one of the recent articles in the Sydney Morning Herald about our UpperCrust cafe and catering business in Normanhurst.

One of the articles questioned House with No Steps' commitment to keep operating UpperCrust given the losses that the business has incurred over the past few years. The other, a few weeks later, was a glowing review of the wonderful food, coffee and atmosphere that you experience when you walk through the door at UpperCrust.

We would like to assure you that UpperCrust is still very much open for business.

It is true that we have faced some challenges in operating this business. However, our intention is to keep UpperCrust open and we are doing everything in our power to ensure its success.

The new general manager of our Sydney businesses, Gordon Thorpe, is working hard with our UpperCrust team to improve the cafe's financial performance, grow its catering business and enhance the delicious range of snacks, meals and drinks on offer each day.

Our CEO Andrew Richardson says,

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"We operate a range of businesses, like UpperCrust, to provide community-based employment opportunities for people with a disability. Having a good job is such an important part of life! It's vital that we run sustainable businesses that are here for the long run."
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We are very fortunate to have Professor Stephen Shaul from Hotel School offer to volunteer his time and expertise in helping us turn UpperCrust into a smashing success.

Hotel School are experts in all things hospitality, from coffee making skills to finance management. Professor Shaul plans to analyse the current financial situation of UpperCrust and based on the results, develop a plan to maximize growth of the business.

In addition to this we have received a fantastic response to a recent appeal to businesses to donate equipment to the cafe. One very exciting addition as a result of this appeal was a commercial blender valued at over \$1000 which Vitamix shipped free of charge by fedex from Ohio. This special blender breaks open the cell walls to release maximum nutrition from whole foods, more than you can get any other way. It also gets the best flavour infusion! Now you can get healthy fresh fruit frappes, smoothies and more from UpperCrust cafe in Normanhurst.

We need your business. We are open for lunch Monday to Friday and are available to cater for business meetings etc. We are competitive and our food is great. We are so sure of that we offer a money back guarantee.



House with No Steps

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Cover photos:
Adam and Alison are
valued employees at
UpperCrust cafe
in Normanhurst.
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David

David is a really positive person. He has a great sense of humour and always sees the bright side of life. Every day is a good day to David.

David has very little short term memory. He can recall his past up to the age of 22 but he can't remember what happened yesterday.

When he was 22 years old David was working as a mechanic when a truck tyre exploded with an unbelievable 300 pound pressure. The steel rim around the tyre smashed into the side of David's head pushing him 20 feet across the room. His injuries were so severe that his boss thought David had died on the spot.

Fortunately the paramedics kept him alive but David had slipped in to a coma. There was no certainty that he would wake again. However, David is a true fighter and amazingly he pulled through, coming out of the coma 2 months later, on his 23rd birthday! David suffered severe damage to his brain, developed hemiplegia down the left side of his body and has had to undergo lots of plastic surgery on his face over the years.

It is these unexpected incidents that can change your life forever. These defining moments do not discriminate - they can happen to any of us at any time.

Fortunately, House with No Steps (HWNS) is here to help people like David to walk the path of a new life with enthusiasm. At HWNS we focus on what David can do. Despite the disabilities he has acquired - he still has many abilities.

David works in one of the HWNS plant nurseries and also attends a HWNS respite service. "House with No Steps provides a wonderful service for David and it is great for him to be around lots of people. He is a real people person",

says David's mum, Jackie. "I feel comfortable that they look out for his best interests as much as I do."

David would find it extremely difficult to find meaningful employment elsewhere. Because of his poor memory, he needs to be reminded continually throughout the day about what task he needs to complete.

Work gives David dignity, self esteem, a sense of independence and an opportunity to meet friends and have social interaction.

David has a solid group of friends who genuinely care for and look out for him. Sometimes he forgets where he is going when he heads to morning tea and they all know to just help him along.





Summerland House Farm

Our Alstonville site, commonly known as Summerland House, has a new name and image to reflect an exciting new direction. The site is now known as “Summerland House Farm”, which sums up our agritourism focus perfectly.

The picturesque site employs 88 people with a disability and currently houses a café, function centre, children’s park, gift shop, macadamia and avocado orchards and fruit packing sheds. The new attractions will really compliment what already exists on the site. They include an area where visitors can pick their own strawberries and tomatoes, gather their own free range eggs from the free range chicken area, take a farm tour on a trailer hooked up to a tractor and children can enjoy a new playground area.

The venture will also provide employment opportunities to approximately 16 more people with a disability.

Funded by various grants and by the generosity of local businesses and community members, the agritourism business is expected to open to the public in November.

Brett Lacey, Regional General Manager of the northern NSW region speaks of Summerland House Farm,

“It has changed lives, changed perceptions of people with a disability and has provided the community with a vital resource for entertainment, education and the growth of the region’s farming industry. The new development will ensure this continues. **We still need the support of businesses and individuals to grow the site as a major tourism attraction to provide these opportunities.**”

Above left: Tyrone works as a Farm Hand at Summerland House Farm.

To help us achieve this exciting venture please contact Lisa Murphy, Marketing Manager Summerland House Farm, on 02 6628 0610.



News from our regions



Western NSW:
We are now an approved provider for the Better Start for Children services

Northern NSW:
Upgrading the wholesale nursery has now commenced

1 Western NSW

- All employees in the lawn maintenance team, as well as a support worker, are attending a six week Introduction to Small Engines course through the local TAFE. Completion of this course will be a huge achievement for this team.
- The Australian Government recently announced that Our Early Childhood Intervention service was successful in becoming an approved provider for the Better Start for Children services. This service aims to provide early intervention services to children with sight impairment, hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, down syndrome and fragile X.

2 Northern NSW

- Due to the constant rain in the early part of the growing season, regional macadamia and avocado crops are well down. This is having not only a negative impact on our own production, but also the fruit packing and macadamia dehusking businesses.
- Works are currently underway on The Grocer, which is being developed to offer fresh local fruit and vegetable lines along with value add products.
- Upgrading of the wholesale nursery has commenced, thanks to a \$55,000 grant from Newcastle Permanent.
- The Growing Care team have secured the grounds maintenance contract at Lismore Shopping Square.
- Work has commenced on the Armidale home that will accommodate five residents.

3 Southern NSW & ACT

- NSW Minister for Disabilities, Andrew Constance, officially opened our new group home in Batemans Bay on the 24th June. The opening of the newly constructed villa style complex was a significant event as it is the first facility of its kind in the Batemans Bay area. The service will be the new home for five residents.
- A new group home has also been opened in Warilla and will be the new home for four residents. The property consists of three recently renovated units
- Our ACT services are moving into new offices. We will be sharing an office complex with Disability ACT and two other disability services. This is an exciting concept with like minded organisations sharing facilities and working cooperatively to ensure the most effective use of resources and best outcomes for the people we support in the ACT.

Queensland

4

Northern NSW

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Hunter

6

Western NSW

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Sydney

5

Southern NSW

3

ACT





4 Queensland

- HWNS continues to grow to meet the needs of Queensland communities. In the past 12 months we have supported over 800 people across Queensland in areas such as community living and community participation programs, respite, employment, learning programs and emergency response. This is an increase of 416 from the past financial year.
- We have planted the seed and Growing Care, our commercial cleaning and grounds maintenance service, is blooming nicely (excuse the puns). We are now providing services from the Gold Coast to Beenleigh and are soon to expand to the Sunshine Coast and Townsville.
- We have just opened a new respite service at Ipswich and have also opened additional community living services at Sumner Park and Wacol.
- Our Person Centred Approaches team led by Rhonda Toms continues to provide training and support to staff across Queensland and we are already seeing the benefits flow on to clients, employees and families. It is wonderful to feel the buzz and excitement that is being generated from this training.
- Old Guys Rule business enterprises at Doonan on the Sunshine Coast are enjoying the challenge of meeting the orders being generated for this clothing line. Our employees provide warehousing, labeling, sewing and pick and pack services for local clothing company Noosa Brands. It has been wonderful to see the further diversification of business as it provides a wonderful opportunity for our employees to learn new skills and build the potential to employ additional people with a disability.
- HWNS One Link Contract Employment Solutions has relocated to Beenleigh and is continuing to expand. We now service from Coolangatta to Caboolture. One Link provides casual staff to the disability, HACC and aged care sectors and is quickly becoming a preferred supplier of staff to many organizations including government services.

5 Sydney

- We are excited to announce two new respite centres in Galston and Spring Farm. Both are set in beautiful rural settings and offer a 'home away from home' for up to five people at a time. Clients are invited to stay for weekends or longer periods and enjoy a wide range of activities. Feedback has been extremely positive. The mother of one client tells us that her daughter returned home in a bubbly mood, rarely seen before, and cannot wait to come back.
- Our landscape maintenance business Growing Care has secured three new contracts valued at \$300,000 per year. This will also provide work to approximately three more people with a disability.

6 Hunter

- 17 people from the Active Linking Initiative recently enjoyed a five day camp at Point Wolstonecroft on the shores of Lake Macquarie.
- 88 families received respite through the Hunter respite program last financial year.
- The team from our recycling division has provided a great contribution to the environment reaching record tonnages of cardboard and paper processed for recycling in the past 12 months.
- Services throughout the Hunter region hosted Open House morning teas on 2nd August to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Queensland: Growing Care in Queensland is blooming nicely

Hunter: Reaching record tonnages of cardboard and paper processed for recycling

STOP PRESS!

Australia is set to get a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) following the Gillard Government's release of the Productivity Commission's report into disability care and support.

The NDIS will provide insurance cover for all Australians in the event that they, or a family member, acquire a disability.



Transition to Independence



Top: (left to right) Joanne and Mary participate in the swimming program



Above: Left to right: Jared, Sean and Mary take cooking lessons with Terina.

Our new HWNS Transition to Independence (TTI) program in Caboolture, Queensland opened its doors in April. Word of this wonderful new service spread fast and the program was at full capacity within the week. We already have a considerable waiting list.

The TTI program is a one year program, designed to assist people with a disability to develop and/or expand on their independent living skills and community connections. Participants are able to select their areas of individual development.

These may include:

Personal Development

- Adjusting to Change
- Decision Making
- Interpersonal Skills
- Self Esteem

Social Skills

- Communication Skills
- Friendships
- Personal Presentation
- Travel Training Skills

Living Skills

- At Home Living Skills
- Being a Good Tenant
- Money Management
- Telephone Skills

The aim of the program is to assist individuals to participate in real life activities so that when the program concludes they are appropriately trained and feel more confident to participate in these activities independently.

The program has been developing links with a variety of organisations in the community including the Caboolture Historical Village, sports centres, employment agencies and woodcraft clubs.

Independent Living Support Initiative



Top: Leigh learns how to cook his mum a roast pork lunch.



Above: Freedom Fighters - Sophie and Jane.

The Hunter Independent Living Support Initiative is currently assisting 5 people who are very keen to gain the necessary skills to be able to move out on their own. At HWNS we adopt a person centred approach, so each individual in this program is in charge of how this actually happens.

Jane* and Sophie* have been really close friends for a long time and have already identified a place they want to move into together very soon. Training and planning is well under way, with full support from their families, to ensure they achieve this goal.

Instead of a house-warming party Jane and Sophie have planned to hold a 'Freedom Fighters' party when they move, in celebration of their independence! Both Jane and Sophie have been striving for this goal for a long time and are really excited that finally their dream is coming true.

Leigh is also working toward achieving his dreams. His first priority is to get his driver's license. Once that goal is crossed off his list, he wants to move into a place of his own, learn to cook, take a cruise around the world and go skydiving with his brother. Leigh also

really wants to speak on behalf of people with a disability and perform on stage but his ultimate dream is to find a nice young lady to marry and settle down with.

Leigh is well on his way to receiving his driver's license which will assist in giving him much more independence. We look forward to working with Leigh to continue to cross his other goals off his list.

All three of these inspiring people have been asked by Down Syndrome NSW to take part in a documentary "Making It On My Own" which follows their journey to living independently. Excitement abounds as filming is already under way. Everyone is really comfortable in front of the camera, especially Leigh!

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



City2Surf

City2Surf is Sydney's favourite sporting event. This year the event saw a record number of participants. Over 85,000 people entered, making it the world's largest run, attracting more entries than the London marathon and New York marathon combined!

Previously, it has been possible to register on the morning of the event, but this year entries closed a month beforehand due to the volume of people wanting to take part.

15 HWNS service users braved the event this year, walking the scenic 14km route from to Bondi Beach. Clients and employees were linked with volunteer buddies to give them some extra support and encouragement along the way. Their determination and positive attitude saw them through to the finish line beaming with pride.

The terrific day was concluded in the Perpetual corporate tent on the beach where participants were replenished with a hearty lunch whilst taking in the view of the Tasman Sea.

Our "Heroes" raised \$6587.40!!

Everyone had such a wonderful time - they are already looking forward to next year.

Thank you so very much to Perpetual staff who funded the participants' entries this year and also for providing space in their tent afterwards. These small luxuries certainly make a big difference.

Thank you also to the volunteers who cheered on their buddies and helped them accomplish this huge undertaking. Without you this would not be possible.

And a big thank you to the generous donors who sponsored our participants. The messages of support you left on their Everyday Hero fundraising pages meant a lot to them - THANK YOU!

Our biggest thank you and congratulations goes to our HWNS' heroes (clients and employees):

Andrew Booth, Colin Bruce, Janice Coleman, Peter Garland, Hayden Goodmanson, Erica Halvorsen, Brendan Healy, Jenny Hardy, Dane Irvine, Trent Jones, Jeff Kilduff, Bru Metcalf, Susan Pilkington, James Pollard, Colin Smith, Katherine Stanning.



Top left: The HWNS team before heading to the start line.

Top right: Janice tucking into a well earned lunch and enjoying the view.



Bottom left: Jim, Elise and Jenny stick together amongst the mammoth crowd.



Bottom right: Libby, David, Andrew and Bru looking victorious as they cross the finish line.



Live it Up

HWNS funds a Sydney-based social participation program for people with disabilities called Live It Up.

Live It Up has helped many hundreds of Sydneysiders to be active participants within their communities, to form friendships and networks and to provide much needed respite to families and carers. In short, the program greatly enhances the quality of life of its participants by giving them the opportunity to participate in social outings such as horse riding, touring local sites and going on holidays.



Testimonials from participants, families and carers overwhelmingly support the value of the program. Examples include:

Much of the current government funding received by HWNS is directed to meeting the basic needs of people with a disability, such as accommodation, bricks and mortar and the essentials in daily living. While these services are vital, in our opinion programs such as Live It Up should not be seen as an “added bonus” as it may provide the only access and support many clients have for community participation.

A very big thank you goes out to all supporters and in particular, Ian Landon-Smith and the parent committee who got behind this program. It is largely due to this group that we have seen this program grow from strength to strength. Without their financial support and fundraising initiatives the continuation of Live It Up would not have been possible.

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Above: Janice loved feeding the horse.
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Below: Having a ball at Warri Beach. Jet boating was a blast!
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“Sue was living at home with her father after the sudden death of her mother. She was very socially isolated and had no friends. Her father rang Live It Up and asked if she could “come and try out”. He was unsure whether she would stay but we were happy to help out. Through our team of support staff and our wonderful clients Sue has just blossomed!! Fantastic friendships have been formed. Sue is attending evenings and weekends regularly and has even come away for a weekend!! Her father is so happy with her achievements and Live It Up were glad to be a part of it!!”
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“Kellie moved from the north west of Sydney to the northern beaches with her elderly parents and felt very isolated as she had left many of her friends behind. Kellie decided to give an old school friend a call who she knew lived in Chatswood. Kellie asked him what he does on the weekends and during the week. He told her about Live It Up. Kellie now attends Wednesdays, Fridays, weekends, and the holidays!! She is so happy to be out and about and not at home all the time. Her parents are also happy for her.”
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