

HOUSE WITH NO STEPS ... caring for carers

● Advertising Feature

CARING for a child with a disability full-time can put a huge strain on a family unit. Respite care, like that offered through the House With No Steps, is of huge value to families because it provides an opportunity for parents and clients alike to have a break from each other and revitalise.

Operations Manager for House With No Steps Mid North Coast Lindsay Hobson said support for carers is extremely important.

"If the caring relationship breaks down it creates a larger burden on the system, so it makes sense to support the carers," he said.

Taree now has Frangipani Cottage in Sturt Place and the House With No Steps service for the

area (which takes in the Manning and the Hastings) is waiting to receive funding from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC).

The primary target groups that will use the service are older carers who are caring for children with a disability who are over 25 years, ie aged 60 + years or over 50 years if they are from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Andrews family from Taree, is one such family benefiting from the support offered by House With No Steps. John and Catherine's daughter Linda has an intellectual disability and they have provided full-time care for her for 42 years.

They had their first respite service from the House With No Steps in July last year and are very happy with the service. They say there are many advantages, including flexibility.

"We were allocated 24 hours a month to use however we wanted to. If we wanted to go out with friends for dinner we could drop Lindy around here (at Frangipani Cottage)," John said. Before the cottage was complete, carers went into the homes of clients to care for them, but now there is an option.

Carers also take clients on outings. "Lindy had gone to the beach, the movies and gone out for dinner with a respite carer," John said.

Catherine said while the respite service gives them a break, it also gives their daughter a holiday from them and a chance to do something different.

Emergency care is also something that has been made available to the Andrews family. Just recently they were faced with an emergency family commitment and instead of Linda having to go to the city with her mother, funding was sought and Linda was able to stay at the Frangipani Cottage with carers and continue attending her day program.

The cottage is a four-bedroom facility staffed by trained full-time and casual carers and meets the high health and medical needs of clients. Respite services will be flexible and the centre-based respite services will be augmented by in-home respite, community access, camps and holidays away, in line with carers choices.

Donna Mackaway, who is the Co-Ordinator of the House With No Steps Frangipani Cottage, said the service is flexible and is focused on meeting the needs of the families.

Operations manager Lindsay Hobson said respite services such as this really help sustain the caring role.

"When a person is looking after someone with a disability they tend to spend a lot of time in the caring role and that can lead to inevitable strain.

"Our overall mission is to enhance the lives of people with a disability by providing quality support services."

It is hoped that in the future there will be additional funding on top of their core funding, to allow House With No Steps to offer more packages to clients.



Lindsay, Donna, Linda, Catherine & John

House With No Steps (HWNS) is a leading provider of support for Australians with disabilities. Since 1962 HWNS has supported adults and children with intellectual physical or psychiatric disabilities.

Today HWNS supports over 2000 people across 100 sites in New South Wales and Queensland. We operate businesses that provide employment to over 600 people with disabilities and we run a broad range of accommodation support models, community and leisure programs as well as offering education with our Training Organisation.

Our vision is to "enhance the lives of people with disabilities" by helping them live full, valued and meaningful lives with their local communities.

We strive to base all of our services around a true 'person-centred' approach, ensuring that our staff, continually focus on the unique needs and desires of each individual.

House With No Steps Respite Services

House With No Steps has launched fifteen new respite services across NSW and Queensland. The new respite services will support carers of people with disabilities and mental illness to cope with the demands of full-time care.

Ten of the new services will have an initial focus on supporting older parent carers of people with a disability. A further five new services will support carers of people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities including autism.

HWNS plans to provide at least 350 additional respite places for these carers over the next three years. They will provide a diverse range of services from community and recreation access, to in-home and centre based respite, social supports and "respite effect" services according to the funding model and region.

Our new respite services will help deliver on House With No Steps' commitment to provide more short break opportunities for carers and relieve some of the stress of full-time caring.

Australia's 2.6 million carers save the community more than \$30 billion a year in care costs. Carers provide vital but widely unrecognised support for family members who might otherwise require full time residential care, at a massive cost to taxpayers.

As our population ages, more and more people will need community support to continue caring for family members.

Many carers do it tough. They provide living, unpaid care 24 hours a day, seven days a week and receive little support or recognition. They are the unsung heroes of local communities across Australia. We owe these families and the people they care for much more.

House With No Steps comes to the Mid North Coast

The last year has been one of the more significant periods in the history of the Northern NSW region of HWNS. HWNS now delivers quality services at Alstonville, Terranora, Coffs, Harbour, Port Macquarie and Taree.

In addition, a Mid North Coast office has been set up in Port Macquarie to support this establishment of the Mid North Coast operations.

HWNS regional expansion continues to be good news for many people and families seeking services across these areas, providing much needed additional quality support services for people with a disability and their carers.

The region now operates six community living accommodation models across the mid and far north coast of NSW. These homes are staffed

on a full time basis, providing a new level of independence for each client along with a long-term living solution, offering surety for each of their families. Each home has now been set up and resourced, staff recruited and trained and a transition plan developed for each client.

In addition to Frangipani House, respite services are now operating at our Summerland House site at Alstonville.

The HWNS Respite Service recognises carers' efforts and gives them a few precious hours break to do things the rest of us take for granted.

For more information about Respite Services or other House With No Steps activities:

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