



# hunter circles

## Hi friends!

Spring is in full swing and we're back with our October newsletter! The season is full of possibilities and there's plenty to get involved with in building a **Community For Everyone!**

Here's what's coming up:

### **October Meet Up**

**Friday 31 October** – 12.00 PM to 1.30 PM

Catch up, share stories, and stay connected with others involved in our *Community For Everyone* project.

### **Listening to People Rarely Heard** – Workshop with Dr Jo Watson

**Back by popular demand!**

**Wednesday 3 December** – 9.30AM to 3.30 PM.

A deep dive into communication, autonomy, and really listening. Not to be missed! Followed by our AGM.

### **Hunter Circles 2024-2025 Annual General Meeting and Celebration**

**Wednesday 3 December** – 4.00 PM - 5.30 PM.

Celebrate International Day of People with Disability with us! Our AGM will run briefly until 4:15pm, followed by film launches, stories and celebrations.

### **Get Involved: Community For Everyone Project**

We're always on the lookout for more local community members to get involved - once a month or as often as you like - build connections, share your skills, and be part of something bigger!

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# Listening to people rarely heard

A workshop with Dr Jo Watson



hunter circles



Communication strategies  
to support decision making  
for people who  
communicate informally

**Wednesday 3 December**

9.30am - 3.30pm

Hunter Workers, Barrack Nichols room  
Level 2 406-408 King St, Newcastle West

## Back by popular demand!

## Listening to People Rarely Heard - Workshop with Dr Jo Watson

We're beyond thrilled that **Dr Jo Watson** is coming back to Newy! Join us on **Wednesday 3 December** for Jo's fabulous workshop on communication strategies to support decision-making for people who communicate informally. With over 30 years of experience as a Speech Pathologist, researcher, and advocate for people with complex communication support needs, Jo brings incredible expertise and insight — and we're so proud that she's on the board of Hunter Circles!

This fun and interactive day will introduce supported decision-making and explore practical ways to support people's choice and control, especially when communication is informal. Whether you are new to these ideas or attended before, there's plenty to learn, explore and put into practice!



**Date:** Wednesday 3 December



**Time:** 9.30am–3.30pm



**Location:** Hunter Workers: Barrack Nichols room,



Level 2 406-408 King St, Newcastle West (Entry via Devonshire Lane)

### Cost:

- Individual – \$100
- Student Discount – \$30
- Free for Social Connectors and Circle Members with *Community For Everyone*

***“Start with assuming that everyone can communicate and everyone can make decisions.”***

Please check out Jo's fabulous Ted inspired talk given at the Financial Counselling Australia Conference in 2016.

### **Additional Information**

Jo's workshop will finish at 3.30pm — **we'd love you to stay and join us for the Hunter Circles AGM and Celebration** starting at 4.00pm.

Come and hear about the communities and connections that we are building, see the launch of new films and resources, and celebrate **International Day of People with Disability** with us.

**Everyone is welcome!**

[Register now](#)

## **AGM & CELEBRATION 2025**

**WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER**

**4.00PM - 5.30PM**

**HUNTER WORKERS BUILDING**

Join us this **International Day of People with Disability** as we celebrate community, connection and belonging - sharing **new films, stories and resources** about building friendship and inclusion.

**Join us to celebrate and connect - everyone welcome!**

 **Film Launch**  **Celebration**  **Stories**

**Hunter Workers Building  
406-408 King Street, Newcastle West**



**JOIN US!**



## **Hunter Circles 2024-2025 Annual General Meeting and Celebration**

Join us this International Day of People with Disability as we celebrate community, connection and belonging! We'll share new films, stories and resources about building friendship and inclusion - one person at a time!

## **At Hunter Circles, we believe community is for everyone.**

But for many people with intellectual disability - especially people living in group homes - real connection can still be hard to find.

Research shows that when large institutions close and people move into group homes, very few - if any - build informal relationships or genuine friendships. That's why, when the Hunter institutions finally closed, we set up **Hunter Circles** — to help change that and support people to take their rightful place at the heart of community.

Over the past year, we've been running a project with our partners from Parramatta, **Side By Side Advocacy**, called **Community For Everyone**. Together, we connect people with intellectual disability to their communities — because even with the NDIS, too many people remain lonely or isolated. People might have paid support, but not real mates.

We're working to change that — and we want to share what we're learning.

### **Event Details:**

**Wednesday 3 December**

**Arrive from 4:00 PM**

**Annual General Meeting will run briefly until 4:15pm**, followed by the film screening, stories, and celebrations. We'll finish the evening with a glass of champagne and plenty of connection.

**Location:** Hunter Workers: Barrack Nichols room,  
Level 2 406-408 King St, Newcastle West (*Entry via Devonshire Lane*)

**Free – everyone welcome** (*only members can vote*)

[Register now](#)

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### Meet the invited speakers

The following local experts will participate in the conference program:



Leigh Creighton



Jen Cush

### **ASID (Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability) 2025 Conference**

We're pretty stoked to be speaking at the **ASID 2025 Conference!** It's a fantastic opportunity to share the work we love doing and the small but meaningful ways it's supporting people to connect with community.

There's still a massive gap in knowledge about ways to build social connections for people with intellectual disability who are profoundly socially isolated. Sharing our experiences - and learning from others - is what makes this work so exciting. At ASID, we'll be talking about what we have learned so far through our *Community For Everyone* project as we get ready to share our mid-project research report.

The theme for the ASID 2025 Conference is ***Learning from the Past, Shaping the Future***. One focus is the progress of deinstitutionalisation - something very close to our hearts **as we continue learning how communities can take the lead in repairing the harms of the past** and restoring people with intellectual disability to their rightful place at the heart of community, ***through relationships***.

**This conference marks the 60th anniversary of ASID and celebrates 70 years of advocacy by Inclusion Australia. Hooray!** Whenever we're working toward change, it's important to share what's working and learn from what's not. We can't wait to be part of these conversations at ASID!

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# Monthly Meet Up

Friday 31 October  
12 to 1.30 PM



## Monthly Meet Up - Friday 31 October - You're invited!

Our monthly Meet Ups bring together people involved in our Community For Everyone project. These gatherings are such a great opportunity to:

- Reflect
- Share stories, tools and connections
- Build local knowledge on what works
- Support and learn from each other

Come and be part of the conversation - bring a friend, grab a snack, connect with others involved in building community!

Date: **Friday 31 October**

Time: **12.00pm - 1.30pm**

Where: **437 Hunter Street, Newcastle**

**Light snacks provided**

[RSVP now](#)



**Build community through connection**

**Take that next step**

- Join a circle of supporters
- Once a month or as often as you like

**Together we can do so much**

## How you can be part of building a *Community For Everyone*

***“I’m a Social Connector because I think community needs to do this sort of thing. We can’t rely on governments to run our lives for us. We need to, as people, come together and look after each other.***

***We could sit on the couch and talk about it forever - or we can get out there and do it. So I urge you - go on, have a go!”***

— Dan Galazowski, OG Social Connector, Muloobinba/Newcastle

There are simple, meaningful ways you can be part of building a *Community For Everyone*:

- **Tell a friend** about our work
- **Share what you love doing** – connect with someone who has similar interests and build a real relationship – ***people who do things together are more likely to become friends***
- **Start or join a Circle of Support** – contact us to find out how
- **Invite someone in** – bring a person into your local club, volunteer group, or community organisation (we can help connect you)
- **Share what you love doing**

Remember: you don’t need to be an expert – just a human.

**If you or someone you know is interested, please get in touch!**

- Reach out to us any time. Contact Jen (she/her) at [info@huntercircles.org](mailto:info@huntercircles.org) or 0401 388 164
- Tell us more about yourself by [filling out this form](#)
- Visit our [website](#) for more information
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to keep up with the action.
- Share this email with others who may be interested in joining our [mailing list](#) to stay in touch.
- [Contact us for a chat](#). We'd love to hear from you!

**There are so many ways to get involved - join us and be the change you want to see. We hope to see you soon 😊**

Our project partner, **Side By Side Advocacy** is running the Community For Everyone project in Parramatta and Ryde.

Contact Kim (she/her) at Side By Side

Advocacy: [info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](mailto:info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au) Ph: 9808 5500

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**There is no justice in this country without First Nations justice. Hunter Circles acknowledges the Awabakal and Worimi peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present. Sovereignty was never ceded.**

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