



# hunter circles

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## Hi friends!

**Spring has sprung - welcome to our September Newsletter!**

We may have skipped August (life happens! 😊), but we're back with plenty to share. This edition is full of updates and ways you can **get involved** in building a **Community For Everyone**.

- **Remembering institutions** - honouring the lives of people who lived in institutions and taking action to prevent the mistakes of the past from continuing into the present - ***through relationships and community!***
  - **Monthly Meet Ups** - where we connect, share and exchange ideas
  - **Opportunity of the Month** - *Ukulele on a Saturday morning with Jack (not his real name)* — one of the most fun ways to spend a weekend! 🎵
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## Remembering disability institutions



**“Disability institutions are about people and their stories, and we want to remember those stories even as the world changes around them.”  
- Leigh Creighton**

### Looking Back and Moving Forward

Our partners at University of Technology Sydney (UTS) recently published an article that reminded us how important it is to honour and remember the past, while taking action to build a more inclusive future - featuring peer leader, Leigh Creighton. Working with **UTS** and **Council for Intellectual Disability** (CID), we want Australia’s disability history to be at the heart of planning, with the voices of people with intellectual disability leading the decisions.

👉 [Read the UTS article here](#)

The NDIS promised more choice and innovation, but more than a decade on, little has changed in the day-to-day lives of people with intellectual disability who live in group homes. Many are seeing little benefit from the NDIS - and, as the Disability Royal Commission has shown, group homes can put people at higher risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This is why it is important to name and understand the past - remembering institutions and listening to lived experience - to prevent the mistakes of the past from continuing into the present.

Another person leading this work is peer leader Robert King, who features in our short film about moving forward from institutions. Rob’s story is a reminder of how far we’ve come - and how much still needs to change.

🎬 [Watch Rob’s film here](#)

You might remember that Rob had a fundraiser on [the night we launched the film](#), and he has now raised enough money to buy a wheelchair-accessible van. There are just a few final steps left - covering registration, insurance and some essentials - to get the van on the road.

👉 [Support Rob's fundraiser here](#)

Please share Rob's fundraiser with your family and friends to help him reach his goal. And importantly, please share Rob's story - it shows that we all have a part to play in building communities where everyone belongs. Relationships and community are everything - the heart of inclusion. They can help repair the harm of institutions - past and present. Each of us has something to contribute to create a **Community For Everyone**. Keep reading to find out how you can get involved!

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## Monthly Meet-ups

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
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At our July Meet Up, Rob shared some of his story and how we can plan for a good life, and a couple of reflections stayed with us:

*"Planning for a good life begins by asking: **What are this person's gifts?** Where will those gifts make a positive difference? What will it take for those gifts to show up in those places? Who will commit to action?"*

*"For some people, autonomy doesn't just happen. It grows when we make intentional plans - we need to plan for it."*

If you want to take action on making the Hunter more inclusive, join us for our next Meet Up on **Friday 29 September** from **12pm to 1.30pm**.

**What:** A chance to connect, share stories, and exchange ideas.

**When:** Friday 29 August 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

**Where:** 437 Hunter Street, Newcastle

**Cost:** Free

[Register here](#)

Image description: A few photo's of people at our last Meet Ups and July Circle Facilitator training



 **Be part of Ukestra and build community through connection**

 **Carrington Bowling Club**

 **Every Saturday**

 **10:00am – 12:00pm**

 **The Ukestra is a fun, relaxed and welcoming place to learn music together** 

## Opportunity of the month

 **Be part of Ukestra and build community through connection** 

**Each Saturday morning**, a fab bunch of people gather at the Carrington Bowling Club to make music together. [The Ukestra is a fun, relaxed and welcoming place to learn musical skills together.](#) But the Ukestra is about more than music. It's a space where people build friendship and community.

**This opportunity takes it one step further.** It's your chance to connect with Jack\* - a Newcastle local who has an intellectual disability and who loves being part of Ukestra each week. **By joining him, you'll share your love of music and help build a more inclusive community.**

We're looking for people who want to:

- ✦ Meet someone new **and** grow your musical skills
- ✦ Join a small support circle
- ✦ Help build a more inclusive community

**No experience? No problem.** We'll provide guidance and support so you'll feel comfortable every step of the way. You don't need to be an expert - just a human.

- 📍 Carrington Bowling Club
- 📅 Every Saturday
- 🕒 10:00am – 12:00pm

\* not his real name

And that's not all — there are plenty more opportunities to get involved! We are now connected with **10 people with intellectual disability** who want to be part of the project, and we're looking for local community members who share their interests.

### 👉 **Are you ready to join us?**

Whether once a month or as often as you like, you'll be part of a community of people who are passionate about connection and inclusion.

We're particularly looking for people who:

- Go to [Blackbutt parkrun](#) (Lambton area) – every Saturday, 8am
- Love the outdoors and conservation – [Hunter Botanical Gardens \(Mondays, 8am\)](#) or [Central Rankin Park Landcare Group \(Wednesdays, 9am\)](#) or [Hunter Wetlands Centre \(Sundays, 10am\)](#)
- Attend **Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral (Newcastle)** or **St John's Anglican Church (Raymond Terrace)**

Not your thing? No worries! Tell us about your **local club, volunteering group, or community organisation** and ***invite someone in***. Get in touch with us today!

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

***“Each of us has choices - about whether we will pass each other without stopping, listening or really seeing. Or we help build - or to be part of - someone’s Circle of Support”***

— Jack Pearpoint, inclusion activist, Canada

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)  
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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