



Community Living Association

Community Matters

NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2026



Together we thrive



TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

CEO UPDATE

06

COOKING AT 56

08

DRIVE FORWARD
NEWS

11

ART IN ACTION

12

ACTIVITIES NEWS

14

STAFF
RECOGNITION

17

CONTACT LIST



Share your stories with us!
We'd love to hear from you.
Email your photos and news to:
Newsletter@mycla.org.au
Next edition: August 2026

COVER: ALEX WHITTINGTON

COMMUNITY MATTERS MAY 2026

EDITOR: C SIMPSON

02



Congratulations to Allan Swarbrick and Gemma Perry on their wedding day, celebrated in March! We loved being able to watch their special day live on Facebook from the office. We wish you love and happiness for your future together.



CEO UPDATE

As we move through another busy quarter, I want to acknowledge that many people in our community are hearing a great deal of discussion about the future of the NDIS. Some of this commentary is useful and factual. Some of it is political. Some of it is understandably worrying for participants, families, carers, staff and providers who rely on certainty, trust and continuity.

The NDIS has always been more than a funding scheme. At its best, it is a promise that people with disability should have choice, control, safety, dignity and the opportunity to live ordinary lives in their own communities.

For regional communities such as Albany and the broader Great Southern, that promise matters deeply. Access to services is not simply a policy issue. It affects where people live, how families cope, whether people can participate in community life, and whether providers can maintain a skilled, stable and caring workforce.

There is no doubt the NDIS is changing. We are seeing ongoing reform around planning, evidence, support definitions,

provider obligations, safeguarding, fraud prevention and long-term scheme sustainability.

We are also seeing discussion about how the NDIS should work alongside mainstream services such as health, education, housing, justice and community supports. These are significant issues, and they deserve careful consideration.

At CLA, our approach is to stay calm, informed and focused. We will not respond to every headline, nor will we add to uncertainty by speculating ahead of confirmed detail. Instead, we will continue to monitor government announcements, review the practical implications for our participants and services, and communicate clearly with families and stakeholders when changes become relevant.

What I can say with confidence is that CLA remains strongly committed to the people we support. Our work continues every day through accommodation services, daily living supports, LifeSkills, Positive Behaviour Support implementation, Drive Forward programme, community activities

and the many individualised supports that help people build confidence, relationships and independence. The value of this work does not change because the policy environment is unsettled.

We also recognise that reform can be unsettling for staff. Our workforce is the foundation of quality support. The compassion, judgement and consistency shown by CLA staff are what make good support possible. As the sector changes, we will continue to invest in good systems, good supervision, safe practice and clear communication so our staff can do their work with confidence.

For participants and families, our message is simple. You are not alone in navigating these changes. Where there are questions about plans, service arrangements or future supports, we will work with you in a respectful and practical way. We may not always have every answer immediately, particularly where government policy is still developing, but we will be honest about what we know, what we do not yet know, and what we are doing to prepare. It is also important to remember that reform does not have to mean retreat.

Done well, reform should strengthen safeguards, improve consistency, reduce unnecessary complexity and ensure that people with disability receive the right supports at the right time. CLA will continue to advocate for reforms that recognise the realities of regional service delivery, including workforce shortages, thin markets, travel distances and the need for genuine local relationships.

The Great Southern has always relied on practical people working together. That is how CLA has grown, and that is how we will continue to respond. Our focus remains steady: high quality, person centred support; strong community connection; safe and respectful services; and a clear voice for people with disability in our region.

Thank you to our participants, families, staff, volunteers, Board members and community partners for your continued trust and support. In a time of change, our commitment remains constant. CLA will continue to stand alongside the people we support, listen carefully, adapt responsibly and keep working for a more inclusive community.

“

For participants and families, our message is simple. You are not alone in navigating these changes.

”



Cooking at 56

COOKING AT 56

Our recent 4-week cooking classes were a great success, with all sessions fully booked.

Participants enjoyed learning a range of healthy, easy-to-follow recipes under the guidance of Gemma at 56.

The classes provided a fun and supportive environment for participants to build confidence in the kitchen while trying new dishes.

Due to the positive feedback and strong interest, we look forward to running the classes again in the future.



Jarrod gives it the thumbs up!



Participants enjoy the cooking class.



Gary makes a healthy wrap.



Chandra busy in the kitchen.



Erica - Drive Forward Coach

DRIVE FORWARD NEWS



An absolute moment of excitement for the Drive Forward Team today with Mia passing her PDA with flying colours. Mia will now be independently driving about town in her little red car. Well done Mia!

Well done Brodie on passing your PDA. Heading in to winter is a great time to start driving to work. Congratulations!





“ Congratulations Paul on passing your PDA. You put in the time each week with instructor Jay to achieve your 50 hours of supervised driving. Driving to school in your Subaru will be great. ”



“ It's a Fantastic Friday and 50 hours of supervised driving Finale!! Congratulations Sassie on passing your PDA. You were dedicated to your weekly after school lessons. ”



P FOR PROBATIONARY LICENCE AND
P FOR PROUD MOMENT.
WELL DONE COBY ON PASSING. YOU
WERE DEDICATED AND FOCUSED IN
ACHIEVING 50 HOURS OF SUPERVISED DRIVING 🎉

“
Driving into the start of his working week is Coby .
Coby passed his PDA with flying colours . Coby joined
our Drive Forward program to complete his 50 hours of
supervised driving.
Congratulations on achieving your goal!
”



Nat's shows her artful creation.

ART IN ACTION

Our Art Circle participants recently explored creative mandala designs using recycled vinyl records.

The group enjoyed experimenting with colours, patterns and detailed artwork while transforming old records into unique pieces of art.

The activity encouraged creativity, mindfulness and self-expression, with everyone producing their own impressive designs.

Art Circle is held at 56 every Tuesday during the school term.



Nathan completed his master piece.

ACTIVITIES NEWS



Our participants and staff enjoyed an Easter morning tea. It was a great opportunity to spend time together, share some treats, and celebrate the Easter period.

ASH'S ARTWORK



Ash has completed his amazing tiled table design, which will become the centrepiece of the new garden area at 56. The project showcases his creativity and hard work, and the finished result looks fantastic! Please take the time to congratulate Ash if you see him around, he should be very proud of his achievement.



STAFF RECOGNITION

Coordinator Award Winner – Lisa Morrell
Congratulations to Lisa Morrell
Coordinator Award Winner.

Lisa consistently demonstrates excellence in her role, providing high-quality support while leading with compassion and professionalism. Her ability to support individuals with complex needs, while fostering positivity within her team, makes her a truly deserving recipient of this recognition.

“
**CONGRATULATIONS
LISA!**
”



STAFF RECOGNITION

Marcel has demonstrated strong leadership and initiative, working collaboratively with nursing staff and ensuring the team remains well-informed.

His proactive approach and commitment to quality support make him a deserving award winner.

“
**CONGRATULATIONS
MARCEL!**
”

PHOTO FINISH



Congratulation to Tim Fairley one of our lucky \$50 draw winners at our staff BBQ!

CLA received an anonymous donation from a person passionate about recognising the dedication and hard work of our staff, which has enabled this new initiative.

Other lucky winners were Patrick Kerr, Kerri Bentink, Deshan Govender and Natasha Anderson. We thank each of you for the commitment and professionalism you demonstrate every day.



THANK YOU

Thank you

Thanks to Marie and Graham, for their generous donation of a table tennis table and accessories. It will bring a lot of enjoyment and connection for to 56. Your kindness and support are greatly appreciated. Thank you!
From the CLA team





CLA CONTACT LIST

Patrick Kerr - Business Planner	0448 104 333
Cameron Crane - Coordinator	0492 871 184
Amanda Dawson - Coordinator	0419 175 784
Corey Grossman - Coordinator	0428 679 419
Kirsty Martin - Coordinator	0419 474 203
Peter Nevin - Coordinator	0428 916 981
Amanda Glover - Mentor	0448 423 128
Brian Shepherd - Mentor	0429 682 599
Marisol Santiago - Mentor	0490 513 930
Maggie Thompson - Mentor	0438 305 384
Kelli Thornton - Mentor	0492 871 179
Erica Gardiner - Drive Forward Coach	0492 844 796

To make a complaint:

We manage complaints fairly. We will provide you with updates as we resolve your complaint.

You can submit a complaint online by scanning this code.

Phone: 9842 3855.

Email: reception@mycla.org.au

or visit us at our administration centre.

Need to make a complaint?



Registered
NDIS
Provider



PARTICIPANTS TAKE THE SURVEY



**Participants Satisfaction
Survey 2026
Complete online
by
30 May 2026!**

Paper copies available from reception.