

BAR NONE.

Bar None Employment Resource Guide



Inside this booklet you will find the stories of a group of Victorians with a disability and their experience of work.

There are also practical tips for employers wanting to recruit people with a disability and people looking for work. A DVD is included on the inside part of the back cover.

Copies of this resource can be available from:
www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au/bar_none_in_employment.htm

If you would like to receive copies of this resource in alternative format please contact:

Office for Disability
1 Spring Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Phone: 1300 880 043
TTY: (03) 9208 3631 (for the cost of a local call)
for people who are deaf or hearing-impaired
Email: ofd@dpcd.vic.gov.au

We believe
in a world

where
everyone
can take
part...

BAR
NONE.



Foreword by Lisa Neville Minister For Community Services

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that Victoria is a place where diversity is embraced and celebrated and where people of all backgrounds and abilities are able to participate fully in the community. Participation includes the ability to access buildings, transport, services, enjoy a full and active social life and importantly find and retain satisfying employment.

One in five Victorians has a disability and yet people with a disability are consistently under-represented in the workforce. Only 55 percent of people with disabilities of working age are in the paid workforce, compared with 81 percent of people without disabilities.

The Victorian Government is determined to lead the way in addressing this inequality by increasing the numbers of people with a disability working in the public service and encouraging other organisations to do the same.

This isn't just about fairness; it also makes good business sense.

Organisations that hire, accommodate and retain people with a disability will be in a better position to remain relevant in the future. Additionally organisations that more accurately reflect the diversity of the communities in which we all live will be able to connect better with their customers.

The Bar None Employment Campaign demonstrates simple ways of welcoming people with a disability into the workplace and the benefits of inclusive attitudes. It showcases 15 people with disabilities from around Victoria who work in a range of fields – from artists and opera singers to school teachers and business analysts. Their stories are a strong reminder of the contribution people with disabilities can make to building more diverse and dynamic workplaces.

I urge businesses to take the time to read this booklet, watch the accompanying DVD and importantly make long term changes that will make the hiring and retention of people with a disability not just a possibility but an everyday part of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Neville', written in a cursive style.



Madduk Malual was born in 1975 in Southern Sudan, Africa. Having a disability himself has prompted Madduk to seek opportunities to assist others with a disability. He understands the challenges people face and is able to provide practical support to many in his community.

As a refugee in Kenya, Madduk worked as a centre manager for a community-based rehabilitation program. He also worked as a peace education facilitator with the Lutheran World Federation. Later, he moved into landmine education, teaching refugees returning to Somalia and Sudan how to live safely in areas with landmines. While staying in the refugee camp, Madduk also used his diverse language skills to translate between Nuer, Kiswahali, Arabic and English.

Madduk arrived in Melbourne in December 2005 as a sponsored refugee from Kenya. While getting a job and support was initially difficult, Madduk now works as a multicultural education aide at Noble Park Secondary College.

'I deal with kids from Africa, Burma and Afghanistan from Years 7 to 12. Some kids have limited English and some have not been to school before. As I speak a number of languages; I can sometimes help with decisions about elective studies and their career pathways.'

Madduk has continued to be involved in community activities and enjoys his role as the president of the Sudanese Disability Action Group in Victoria. He volunteers at the South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre in Dandenong. Madduk is also the General Secretary of the Lou Nuer Community Association in Australia. The Lou Nuer people originate from Jonglei State in Southern Sudan on the horn of Africa.

Talking about the value of employment, Madduk says 'Life is money. Once you have an income then you can survive.'

Madduk does not know what lies ahead. 'I am unsure about my future. Personally, I have found it hard to live here without my wife who is still in Kenya. I am very much looking forward to seeing my family again soon.'



Anna Healey is a drama teacher and Year 10 co-ordinator at Mullauna Secondary College in Mitcham. Anna is passionate about her job and about the importance of working:

**'I have a place in society and I contribute to society.
I feel confident and complete.'**

Anna was teaching at Mullauna College in Mitcham when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She left the college to pursue other roles, including working with people with intellectual, mental and physical disabilities, and a four-year role as a work placement officer before returning to secondary school teaching.

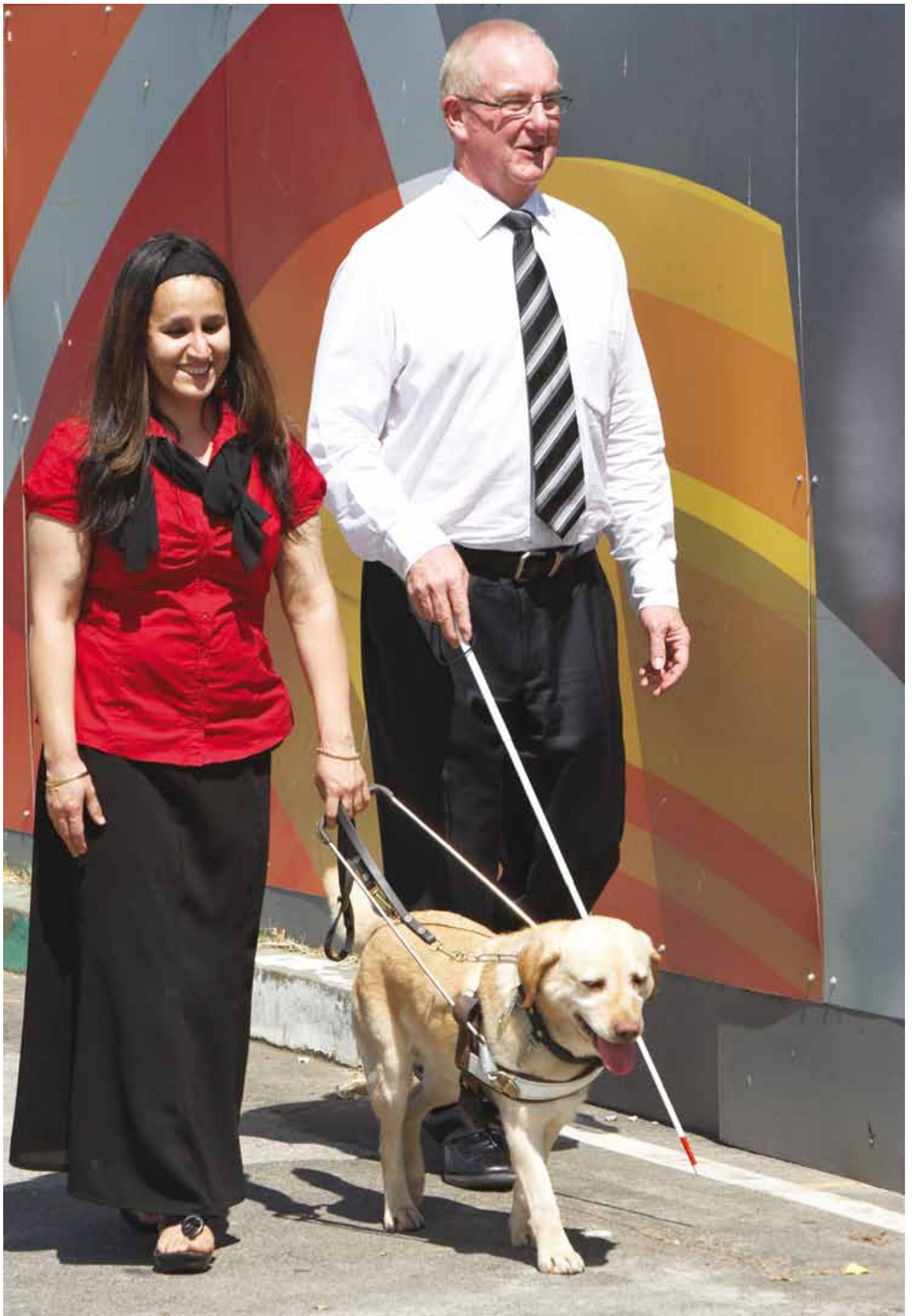
'I stopped being embarrassed about my disability and started breaking down barriers. The students don't seem to notice my disability. I feel I'm teaching on two levels. While I'm teaching, I'm also making students less judgemental and less self conscious about being with people with a disability. So, I am creating a place for people with a disability in their world and their experience.'

Anna returned to Mullauna College in 2000, where she enjoys working with young people.

'Teaching drama is great fun! There's something about working with teenagers – they are so full of life and passion. They remind me that life is always worth living,' Anna said.

Mullauna College Principal, Phil Vear, speaks highly of Anna. 'Teachers are employed at Mullauna on their ability to fulfil the role. Anna has a demanding role looking after the wellbeing of a large group of students and does it extremely well. We are inclusive of staff and students with a disability and the school is wheelchair friendly.'

'Anna gives me great confidence in hiring people with a disability because of who she is and her skills as a teacher. Anna is a strong, lively and energetic person who is popular with staff and students.'



While Chris Stewart has worked at the City of Greater Dandenong for almost 20 years, he finds every day different.

'Greater Dandenong is Victoria's most culturally diverse community, with 156 nationalities representing fifty-six percent of the population. Coming to work is like going on an overseas trip every day – there's always a festival or event happening!'

Chris enjoys the diversity of his role. He advises council on making the built environment better and more accessible for everyone – including people with a disability, and all ages and cultures. He consults with engineers who design accessible streetscapes; and advises on the best ways to address the needs of people with a disability in all of council services. Chris also encourages inclusiveness and wide community participation in recreation programs.

Chris trains new staff in the council's expectation that everyone works towards access and inclusion for everyone. He works in the office and out in the municipality talking with the broader community and with local traders and community organisations.

'I always enjoy a challenge. It's good to work in an environment where there is positivity for the inclusion of all.'

'I have support from management and colleagues and I am doing something I am passionate about. I have a young family and I have certain lifestyle expectations. My job's important for my sense of purpose and my family's wellbeing.'

Chris is vision and hearing impaired. This has not stopped his full participation. Tools such as screen reading software and computer technology make it possible for him to work at full capacity.

'It's been an advantage to have an intimate understanding of the needs of people with a disability. It means I'm able to offer insight into council's guidelines and regulations – I can make sure they are logical for everyone.'

Chris' manager, Mark Doubleday, Director of Community Services, Dandenong council agrees.

'One of Chris' great strengths is his ability to de-mystify disability and encourage the flow of information between different parts of council. This is an invaluable contribution.'

Danny O'Neil was a revenue clerk with the Tramways Board when a motorbike accident left him with paraplegia. When he couldn't physically continue in that job, Danny moved to Head Office but soon was bored.

A self-proclaimed 'maniac', Danny found he was trashing his wheelchairs within months.

'When I was first in a wheelchair, I was jumping off ledges and finding out what I could and couldn't do. The chairs available were not tough enough and too heavy. I was told I was too hard on them and to take it easy, which I thought was ridiculous. So, I decided to make my own.'

Today Danny is the owner and manager of Mobility Plus. He started the business in 1983 modifying wheelchairs, then importing them and manufacturing customised wheelchairs. Mobility Plus now sells imported electric chairs and scooters and also custom builds chairs for everyday use and for wheelchair sports.

The business employs 36 people, seven of whom have a disability, with five people using wheelchairs. 'We employ disabled people as part of our workforce because they can do the job very well, not because they are disabled and generally find them to offer a great package – they are conscientious and reliable. Quite a few have gone on to bigger and better things.'

Danny has also been a Director of Independence Australia since 1989, and an active member of Wheelchair Sports Victoria. His social life, leisure life and business life are all involved with wheelchairs.

'I have made lots of friends and get real satisfaction from my work,' he said.

'The thing I like most about working this industry is the job satisfaction – being able to change people's lives, making a difference.'





Jody is a self-employed community consultant, working through her own business, Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, to improve the quality of life and communication for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Indigenous people.

Jody works from her home in Shepparton and travels across the country, assisting organisations on issues affecting Deaf Indigenous people. Jody also works with people who may have a disability, be involved in domestic violence, have legal issues or health and mental health challenges. She also trains people working in service industries to be culturally appropriate.

'In my work, I am highly motivated because I'm in an area I love. My Indigenous heritage is the key to my success. It gives me insight into the needs of my clients.'

Jody describes herself in these words: 'I'm a deaf, fair-skinned Aboriginal country girl. My father is from 'the stolen generation' and my mother is Irish. I have been a wife, and a widow and I am a mother. I'm a trained chef and social worker. I've been exposed to violence and trauma in my life and, I am educated and self-determined.'

With a background in advocacy, education and welfare, management and leadership, Jody believes her mission is to give the Deaf community a voice and ensure they have access.

'It is also important for women with a disability to become role models and show we can achieve. It is good to be self-employed if you can get the right support mechanisms in place. If you can achieve that; I think you can achieve anything at work.'

In addition to her work, Jody makes time to be on the Victorian Women with Disability Network, Koori Women Mean Business Board, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Disability Reference Group, the Australian Indigenous Disability Education Trust Funding Board, the National Disability Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Disability Network, the Victorian Disability Advisory Council and the Telstra Disability Forum.

Julie Anderson's experience of living with a bipolar condition has influenced her career and led to her role as an advocate for the rights of people affected by a mental illness.

Julie's wealth of experience has enabled her to offer hope and practical advice to others to assist in their journey to recovery.

'There are several factors which help to build a pathway to recovery: a home, a job, friends and integration into the community; they need to be combined with a sense of hope, relearned optimism and self sufficiency.'

Julie volunteered and was then employed by the Victorian Mental Illness Council as a receptionist. Finding a sense of purpose; Julie took another role in the mental health sector; as a project worker at the Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria.

'I love my job and I like that, through my work, I'm linked into a broader network. Personal connections have been important to my recovery.'

Today, Julie is a co-ordinator, consultant and researcher at the Mental Illness Fellowship, which provides services to support psychiatric rehabilitation and facilitate community education and advocacy. Julie's research is focused on consumer and carer participation in Victoria's psychiatric disability support sector.

A personal understanding of the affects of mental illness on people's lives is a positive factor in Julie's work. Julie is a member of a team that finds avenues to participation and social inclusion for people with schizophrenia, depression and bipolar disorder.

'It's rewarding to be taking action to improve lives by offering practical assistance and some hope for a brighter future.'

Beyond her daily job, Julie participates in a number of groups focused on addressing mental health issues. She is a member of the Department of Health and Ageing Expert Mental Health Reference Group, and president of NEAMI, a psychosocial health and rehabilitation support provider.

It was Julie's experience as a member of the Committee of Management at the Mental Health Legal Centre that first ignited her passion for social justice and human rights issues. As for her future direction, Julie aims to continue in roles that support people with mental illness on their journey to recovery.





For seven years, Kevin Keane has been employed as a professional artist at Q ArtStudio.

Q ArtStudio is a fine art, applied art and design studio that produces a range of products, including paintings on canvas, drawings, special occasion and everyday greeting cards, Christmas Cards, gift wrap, ceramics and screen-printed household items. A division of Vatmi Industries, Q ArtStudio provides employment for 11 artists with intellectual and physical disabilities.

Kevin's unique works include paintings on canvas, ceramics, images on greeting cards and gift wrap and designs which feature on a range of products.

The artists at Q ArtStudio enjoy a broad range of music and, as a music-lover; Kevin likes to share his eclectic tastes by making the studio's music selections.

Kevin's musical tastes are broad – from Leonard Cohen, Duffy and Pink Floyd through to classical and ethnic performers. The artists enjoy Kevin's selections; making the studio a welcoming place in which to be creative. Kevin is also well known for his attention to detail; he keeps the studio organised and tidy – something that is appreciated by his fellow artists.

'I like it here. I have other people to talk to and I enjoy their company. I enjoy drawing and painting.'

'I like achieving new things like having one of my images put on the wrapper of a chocolate bar.'

'At the moment I am transferring drawings from my art diary onto large canvases.'

Asked what he wants to be doing in five years time and Kevin replies:

'More art. I like my job.'

Nicci Wall walked into the Harley-Davidson shop in Geelong for a bike, and ended up with a job as well. Two years on, Nicci is working between 25 and 30 hours a week doing book-keeping, clerical work, IT support and administration.

'The management at Harley-Davidson knew I had a bipolar condition before I started the job. If I'm unwell from the condition, I am able to make up my hours at another time – so the flexibility really suits me. The flip side is that when I'm hypomanic I easily do the work of two people.'

'During these times I also come up with some good solutions to make the workplace more efficient.'

The Dealer Principal of Geelong Harley-Davidson Andrea Davis-Currie agrees.

'Nicci is always coming up with ideas to not only improve her own job but also to help any one else within the business.'

For 20 years Nicci lived with a wrong diagnosis of severe depression. When she was 35 she discovered she had Bipolar Affective Disorder. 'It was extremely scary to feel out of control at times and not understand the reason.'

Now, Nicci wants to ensure others in the same position are able to receive the right assistance to get their lives back on track.

Nicci sought professional care close to home, but was unable to find an appropriate service to offer assistance. This led Nicci to establish the Melton Depression and Bipolar Support Group. The aim was to ensure that others in the same situation would receive the education, support and resources they required to assist their recovery.

At that time, Nicci also started collecting personal stories of mental illness and produced a book, 'Glimpses' – a compilation of uncensored real life experiences with mental illness. The book promotes community understanding by providing an insight into the life of people living with a mental illness.

In 2007, Nicci received a Tattersall's Award for Enterprise and Achievement – recognising her contribution to the area of volunteer advocacy of mental health issues.



Olivia Curtain loves her job as an administrative assistant for Marriott Support Services. She has become a popular member of the team since starting work in 2003.

'The job I've got is great and I'm very happy to be here. I enjoy assisting people and it's rewarding to make a difference in the lives of so many.'

Marriott Support Services provides day programs and activities, training and employment options to adults with an intellectual disability, including teaching independent living skills and promoting recreational and community access.

At the age of 10, Olivia was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition – Williams Syndrome. It only affects 1 in every 10,000 births. Williams Syndrome impacts several areas of development including cognitive, behavioural and motor areas.

Now 30, Olivia believes that the condition has not stopped her from having an active life.

'I went to a mainstream school for 11 years and then to a specialist school. I made friends and learnt a lot of life skills. I live independently; for sport and fun I play basketball, and I keep up a busy social life with my friends and family.'

According to Olivia's supervisor, Simone Mitchell, Olivia is social and friendly and enjoys working in the busy office. 'Olivia is a great communicator with a wonderful phone manner which is important when you deal with people all day.'

Olivia has a Certificate in Work Education and plans to further her studies by completing a Certificate in Business Administration.

'If more people with a disability were employed, there would be a much greater understanding of what it is like to have a disability. I hope more people can open their eyes to include those who may be different to them.'





Son Tam ('Sonny') Nguyen is from a Vietnamese-Australian family of 11 from Thomastown. After a car accident in 2000 left Sonny with an acquired brain injury, he came to work for the Brunswick Employment Agency (BEA).

BEA Windows and Gardens is an Australian Disability Enterprise managed by North West Employment Group (NWEG) Inc, a not-for-profit organisation assisting people with a disability with training and to gain and keep employment.

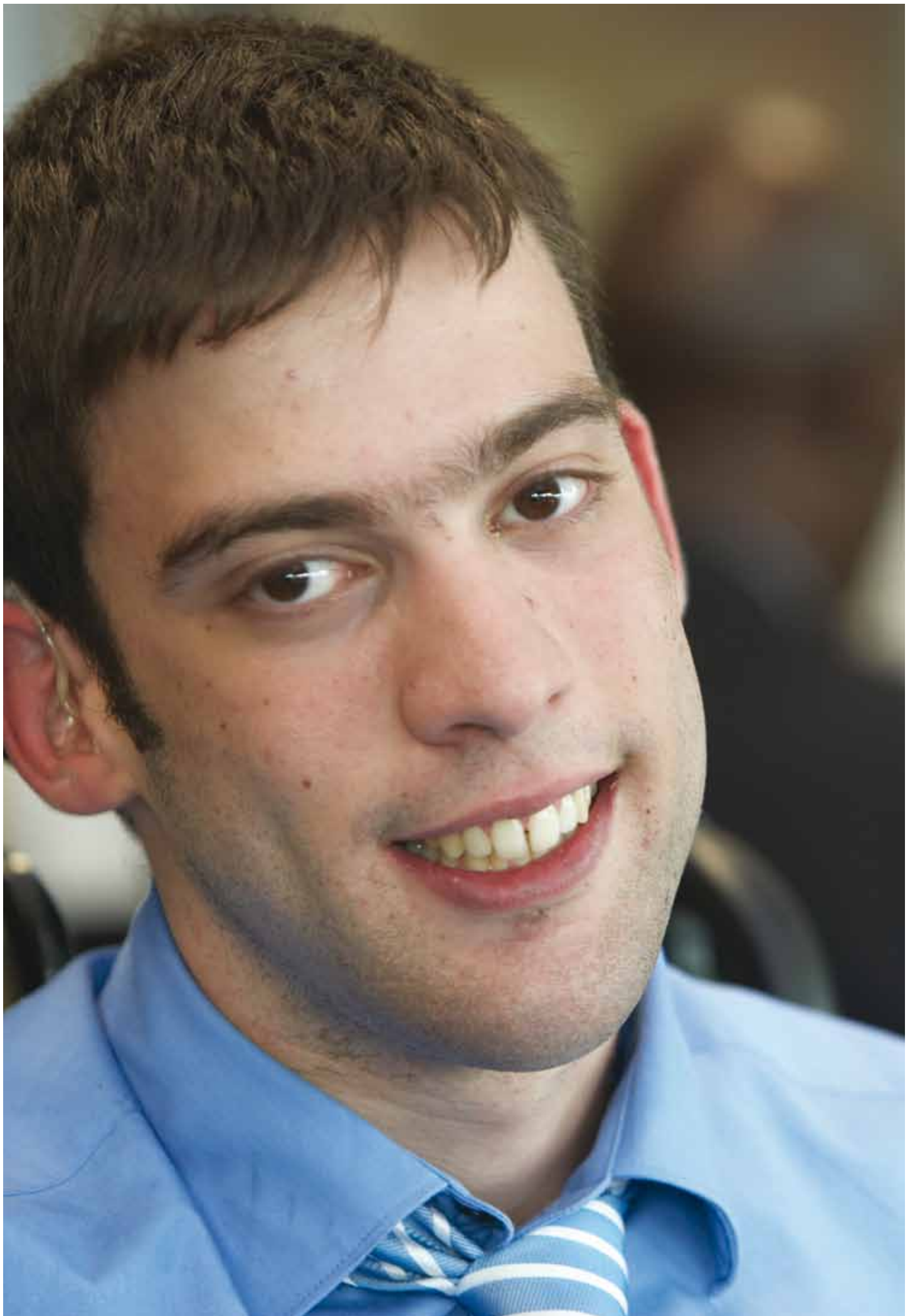
A return to work program designed by NWEG Inc and the Transport Accident Commission, gave Sonny the chance he needed to learn job skills and begin to rebuild his life.

Coping with the consequences of an acquired brain injury has been a difficult road for Sonny and his family. The injury has affected all aspects of life. A loss of functioning and the stress of rehabilitation have been a challenge. Fortunately one aspect of life fell into place – an opportunity to work.

Sonny's quality of life increased when he found a steady job and a caring group of people to support him at work. Since arriving at BEA in 2001, Sonny has gained a Certificate III in Horticulture, which has given him a path into BEA's horticulture business. BEA has provided more than a job for Sonny; it has provided a place to belong.

'I used to work every day as a gardener. Now I work as an office cleaner and window-washer so I can gain more skills. What I love about work is being out in the fresh air. Work has made my life better.'

Registered Training Organisation Manager, Mat Mason says that Sonny has made real progress. 'Sonny has gained a lot of confidence and skills. He is reliable, has high energy, and is a valued member of our team.'



Stuart Minotti began his career with ANZ when he was selected from 5,500 applicants to be part of the highly competitive Graduate Program. He is now a Business Analyst working on technology and business improvement projects.

'It's great to participate in everyday working life and know I'm contributing to the success of the business. I'm learning about myself and I have a sense of belonging in the workplace.'

'Having a disability does not greatly impact my ability to work. At school and university I developed strategies to manage possible limitations, so I can always work at my highest capacity.'

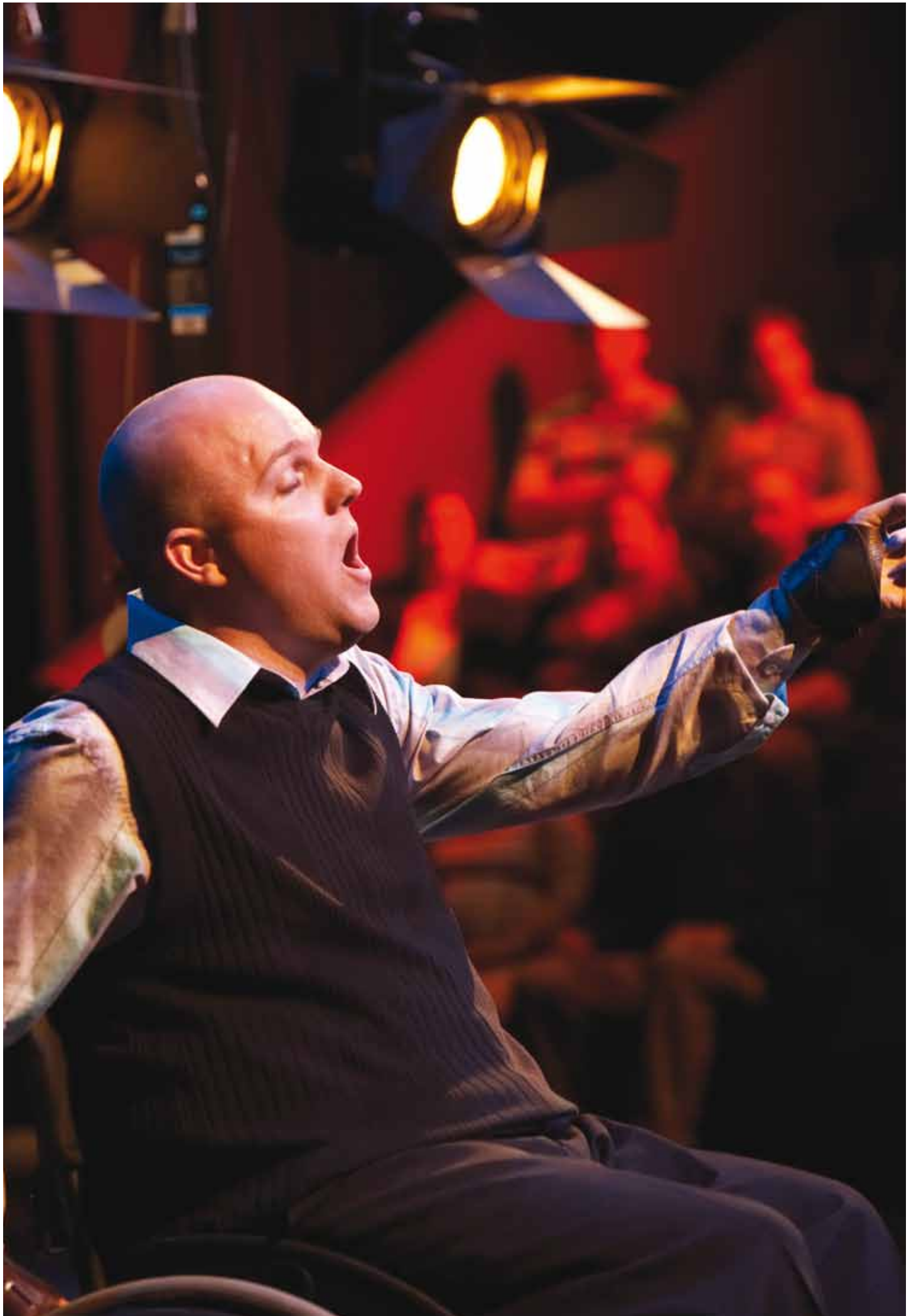
Jonathan Harvey, ANZ Group General Manager, Organisational Capability, says of the recruitment process: 'It's important to employ people with a disability. Twenty percent of Australians have a disability and we strive to reflect the communities in which we participate.'

'Secondly, we are in a talent war – and the organisations that will win this are the ones that look past limited perceptions about candidates; to recognise that talented people are not defined by an image.'

'Stuart has an amazing can-do attitude to work and life and that rubs off on his colleagues. He's making a tremendous contribution.'

'My message to other corporates - and it's my message internally within ANZ as well – is we have to do a lot more to make the employment of people from all walks of life more feasible.'

Stuart wants to progress into a more senior role with ANZ and assist others with a disability to map their career paths. 'I'd like to pass on my thoughts and experience about how companies can assist people with a disability to develop their careers.'



Opera singer Tim McCallum has performed in close to 40 productions in the past ten years, including Dreamscape, Les Miserables, The Sound of Music, Sweeney Todd and Rent. He has sung at the Opera House, the Melbourne Tennis Centre, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and in concerts and cabarets around the country.

'Performing is a huge buzz...and I love to share it.'

Tim has been singing since he was five years old and has never lost his love of musical theatre. His career is dotted with highlights, but his proudest achievement was his first performance after the diving accident that left him a quadriplegic ten years ago. 'It was at the Melbourne Tennis Centre and I sang 'Age of Reason' with an audience of 15, 000,' he said.

While some professional productions tend to stereotype roles – and some old theatres are difficult to access – amateur productions are often more flexible. This flexibility made it possible for Tim to play King Herrod in a recent production. TADVIC (Technical Aid to the Disabled in Victoria) built a spa for the stage that Tim could get into.

'The audience get over the fact that I have a disability two seconds after I start singing... people appreciate my skill much more than worrying about my disability.'

Tim is currently looking for the 'right professional show to crack into' and hopes to put out a CD in the future. He continues to be in demand, performing in concerts and cabaret and as a motivational speaker where Tim shares his life story.

'My disability doesn't make up who I am. I hope my greatest success is to balance my work with my disability and other parts of my life.'

Christian is the co-ordinator of the diversity and disability self-advocacy program, run by the Migrant Resource Centre, North West Region in Melbourne. The program is about empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds who have a disability, so they can live independently and make their own decisions in life.

'I am passionate about self-advocacy. I have cerebral palsy and have had to fight for the right to have an independent life. It is important to me that I'm making a difference in other people's lives. I enjoy the variety of people I meet everyday in my work. Since I manage to be independent in my life, I believe that everyone can be independent to varying degrees depending on age, abilities and experience in life.'

Migrants with a disability can be marginalised and isolated. Christian understands this well because of his own multicultural heritage that connects him strongly with the migrants in the program. While Christian was born in Melbourne, his family moved to Italy when he was seven years old. Christian returned 17 years later to study and find work.

Christian speaks Italian, Greek and French, which assists him immeasurably in a job that is all about promoting social inclusion and reducing cultural barriers for migrants with a disability.

Christian was president of the Cerebral Palsy Support Network for five years and created their most successful fund-raising initiative, Melbourne's Longest Cake.

'At my work, the building is accessible and everyone is friendly here. I feel I am making a difference as I present to people about the role people with a disability play in the workplace and the community.'

'The most rewarding thing is to see how people progress in the program. They become more independent; more involved in the community and achieve their dreams.'

Christian is a member of number of disability-related boards and committees including: the State Government Disability Services Board, Scope Victoria Board, Melbourne City Council Disability Advisory Committee, Arts Access Victoria Board, Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Disability Reference Group, the Victorian Disability Advocacy Network Board and the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit Committee.



Stella Young's strong community spirit is evident in all aspects of her life, especially her career choices. She is a contributor to her community and is passionate about her work.

'It's really important for everyone's sense of self to have a job – it plays such a big role in your identity and who you are – not just for people with a disability, but for everyone.'

In 2007 Stella landed her dream job at Melbourne Museum. Her qualifications in journalism and teaching, experience as a communications co-ordinator and outgoing personality helped to secure the role. As a senior program officer Stella looks after education groups, public programs and holiday programs; working with families, international visitors and school groups.

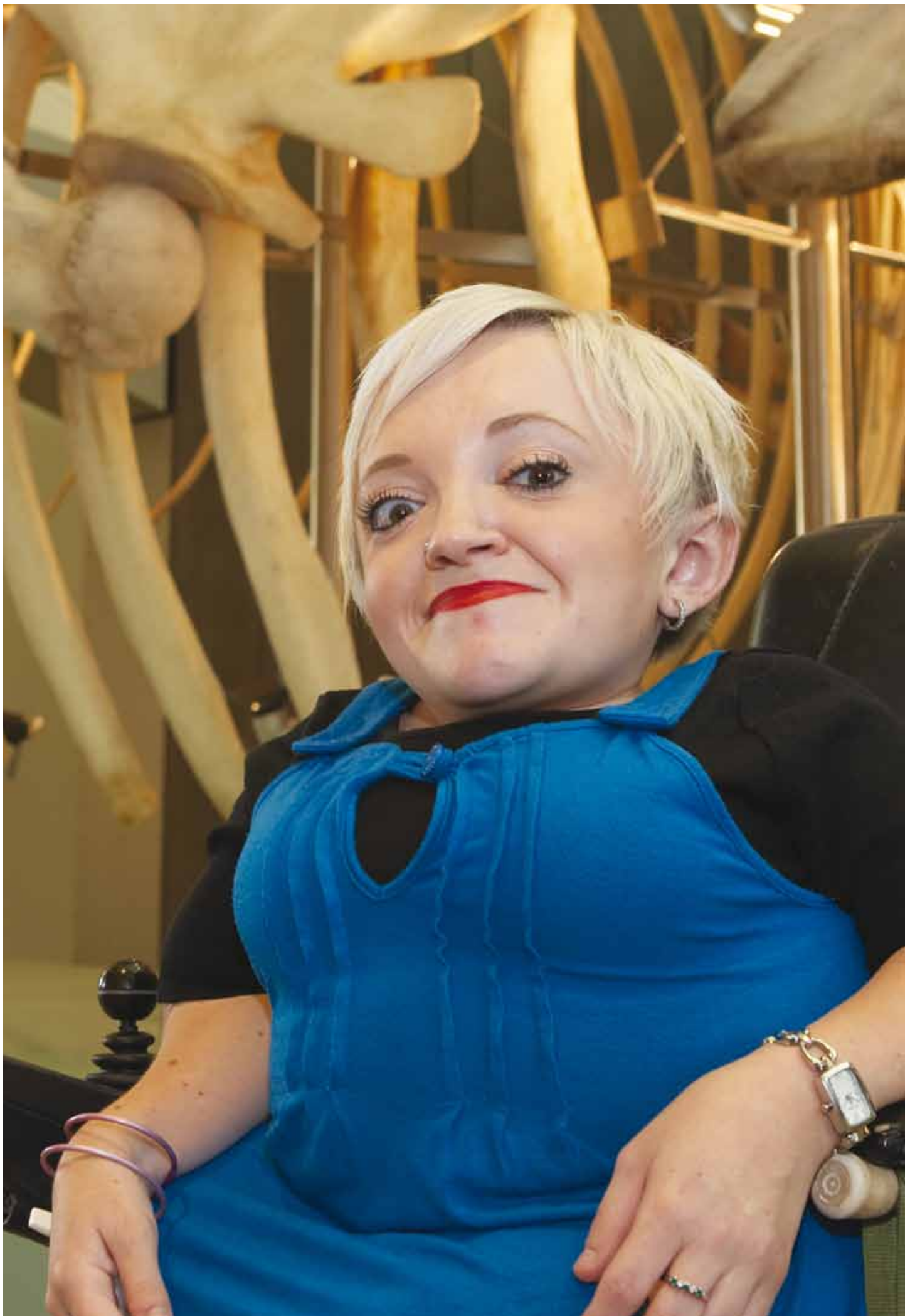
Stella's work day has lots of variety and she loves the diversity. 'The museum is an amazing place to work. One day I'll be delivering an education program and the next I'll be hanging out with awesome kids who just love dinosaurs.'

'The museum is an accessible building and I have a very supportive manager. I feel really good being here. It is really no big deal to employ a person with a disability these days.'

'I worked as a communications co-ordinator for Arts Access, Victoria's peak body for arts and disability. From there, I was recruited through Museum Victoria into the Melbourne Museum.'

In her spare time, Stella's sense of fun has found an outlet through her hobby as a stand-up comic. She was a Victorian State finalist in 2010 Raw Comedy, Australia's biggest and most prestigious annual open mic comedy.

When asked about her future, Stella says 'I would love to work in a museum in New York and explore the museum culture. I'm interested in what museums collect. There are some very cool collections to see.'





Maryanne Weston's career has included working for a major bank and for State and Commonwealth Governments. For the past seven years Maryanne has worked for the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) where she supervises a team of up to 60 staff members who administer Victoria's state and 79 municipal elections. Maryanne also works for the Australian Electoral Commission during federal elections.

Maryanne enjoys her work and has found the VEC to have a culture of acceptance.

'I like the staff here – they are very caring. I also enjoy the challenge and variety of my role and the fact that I work with so many people of different ages and backgrounds.'

'People know about my degenerative hip and unstable knee – everyone is understanding. I've never felt embarrassed or worried about telling them I can't do something. It's just not an issue.'

'In return I am an active, well organised and committed team member and will always do my absolute best.'

'Workplaces that are set up with people with disabilities in mind with accessible toilets, kitchen and work stations make it much easier for people to fit in and feel welcome for who they are.'

While Maryanne's unstable knee can 'go out suddenly and be out for up to 4 – 5 months at a time', she says she rarely thinks about it: 'I'm so used to not thinking about my disability that my husband and I have to remind ourselves to ask about access to a shower when we're travelling.'

'Working is not a battle... some things in life are, but this isn't.'

Away from work Maryanne enjoys cooking, entertaining and travel.

Tips on Hiring People with a Disability

How to make sure you're not missing out on applicants with a disability

Firstly it's important to establish the essential requirements of the job. For instance if the person will not be required to drive as part of the role, it is not necessary to include a current Victorian Driver's Licence as part of the job criteria.

Secondly broaden the way you advertise including the formats you use and allow people to submit applications in a number of ways. Include a positive line in the advertisement about being committed to having a diverse workplace.

If you have a standard application form for job interviews, have a JobAccess Advisor discuss it with you to ensure you're not inadvertently excluding some applicants.

When inviting applicants to interview ask if they have any requirements for the interview to make it accessible for them, for instance they may be hearing impaired and require an interpreter.

The JobAccess website is a free service funded by the Commonwealth Government providing help and workplace solutions for the employment of people with a disability.

Visit www.jobaccess.gov.au or call a JobAccess Advisor on 1800 464 800.

How to improve the accessibility of your workplace premises and the services you deliver

Because the types of disabilities people might have are diverse it's important not to view access through a narrow perspective. A person may have a physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric impairment. While ramp access is important for people using wheelchairs, it's as important that there is clear signage with maximum contrast in highly visible locations for people with vision impairments.

There is an audit tool at the JobAccess website www.jobaccess.gov.au that will give you an indication of how accessible your workplace is for people with disabilities.

You may also want to hire an access consultant to visit your workplace and make recommendations on improving its accessibility. The Association of Consultants in Access Australia is the national peak body for access consultants and provides a list of access auditors on their web site www.access.asn.au.

Where to find advice and financial assistance for modifications

Workplace accommodations may range from slight modifications to work stations to the provision of computer software and communications devices or vehicle modifications. If the workplace needs to be modified at all, the cost required is usually minimal.

There is support to cover the cost of workplace modifications available through the Commonwealth Government's 'Employment Assistance Fund.'

To find out more about funding available visit www.jobaccess.gov.au or call a JobAccess Advisor on 1800 464 800.

How to foster a positive attitude to disability in the workplace

Of all the barriers people with a disability face, possibly the most difficult to overcome is the attitudes of other people. Usually negative attitudes are the result of a lack of exposure to people with disabilities coupled with inadequate education. Therefore solutions aimed at challenging existing beliefs should try to address these two areas.

An obvious way to improve exposure is to hire more people a disability. As research commissioned by the Office for Disability and conducted by Ipsos Eureka in 2008* found, the greater people's exposure to people with disabilities the less likely they were to feel uncomfortable or inhibited.

Other ways to improve exposure and people's understanding of disability might include inviting a range of disability organisations and people with disabilities to present at meetings about topical issues. The incorporation of disability awareness training for employees on language, etiquette and behaviour might also be helpful in giving employees more confidence in daily interactions with people with a disability.

The resources from this campaign should also be used wherever possible. Further information on the campaign can be found at www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au.

Tips for People with a Disability Seeking Work

Preparing for and attending interviews

Before attending an interview try to find out as much as you can about the job including: the type of tasks you would be performing in the job, information about an organisation's policies in relation to employing people with a disability and how your disability might impact on the requirements of the job.

If you need workplace modifications to undertake your job it would be worth coming prepared to discuss these and being informed about the assistance available to your employer through the 'Employment Assistance Fund.' Visit the JobAccess website for more information www.jobaccess.gov.au

Whether or not to disclose a disability to your employer

There is no legal obligation for you to tell your employer about a disability unless it has a direct impact on you being able to do your job. Some people prefer not to disclose their disability because it might be invisible and may invite unwanted curiosity or questions from colleagues.

However if your disability is likely to affect your performance at work then you should consider disclosing. You don't need to disclose personal details or specific medical information regarding your disability. Information shared should be confined to how your disability might impact on your ability to fulfil the role and any adjustments that need to be made. For more information about talking about your disability at work, phone the JobAccess advisers on 1800 464 800 (free call).

Resources that are available

Disability Employment Advisory Service (DEAS)

The Disability Employment Advisory Service (DEAS) assists people with disabilities to jobs in the public service in Victoria. The benefits of registering with DEAS are the opportunity to work with a recruitment and diversity expert, supported access to opportunities within the Victorian Public Service, resume assistance and support with workplace adjustments if required. To register with the DEAS and discuss opportunities within Victorian Government Departments contact DEAS at Randstad on (03) 8319 1169 or email@randstad.com.au.

Job Services Australia

On 1 July 2009, the Australian Government announced a new, simpler service to assist job seekers (particularly from disadvantaged groups) to find long term employment. Job Services Australia gives you access to training, skills development and other flexible assistance when you require it. This includes gaining work experience and access to other initiatives. Your local Job Services Australia provider can be found by visiting www.deewr.gov.au/employment/programs/DES

Ace National Network Inc (ACE)

ACE is the peak body for Australia's Disability Employment Network. The Disability Employment Network is comprised of more than 240 organisations whose aim it is to support people with a disability find and keep employment. All work that is secured by the Disability Employment Network is done through an open market.

To find your local Disability Employment Network provider visit www.acenational.org.au.

The AED Legal Centre

The AED Legal Centre was established in 2008 by the Association of Employees with Disability Inc. The Centre provides legal advocacy to people with a disability in the areas of employment, education and training.

The main aim of AED is to assist employees with disabilities who experience unlawful termination of employment; whose job are in jeopardy, who may be concerned about their wages, working conditions and/or entitlements; or who are bullied/harassed at work.

The Centre is a member of the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres.
Tel: (03) 9639 4333. Email: noni.lord@aed.org.au

Searching for jobs online

There are a variety of search engines available for people seeking employment. It is possible to register with most sites and create profiles.

JobSearch – www.jobsearch.com.au – is an Australian Government web site advertising thousands of jobs throughout the county. If you having trouble accessing information on JobSearch, call the Job Seeker Hotline on 13 62 68 between 8am and 7pm daily.

**We believe in
a world where
everyone can
take part...**

**BAR
NONE.**



www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au