



Genuine Support Services Australia

# Newsletter

MAY-JUNE -JULY 2025

## Uniting Disability Community

In an exciting move to strengthen collaboration and inclusion across the Murraylands, Genuine Support Services Australia (GSSA) is bringing NDIS clients, families, and service providers from across the region together for a night to remember.

Gabrielle Mackenzie, Managing Director of GSSA has organised a high-energy, Black & White Disco at The Bend on Saturday, May 31st, 2025.

Held in the Members Lounge at the world-class Shell V-Power Motorsport Park, the event aims to do more than entertain. "It's really about bringing people together, making connections, encouraging collaboration, and showcasing what inclusive, high-quality community events can look like in our region," Gabrielle said. "We are so happy with the support we're receiving from other agencies, families, and individuals."

The disco is part of Gabrielle's broader mission to help NDIS participants get the most from their supports — and that includes creating social spaces where people feel seen, included, and celebrated.

"It's not just about NDIS clients, we would love to see support workers, admin staff, coordinators, carers at the event — the night is for you too."

"I am so grateful for the facilities team bringing our event to life for such a special occasion, and for the friendships and connections that have been made over the course of our discos," Gabrielle said.

Catered by Rydges Pit Lane Hotel, the \$20 ticket includes fine dining canapés, entertainment by DJ Zoe from Mix 102.3 FM, access to fun activities, and a guided tour of the motorsport museum and racing facilities — all while drift cars roar in the distance and track lights glow.

"Please let us know if you've got any song requests, just let Jess know in our office when you're book your ticket," Gabrielle said.

Dietary needs, carpooling interest, and other supports can also be arranged — just let the GSSA team know when you drop in at 6 Third Street, Murray Bridge.

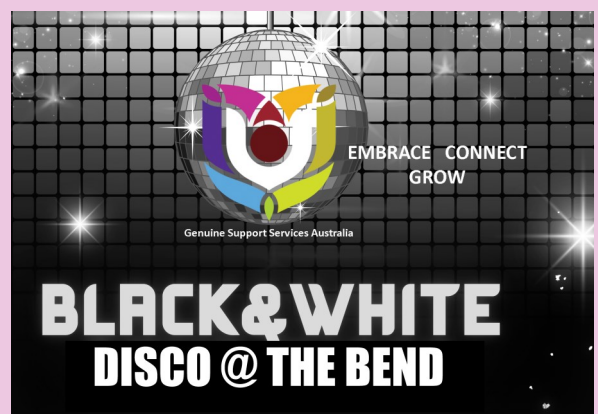
The uniting disability disco team are encouraging people to book early so catering can be managed to ensure everyone's looked after. Tickets at the door are strongly discouraged, due to recording of personal dietary needs and planned activities.

The night is set for a 5.30 pm start at the Shell V-Power Motorsport Park, 543 Dukes Highway, Tailem Bend - music kicks off at 6 pm, dress in what makes you feel best, or join in the Black & White theme.

"Let's come together, celebrate music, dancing, community, and enjoy a night that's all about connection, joy, and shared experience."

*Gabrielle Mackenzie*

Managing Director





EMBRACE CONNECT  
GROW

Genuine Support Services Australia

# BLACK&WHITE DISCO @ THE BEND

**SATURDAY MAY 31, 2025**

**6 PM - 9 PM**

**The Bend Member's Lounge**  
Catering by Rydges Pit Lane Hotel

@

**Shell V-Power Motorsport Park The Bend**

**543 Dukes Hwy, Tailem Bend**

**RSVP GSSA OFFICE 08 8166 7577**

**ONLY \$20 ENTRY FEE**

**Dress in what makes you feel best or join in  
on our Black & White theme**

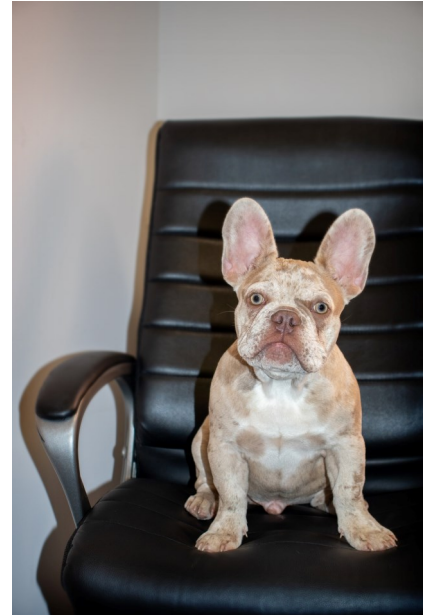
**Register your interest in car pooling and  
transport at the office**



BOOK now \$20 TICKETS available from Jess at GSSA, 6 Third Street, Murray Bridge. Leave your SONG REQUESTS and let Jess know if you have any dietary requirements.

## SECURITY UPGRADE AT GSSA

One employee stands out from the rest at Genuine Support Services Australia, he may not answer phones, file paperwork, or attend team meetings, but his presence is felt in every corner of the office. His name is Hank, and he's the official HQ watchdog – though “watchdog” might be a bit of a stretch for a pup who prefers playtime and cuddles to patrolling the premises.



Hank, a small but mighty force in the office, is more than just a pet. He's a beloved member of the team, a furry companion who brings warmth and joy to everyone he meets.

His routine is simple but sacred, and each person in the office has their role in keeping Hank happy. When Claire, Hank's mum, isn't around, it's Nat who takes over – she's the designated supplier of treats and cuddles, a role she takes seriously.

Adam, on the other hand, is Hank's big brother in all but name – rough play is their specialty, with Adam providing the kind of wrestling and romping Hank craves.

And then there's the mail carrier. To Hank, the mailperson is a fearsome foe, someone who must be scared away at all costs. Hank has developed a particular technique for managing this intruder—he growls from a safe distance, letting the mail carrier know he means business. But if the mail carrier gets too close? Well, Hank is quick to retreat, running away in a flurry of paws and panic – it's a delicate masculine balance, but one that Hank seems to have mastered.

Hank sees himself as a big dog, the chairperson of the board, and that reflection in the office window does not fit his self-image at all.

When it comes to making tough choices, Hank's priorities are clear – given the option between guarding the office and chasing a mouse, you might think he'd stick to his watchdog duties. But Hank has other plans. His real target? The squeaky hippo toy – it's his favorite thing to attack, creating noise and mayhem that annoys everyone in the office. (Just the way Hank likes it) There's nothing quite like the satisfaction of making the squeaky hippo squeal.

Despite his occasional bouts of bravery, Hank takes his security naps just as seriously as the rest of his duties.

His favorite spot is on the sofa or under Claire's desk, where he can keep an eye on her without straying too far from his comfort zone. Even when he's napping, Hank remains vigilant—or so he'd like everyone to believe.

## JUST GETTING STARTED

Casey McNeil's journey is one of resilience, courage, and finding joy in the little things – born in the Royal Adelaide Hospital and placed in foster care at five and a half, her early years were a blur of challenges.

Casey's biological mother wasn't around, and she and her siblings were left with their grandparents, a situation that turned out to be less than ideal. Her sister, Jade, was just three months old when she too was placed in care – yet, out of this tumultuous start, Casey's story begins to blossom.

Her time in foster care transformed her life, especially after being placed with her second foster family—Leonie and Malcolm of Andrews Farm. For Casey, it wasn't just a home; it was the foundation of a loving, supportive environment that helped her heal from the traumas of her past. "Leonie and Malcolm really made up for everything," she reflects.

At 14, the family moved to the Riverland and settled in Nildottie, a small, quiet town where life felt peaceful and safe for Casey. Even now, years later, she talks fondly about the quiet life in Nildottie. "There's just no hooligans around," she says with a laugh, appreciating the stillness of the place where her foster sister Monique and her family continue to live.

Though small and quiet, Nildottie remains close to Casey's heart—a place where she found stability. Despite the scars of her childhood, Casey radiates positivity.

Her love for tattoos and piercings is a testament to how she's found ways to express herself. "I feel like my tattoos are part of my story," she says. Her first tattoo was a delicate design she got while on holiday in Queensland, where she and her family stayed in a holiday home on the Gold Coast. She fondly remembers the bustling streets as the sun set, and the fun energy of the place still brings a smile to her face.

Though life wasn't always easy for Casey, things started to shift for the better when she connected with Genuine Support Services Australia (GSSA) a year ago. Before then, she had no support outside of her family.

She cherishes the independence it gives her, from moments of respite over Easter to time spent in GSSA's Plate to Seed Program or the Ability Café. For Casey, the support has been transformative. "It's been really great. I finally get some of my own time," she shares.

Diagnosed with an intellectual disability by the NDIS and suspecting she has traits of autism; Casey is open about the challenges she faces. "My brain works differently," she says, explaining how she can memorise lyrics after hearing a song just twice, but struggles with tasks like math.

Casey often takes the opportunity to slip next door on a Friday morning and into GSSA's Recreative Music Therapy class to sing one of her favourite country songs – she is gifted with a beautiful voice.



Although Casey acknowledges the challenges of living with a disability, she remains determined. "It's not easy, but I don't want to be waiting anymore," she reflects. She hopes to explore her love for rap music and maybe volunteer at The Station in Murray Bridge to write her own songs—another way to share her story, express her experiences, and connect with others.

Casey's journey is far from over – with her fierce love of life, her bright humour, and her unstoppable drive to keep moving forward, she looks to the future with hope.

## SOON TO BE LAUNCHED—SMILEY'S CHILDREN'S BOOK

Young local photographer and storyteller Cadeyrn Smith of Murray Bridge is about to publish his first children's book — Smiley's Steam Train Dream.



A whimsical journey down the historic rail line from Monarto South to Sedan in South Australia – told through the eyes of a cheeky little character named Smiley.

The book features photos of historic rail bridges and drawings of puffing steam trains as they once supported the communities along the line.

All the drone images were taken by Cadeyrn with the help of Glenn Power, his Genuine Support Services Australia (GSSA) Support Worker. "I'm very happy with how the bridge images came out; they really captured the sweeping empty country around the bridges," Cadeyrn said.

The story came to life with the assistance of Chat GPT, an AI tool Cadeyrn used to help shape the narrative, smooth out the words, and stitch his adventure together.

"It's about steam and dreams," said Cadeyrn, beaming. "The young Smiley imagines a world where every train and station has a secret, and every whistle tells a story."

The project is a heartwarming example of how AI, when used responsibly and transparently, can empower emerging creatives, especially those who may face barriers to traditional publishing. Tools like Chat GPT helped Cadeyrn turn his ideas into a polished product, allowing more time for creativity and collaboration.

Of course, concerns about AI in publishing remain, particularly around originality and disclosure, but Cadeyrn and his team are upfront about how the tech was used: as a support, not a substitute.

"AI can be a brilliant tool if managed well," said Glenn. "It helped Cadeyrn tell his story, in his voice."

The book will be available at GSSA's Ability Cafe soon and at selected community events this autumn.

\*The Ability Café – a café with a cause is open Fridays from 11.30 am to 2 pm at the GSSA's Community Hub & Activities Centre, 5 & 6 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge.

## KRISTY'S AMAZING MELBOURNE TRIP

"Hey everyone! I had the best time in Melbourne and just had to share some of my favorite moments."

"Saving and budgeting for my trip was a great learning experience and I look forward to saving for my next adventure."

"One of the highlights has been visiting Monopoly and Hijinx Hotel—both are so unique and way different from anything we have in Adelaide! I also got to see Akmal perform live and even meet him in person! Such an incredible experience!"

"Another unexpected highlight has been the bus trips—they're so different from my usual routine, and I'm actually really enjoying them!"

"Learning to catch the bus in a busy city and navigate different systems has taught me a lot."

"If you're ever in Melbourne, I definitely recommend checking out Monopoly, Holey Moley, and Hijinx Hotel. They're all so much fun and totally worth the visit! Plus, the accommodation has been amazing, making the whole experience even better."



We don't always get a chance to stop, sit down, and truly connect – but here's our chance!

You're invited to a special GSSA Support Worker & Participant Lunch at Fasta Pasta!

Let's come together over good food, warm conversation, and lots of laughs. It's just \$10.90 for a delicious lunch PLUS Ryan is throwing in a free garlic bread for us – yes, please!

We know everyone's often out and about doing their own thing, but this is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with past and present participants, support workers, and friendly faces you might not have seen in a while.

Date & time – Tuesday, May 20 11 am to 12.30 pm – but we need to know you're keen!

Register your interest with Jess at reception so we can book a table big enough for all our smiling faces.

Let's fill an hour with food, friendship, and connection. You'll be so glad you did.

[FastaPasta.com](https://www.fastapasta.com) – check out the menu and get hungry! We can't wait to see you there.

# A UNIQUE EQUINE PATH TO WELL-BEING

By Suzanne Lawson-Mackenzie

A unique equine therapy program in the Murraylands is offering women a chance to pause, connect, and restore their mental well-being through working with horses. The program, held at the Murray Bridge Riding Club, is designed to help participants understand and connect with ponies, offering an uplifting and healing experience.

Suzanne Lawson-Mackenzie of Murray Bridge, an enthusiastic supporter of the events, spoke with Diana Gibbs of Equine Assisted Practitioner Association's (EAPA) Clinic Horse Therapy, Paechtown, one of the lead facilitators of the iReach Murraylands equine program. "This isn't just your typical therapy session," Diana shared warmly



(L) Minie, with her handler, Ashley Barnard, next to Cricket and her handler, Diana Gibbs, with Suzanne Mackenzie of Murray Bridge, at the recent Horse Therapy session, Murray Bridge Pony Club.

"It's about fun, relaxation, and finding time for yourself, something many women don't do enough of. Women juggle a lot, and this program gives them the chance to step back, reconnect, and realize how important it is to take time out for their mental health," Diana said. "The equine therapy program consists of two sessions, and is guided by a team of skilled psychologists, counsellors, experienced horsewomen, and volunteers."





If you're looking to experience the benefits of equine therapy, these programs could be the perfect opportunity. The next two-part session is planned soon, and places are limited. To get involved, call iReach at Murray Bridge on 8531 1303 to register your interest. This program is funded under primary mental health care via Country SA-PHN and is open to women seeking a fun, different, and therapeutic experience.

So, what are you waiting for? Take a step toward better mental health and well-being with a Murraylands equine therapy program. Whether you've worked with ponies before or it's your first time, you'll leave feeling more connected, calmer, and ready to take on the world!

\*Suzanne's first published story in Murray Bridge News, The Mannum Magazine and Tailern Topics.

# Calendar of COMING EVENTS

MAY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	Photography by arrangement		1 GSSA's FPP Photography Club @ Library	2	3	4 *Coffee & Cars, Murray Bridge
5 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	6 Fishing Club 	7 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group, Cooking Class & Photo/Film Club	8 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, & Living Skills	9 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	10	11
12 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	13 	14 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group, Cooking Class & Photo/Film Club	15 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, & Living Skills	16 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	17	18
19 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	20  PARTICIPANT & STAFF LUNCH @ PASTA PASTA	21 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	22 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, & Living Skills	23 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	24	25
26 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	27	28 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	29 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photography Club @ Library	30 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	31 DISCO @ THE BEND	






**BLACK&WHITE  
DISCO @ THE BEND**



Genuine Support Services Australia



JUNE

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
30 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion		Photography by arrangement				1 *Coffee & Cars, Murray Bridge
2 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	3 Fishing Club 	4 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	5 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photo/Film Club	6 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	7	8
9	10 	11 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group, Cooking Class & Photo/Film Club	12 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photography Club @ Library	13 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	14	15
16 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	17	18 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	19 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, & Living Skills	20 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	21	22 Photo/Film Club visit to Old Treasury & Tunnels Adelaide
23 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	24	25 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	26 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photography Club @ Library	27 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	28	29

**GSSA MAIN OFFICE**  
6 Third Street,  
Murray Bridge  
SA 5253

**COMMUNITY HUB  
& ACTIVITIES  
CENTRE**  
4 & 5 Seventh Street,  
Murray Bridge  
SA 5253

JULY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1 Fishing Club & Board Gamers 	2 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	3 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photo/Film Club	4 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	5	6 *Coffee & Cars, Murray Bridge
7 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	8 Board Gamers	9 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	10 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photography Club @ Library	11 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	12	13
14 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	15 Board Gamers	16 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	17 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, & Living Skills	18 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	19 Photo/Film Club, pop-up photo booth Winter Bak, Tallinn Bend	20
21	22 Board Gamers	23 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	24 Seed2Plate, Chair Fitness, Eight Ball, Living Skills, & Photography Club @ Library	25 Ability Café Lunch, Arts & Crafts	26	27
28 Seed2Plate, Cooking Class & Rhythmic Fusion	29 Board Gamers	30 A-TEAM, Living Skills, Walking Group & Cooking Class	31			Photography by arrangement



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