



ENQUIRER

Your disability
employment
specialist

Welcome

to the Summer edition of
the EPIC Enquirer

In this edition you'll read a collection of stories about participants thriving in workplaces that prioritise diversity and inclusion.

You will also read our new Spotlight on our team section.

Flip to the back for our upcoming events and recognition dates.

EPIC Enquirer is distributed to connect and inspire more than 3,500 job seekers across Australia who are being supported by EPIC on their employment journey.

You can also connect with EPIC Assist through our social platforms for more job seeker success stories.



Meet Lachlan: EPIC's resident games wizard

Lachlan is the local Dungeon Master, barista, and resident game wizard at EPIC Ipswich, a games café in the heart of town. Not surprisingly, Lachlan's journey to employment here started with a board game.

"I was playing a game of Dungeons and Dragons with some of my friends, and they mentioned there was a new game store opening," he said.

Following a quick interview, Lachlan soon joined the team at the games café, but it wasn't long before he had to step away to look after his health.

"I ended up going to the hospital for a period. For whatever reason, the medication I was on just wasn't working," he said.

During his stay in the hospital, Lachlan's medication was balanced and he was finally given a formal diagnosis of autism.

It was important for Lachlan's employer, Trevor, that the team was always there to support Lachlan through his treatment and recovery. Trevor is proud of the inclusive and diverse business he has built. For him the wellbeing of his staff and customers comes first.

"Lachlan has had a long journey with us. We were supportive in the sense that we gave him as much time as he needed," he said.

When Lachlan was in the right mindset again and was moving forward with his life, he rejoined the team in a new new role created just for him. Lachlan and the team at EPIC Ipswich have not looked back since.



CEO Message

Dean Graham

As we approach the end of the calendar year, we reflect on a massive year in the disability employment sector. One thing that stood out in 2022 was the local businesses emerging from the challenges of the past two years of COVID-19 restrictions and choosing to prioritise diversity and inclusion in their teams.

Supporting staff takes many forms, and there is no playbook on how to do it. Support can vary from actual modifications on work equipment or structures to simply allowing an additional break during the day. EPIC has worked alongside numerous local businesses who continue to be

supportive and understand the value of diversity in the workplace.

EPIC will continue to support individuals and employers throughout the entire employment journey. Whether that's supporting someone on their first day of work or helping people access reasonable adjustments - this is what EPIC does and what we have been doing for over 32 years.

As this will be my last message for this calendar year, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. Please be kind and look after yourself and those around you.



Spotlight on EPIC Employment Consultant: Cindy



EPIC Employment Consultant Cindy, busy at work.

EPIC Employment Consultant Cindy's life changed in January 2019 when she experienced a seizure. This was followed by many misdiagnoses, the discovery of a brain tumour, and being told she had 14 months to live if they didn't operate.

Cindy could not accept that diagnosis and was not willing to throw in the towel.

The road ahead was long and filled with many challenges, but Cindy held true to her goal of one day re-joining the EPIC Assist team.

Through hard work, determination, and a smidge of obstinance, Cindy made her way back to the EPIC Assist team. Having gone on her own employment journey with a Disability Employment Services provider, Cindy feels wiser and more knowledgeable in guiding her participants into employment.

"Because of the support and inclusion I have experienced at EPIC and my own employment journey, I have a deep understanding and ability to relate to the journey that our job seekers are on. I pride myself in offering a unique tailored service to everyone, built upon empathy, support, and inclusion without judgement," Cindy said.

"Through sharing my lived experiences, I hope this helps job seekers to understand further what they can do rather than what they cannot do. I would not be here today if it were not for the EPIC Assist team continuously supporting, encouraging, and believing in me."



Benny's cafe: a pillar of diversity and inclusion



Jimmy, Janelle and EPIC Assist's Meagan and Cindy at Benny's cafe.

Five years ago, having a job, let alone a place to live, felt like an impossible dream for Janelle. She was homeless and alone amid a mental health and drug crisis.

Today, you'll find Janelle busy serving coffee, sandwiches, and croissants at Benny's Café in the Caboolture Business Hub. Café owner, Jimmy does not define people with labels or assign predetermined ideas of what others can and cannot do.

"Everyone is different. Everyone has a disability in some way. So what? Why label some people as disabled?" Jimmy said

"Janelle does freak out a bit. So, we've agreed that she taps us on the shoulder and puts a hand up to go for five.

"I said to her, just go out for five. Yeah, go for a walk, 'cause that's what I used to do when I was stressed." ■

Award for accessibility and inclusiveness excellence

EPIC was proud to sponsor the inaugural Award for Accessibility and Inclusiveness Excellence at the recent Moreton Bay Business & Innovation Awards.

The Moreton Bay Business & Innovation Awards celebrate and recognise business excellence and innovation in the Moreton Bay region.

480 business leaders, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators, and community members came together for the event at Eatons Hill Hotel's grand ballroom,

which shined a light on their achievements.

EPIC COO, Rick Staveley, was proud to present the award to Leanne Hopkins, Chief Success Officer, and the team at Succeed Healthcare Solutions.

EPIC congratulates all the nominees and finalists in this important category, and we look forward to seeing the category grow in the coming years. ■



Winners of the EPIC Assist Award for Accessibility and Inclusiveness Excellence 2022.

As one door closes, Ron builds another



Ron, busy working at MetalBiz Pty Ltd.

Ronald (Ron) is very frank about his life with a disability and his challenges.

Ten years ago, he was diagnosed with anxiety. Until then, Ron was struggling in the workplace.

Arguments with colleagues would escalate beyond his control, and his performance would ebb and flow for seemingly no reason.

Even after his diagnosis, Ron had setbacks. He needed help finding an employer that understood his workplace needs. It took some time for Ron and EPIC Assist to

find the perfect match, but in early 2021 EPIC found Ron a job that flawlessly welded to him.

MetalBiz Pty Ltd, a sheetmetal and stainless-steel business, were happy to give Ron a go.

"MetalBiz makes metal door frames and welds on door hinges," Ron said.

"If a door falls off one day, you know I did that."

Ron is now practically melded into the very fabric of the business.

Good on ya, Ron! ■



Notices

Dates

DECEMBER

03 December

International Day of People with Disability

10 December

Human Rights Day

25 December

Christmas

26 December

Boxing Day

JANUARY

January 1

New Year's Day

FEBRUARY

Feel Good February

4 February

World Cancer Day

28 February

Rare Disease Day

Events

EPIC offices will close over the Christmas break from:

Friday 23rd December at 2 pm, reopening on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday period and look forward to supporting you in 2023.

Feedback

"EPIC is very **friendly** and **helpful** and gives a great service." – Julie, Bribie Island

"EPIC has always been **helpful in job seeking**. I have been in regular work for some time now." – Floyd, Woodridge

"They are **respectful, communicative, and professional**. I genuinely feel like I am better off with them in my journey. Thank you." – Claire, Lismore

"All the staff at EPIC Launceston have been **super helpful and are always friendly**." – Riki, Launceston



If you know someone whose future could benefit from connecting with the EPIC team, tell them to get in touch by calling 13 EPIC (13 3742) or emailing us on hello@epicassist.org

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