

Changing Lives

Supporting people with disability in South Australia

Restrictions
Response
Recovery

– A COVID-19
Special Edition



Bedford

Winter Issue 18 2020



Contents

04	CEO's Message Maggie's Message
06	Across our sector Bedford welcomes the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
07	Our COVID-19 Taskforce
08	Health and Wellbeing Looking after You
10	Business initiatives New look, new website
11	Hospitality and Residential Services Changing the way we cater to the community
12	Sponsored – Bedford tax appeal Share in the Joy of Giving
14	Across our Regional Sites Comfy beds for cute ducks
15	A Day in My Life Mark Silvestri, Senior Packaging Employee, Bedford Panorama
16	Manufacturing Bedford's newest digs
18	One the ground Full Steam Ahead at APG
20	Arts and Culture Maloney's Masterpieces
22	Community Access and Lifestyle and Day Options Opportunities to Innovate

Bedford Group
615 Goodwood Road
Panorama SA 5041 Australia
PO Box 23, Melrose Park SA 5039
t (08) 8275 0211
e bedford@bedfordgroup.com.au
bedfordgroup.com.au
Published by Bedford Group

Editor
Vassil Malandris
Graphic Design
Leah D'Argenio
Writers/Contributors
Vassil Malandris, Jennifer Robinson-Cox, Kate Rushforth, Doris Gambiraza, Rachael Griffiths

Front Cover
Shannon Sullivan Photography
© Copyright 2020 Bedford Group
Follow Us
f bedfordgroup
bedfordgroup
thisisbedfordgroup
bedfordgroup

Maggie's welcome

Hello everyone
and welcome to
our first e-edition
of Bedford's
Changing Lives
– Winter 2020!

I hope you are all healthy, happy and coping with spending so much time indoors – whether you're working from home or taking care of and supporting your family member. Understandably, it's a challenging time but so important for all of us to continue to comply with the government's restrictions and recommendations, to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

Much has changed for all of us with the pandemic deeply impacting the way we live, work, and for us here at Bedford, how we provide employment, care and services. The good news is, despite all the challenges and a reduced workforce, we have managed to carefully navigate our way through this turbulent period.

We introduced increased hygiene, cleaning and sanitation measures, social distancing protocols for our 1700 clients and staff and, where possible, provided work from home opportunities and introduced one-on-one at home services and Work Books.

To manage the economic downturn, we developed a Hybrid Operating Model to bolster our busier departments and reduce the workload in areas where there was a reduction in clients attending work, Day Options and Community Access and Lifestyle (CAL) as they made the decision to self-isolate, and for our commercial businesses, customer orders reduced somewhat. For our commercial businesses, that meant the temporary closure of our manufacturing site at Gepps Cross and five other business units including our hospitality division and Lotteries. However, every supported employee and staff member was offered work at a different department or site and in some cases received valuable training and upskilling opportunities.

The launch of a Bedford Furniture media and marketing campaign also helped our bottom line, with the sale of our Australian grown timber flat pack furniture at Bunnings hitting an all-time high – you can also order Bedford Furniture from our new website which is full of great content, the latest news, articles and even some favourite recipes from staff and clients – check it all out here: bedfordgroup.com.au

I could not be prouder of how team Bedford coped and rolled-up its sleeves to pitch in and keep the lights on. I know we will come out of this crisis more innovative and resilient and, as always, our clients remain our number one priority.



We look forward to our services across employment, Day Options and Community Access and Lifestyle being back to full steam when our self-isolating clients feel confident to return and the economy starts its recovery. Clients in our South Australian and Victorian residential sites will certainly welcome more opportunities to do get back to activities outside of home when the restrictions ease too and we will continue to comply with government requirements to provide a safe and supportive environment. We also look forward to holding another Family Network meeting when it's safe to do so and provide more updates and information about our operations, the New Employment Model and the Springbank Road upgrade to name a few.

Also, in this edition, you can read about some innovative business ventures, health and wellbeing tips, new services and as always uncover the amazing talents of our clients.

So once again, thank you for your continued support – especially during these difficult times and for being part of the Bedford Family.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "maggie". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Maggie Dowling
Chief Executive



Bedford welcomes the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

To read our full statement supporting the Royal Commission [click here](#) or visit our website.

In 2019 a Royal Commission was launched to look at all the services accessed by people with disability across Australia, including the government, disability service providers, schools, hospitals, workplaces, the justice system, businesses, charities and the community.

Bedford is committed to upholding the rights of people with disability to ensure that safe and high-quality services are provided and to enable people to achieve their goals.

We have set up a dedicated team to review our past and current service delivery and to identify any potential incidences of violence, abuse, neglect

or exploitation of people with disability. We will be open and transparent in our response to identified events, including open disclosure with affected individuals and families. Where analysis of past events identifies opportunity to improve systems to safeguard people with disability, Bedford commits to take improvement action.

We also understand that staff can also be impacted by past events of poor-quality supports to people with disability and Bedford will provide supports to staff including connection to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

People can make a submission to the Royal Commission by following the link here: disability.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/make-your-submission



Our COVID-19 Taskforce

At Bedford, the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic were unprecedented. To put us in the best position to successfully navigate those challenges, we assembled a COVID-19 Taskforce; a team of experts who created a response plan with a focus on protecting the health and well-being of everyone in the Bedford Family and to keep the lights on.

We provided up-to-date information from the government and health and disability sectors. We also implemented the following:

- Introduced increased hygiene, cleaning and sanitation measures, social distancing protocols and, where possible, provided work from home opportunities – importantly, no one at any of Bedford’s sites tested positive for COVID-19;
- Introduced additional one-on-one and in-home services for our Day Options clients who were choosing to voluntarily self-isolate;

- Created Workbooks filled with helpful information, tips and activities for clients and Supported Employees who were choosing to voluntarily self-isolate;
- Established a Hybrid Operating Model for Bedford – this saw the temporary closure of one of our sites and some business units to ensure safety and commercial viability during the pandemic, however, every supported employee and staff member could choose to work at a different department or site and in many cases learn new skills;

- Established a COVID-19 helpline to answer any questions and provided access to our free, confidential Employee Assistance Program, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and

Along with the Taskforce, our staff and supported employees have been amazing and coped well with all the changes – especially for those who chose to continue coming into work and help out wherever they could. It’s wonderful to see and a testament to the hard work being done right across Bedford, to ensure everyone feels safe and supported – thankyou team!

Looking after You

We're all in this together. We know our Bedford community is strong, and we've been incredibly proud of how the team has adjusted to the changes being made to keep us all safe.

However, the effects of these changes to our normal way of life can cause feelings of isolation and increased stress and anxiety. Here are some tips about how you can look after your wellbeing during this unusual time.



“Checking in with your family is most important at the moment. Even giving them a phone call and saying, ‘I am here for you.’”

- Lisa Braun, hospitality team member

Stay connected

Connecting with family and friends is so important, and whilst we may not be able to do that physically now, it doesn't mean we can't virtually! Here are some ideas of how you can keep in touch with your loved ones during this time:



FaceTime

Video call with several friends or family members at the same time, and even play some games!



Houseparty

An app where you can have a virtual house party with your loved ones! You can also challenge each other to games.



Phone Call

Pick up the phone and give your loved one a call.



Post a letter

Remember you also stay connected without using technology. Try writing a letter to a loved one and popping it in the post! What a special feeling it is to receive mail, and you might just receive a letter back.



Get outside

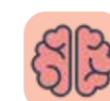
While restaurants, cinemas and other entertainment venues might be closed – there is still so much we can do in the great outdoors! Step outside for a walk and take in the nature surrounding you. Try doing a ‘nature scavenger hunt’ and notice each day how many trees, leaves, birds etc. you can spot on a walk.



Try Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a great way to help ease stress and anxiety. But what is it? Mindfulness is being present and engaged in what you're doing at that point in time. It's being aware of your thoughts and feelings, acknowledging them but not getting caught up in them.

You can find some great mindfulness exercises on the Smiling Minds app, available at [smilingminds.com.au](https://www.smilingminds.com.au).



Keep your brain active

Get out a jigsaw puzzle or boardgame you haven't played in ages and give it a go! It's so important to keep your brain active if you're choosing to self-isolate during this time.



Changing Lives

Bedford offers strong ties to the community, and the resources to help you participate.

Get involved →

New look, new website

Subscribe to our Changing Lives digital newsletter today and you could be in the running to win one of three \$100 gift vouchers.

Over the past few months, we have been updating our website and Bedford brand to help cement our reputation as South Australia's largest and most trusted employer for people with disability and provider of fantastic services.

Our website has all the latest information on our services and projects. It now has better accessibility for those with vision impairments and it's also a lot easier to navigate your way through. There are new features too – including updates about our sector, COVID-19 restrictions and we're even working on a Bedford history page. It's well worth having a look: bedfordgroup.com.au

We have also been looking at innovative ways to engage with our community. You might have heard us on the radio, and on digital platforms promoting our Bedford Furniture products.

The creative talents of the team at Bedford doesn't just end there. Our Stores Trainee, Andrew Norman,

has also showcased his acting and voice over talents in a Bedford video. This beautifully filmed video showcases a behind the scenes portrayal of Bedford, where the smallest of opportunities can bring about the biggest of changes.



It might look a little different, but we still offer the same great service and our purpose remains the same – to give choice and control to people with disability through meaningful employment, supports and services.

Changing the way we cater to the community



Our hospitality division was recently forced to shut down temporarily due to the COVID-19 restrictions and our cooks, chef and baristas were redeployed into other departments.

However, that didn't stop brothers, Beni and Soren Geno who manage our hospitality teams, from activating our commercial kitchen and creating healthy lunch packs at our Balyana residential site.

"It started with a few healthy lunch boxes for high-needs clients and Bedford residents who might not be able to buy or make their own lunch, and it just grew from there," Soren said.

Soon the team was making hundreds of healthy cold packs, gourmet salads, rolls and delicious hot meals each week.

"Our residents love getting the menus and choosing their favourite dishes. By having more meals to pick from, clients feel even more empowered to take ownership about what they eat. It's fantastic," Client services manager, Andrea Hall explained.

"I love the yummy meals and they're healthy too," Balyana resident Rosanna (pictured) said.

But the biggest treat for Rosanna and all our South Australian and Victorian residents is looking forward to the easing of restrictions so families and friends can finally come to visit.

Thank you everyone for your patience and resilience during lockdown.

Share in the Joy of Giving

To all our supporters, we want to thank you for your ongoing generosity and support – especially during this difficult time. It’s one of the main reasons Bedford is still operating and still able to empower people with disability.

Unfortunately, our most vulnerable Australians are at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19 due to underlying health issues, with many of our clients choosing to self-isolate to protect their health. However, as you may have experienced yourself, being isolated from your loved ones, work colleagues and friends and with so much change to your regular life it can be debilitating.

The impact of business and services closing has been felt across our community but I’m proud to say that at Bedford, we responded quickly

to the government’s restrictions and recommendations to ensure that our 1300 clients are not disconnected and can access as many services as possible, including new programs from home.

The ongoing impact will be costly, and we need your kindness more than ever before, particularly to help our South Australian regional centres.



Please help us make a difference today and visit our website today via the [Give](#) page.



“ I feel like as a team, we achieve something every day. Working at Bedford makes me proud. ”
– Kandie

Spanning from the Yorke Peninsula through to the South-East of the state, we have seven regional Bedford sites which provide crucial services and supports to people with disability. Each site has a team of hardworking clients and staff who are passionate about providing the highest quality of service to the town they call home. Whether that be cleaning the local playgrounds or school, manufacturing an activity kit for a Bunnings store, doing the gardening for local council areas or providing laundry services for local businesses, our team put their heart and soul into their job.

Your support will help us upgrade our equipment and services at our regional sites and give back to the communities and our team who work so hard.

This would mean so much to our clients, like Kandie Kirkland; a valued, hard-working member of the Millicent commercial laundry team. Kandie is so passionate about her job, that in the 11 years she has been working at Bedford, she has never taken a sick day.



Last year we asked you to help raise funds to build an Art Space at our Panorama site. With thanks to your support the next wave of budding Bedford artists is now utilising this wonderful space.



“It’s such a critical component for our Mill in Mount Gambier and we really want to be able to continue this work.”

Comfy beds for cute ducks

One is from Victoria, the other South Australia, but there are no cross-border hostilities between these two organisations.

For nearly 20 years, Bedford Mount Gambier and Nhill’s Luv a Duck have been developing a healthy partnership over, of all things, wood shavings.

Site Manager Graham Harris says in previous times our timber mill’s core purpose was to cut logs into lumber and the leftover shavings were dumped into landfill at a significant cost. However, we turned that deficit into a surplus when Luv a Duck came on board.

“They explained to us that the shavings were a precious commodity to livestock companies because animals love to nest on the curly wood chips. So, every day they send an empty truck across the border and it leaves our site filled to the brim with wood shavings.”

“... And when the shavings can no longer be used for nesting, they’re turned into fertiliser. How’s that for recycling?” Graham said.

The focus now is to replace our ageing dust extractor which not only removes the dust but also the shavings from the factory floor as it is nearing the end of its life cycle.



“It’s such a critical component for our Mill in Mount Gambier and we really want to be able to continue this work,” Nick Conley, General Manager of Manufacturing said.

For more information from Graham and to see our extractor in action click [here](#).

And if you need a product or service from one of regional centres, have a look at our online brochure [here](#).

A Day in My Life with Mark Silvestri

Senior Packaging Employee,
Bedford Panorama



“I just love the variety and the team environment too.”
– Mark

For more than 40 years, Mark has worked across many areas at Bedford – from spray painting to woodwork.

These days he brings his skills and friendly smile to the 670- strong packaging team in Panorama as we embark on a one of the biggest contracts in Bedford’s 75-year history.

“Everyone’s talking about chips at the moment because of our new deal with Smith’s snack foods. There are boxes and boxes of them and it’s so busy so we’ve taken on team members from other parts of Bedford that had to close down for a bit – like hospitality, because of the Coronavirus (restrictions),” he says.

For the most part though, the 56-year-old veteran works on complex irrigation systems and at show time, helps the team assemble more than 200,000 showbags every year.

“I get in at 8 o’clock, wash my hands of course, and then Adam my supervisor tells me Mark you’re working on Pope products today and off I go, I just love the variety and the team environment too.”

That team environment was tested recently during the COVID-19 crisis when many clients chose to stay home – especially those who had compromised immune systems.

But not Mark...

“Well I’m still pretty healthy and I can’t imagine sitting around at home. I’d get so bored!”

“You know in nine years-time I’ll be 65 so that means I’ll have clocked up 50 years at Bedford. Pretty good huh?” he said.

If you’d like to see a video about our new deal with PepsiCo and packaging capabilities, [click here](#).

Bedford's newest digs

Did you know, Bedford has made the move to a new distribution centre at Woodville?



Located near the busy St Clair development on Cheltenham Parade, we fitted out the factory last year after we outgrew our former site at Pooraka.

The Woodville Distribution Centre is more than three times bigger and now has on-site storage capabilities which saves us considerable monthly storage fees.

“It’s a really modern warehouse with offices, a kitchen, outdoor area, a canopy for loading in all weather conditions and a sizeable hard stand for container storage and unloading,” Bedford’s General Manager of Manufacturing, Nick Conley said.

From this warehouse, we now send out over 160,000 Bedford Ready to Assemble flat pack furniture products to Bunnings Warehouse. Our hard working teams



at Port Pirie and Kadina also produce and distribute Bunnings Activity Kits, Planter Boxes for vegies and even Billy Carts. Meanwhile at Mount Gambier we now produce ten thousand bags of kindling for the On The Run group each year and this is also distributed out of our bustling Woodville warehouse.

During peak periods and public holidays, it’s not unusual for the team to pick and pack over 100 orders in a day to supply the 265 Bunnings stores in Australia and New Zealand. We also distribute bulk products to our 3PL warehouses located in Hobart, Perth, Brisbane and Auckland making Bedford distribution truly a national and international distributor of timber products.

Full steam ahead for APG

Arrr, me hearties! It's been all hands-on deck for Adelaide Property and Garden's latest landscaping project – a new pirate-themed playground at Seaside, Moana. It even features a tall ship at the centre of the playground!



Awarded the contract just before Christmas last year from Hickinbotham Group, the team has been hard at work bringing Moana Seaside Park to life for children and parents alike to enjoy. The project is due to be completed by the end of May.

Apart from the tall ship, the playground features rope climb equipment, rock walks and a water hand-pump. There are also several nature play elements, including a creek made from rock cast into concrete.

For those wanting to make a day of it, the team has created a large green reserve with 50 native trees and five picnic settings.

This has been an incredibly detailed project for the APG crew who have learnt many new skills and had a lot of fun along the way. In recognition of their exceptional and high-quality work, APG has been awarded several additional, smaller projects with the same client.

Please go and visit as of July and have a look for yourself!

If you want the opportunity to work on exciting projects like this and join the APG team, call us on **8275 0211** or visit bedfordgroup.com.au.



You'll find this playground at Seaside, Moana located at Seaside Blvd, Moana.

Maloney's masterpieces

The north pole, a field of forests, sunset over a bustling city or the pride lands of Africa.

These are some of the ideas and images swirling through Josh Maloney's mind when he starts mixing colours on a new canvas.

"... But no matter what he creates, it's always animated - like a cartoon and that's how Josh sees the world, in animation." Mum, Sue explains.

Josh's artistic talents were detected very early- soon after he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. First it was doodles, then drawings. By age 7 he was painting entire animated story boards and pinning them on the wall. A teacher at his school recognised his ability and convinced his parents to take him to Tutti Art school.

"We don't know where he gets it from. Certainly not his Mum or Dad. I can't even do stick figures that well. But his creations were just amazing," according to Sue.

Now at 22, the Bedford employee is turning heads in the art community and even recently held his first solo exhibition as part of the Adelaide Fringe.

"Oh yes, yes I did. It was a good exhibition. I could do this forever," Josh said.

They nearly missed the event, though according to father Neil.

"We were caught in traffic and running late on the opening night, so I called the organisers (Dentons law firm) and already five paintings had sold," he said.

You can also see more of Josh's amazing artworks by clicking on this [link](#).



“ Oh yes, yes I did. It was a good exhibition. I could do this forever. ”
- Josh



When they finally arrived, they were greeted by a crowd of nearly 200 people and eventually all 14 paintings sold.

"It was so good for Josh, he's normally quite shy in social settings, but he really worked the room and talked to people," Sue said.

"I feel famous now. With all the money I might buy some chocolate bars and Disney DVDs. I love Gumball and Loony Tunes," Josh said.

When he's not showcasing his artistic flair, Josh works three days a-week in the packaging department at our Torrensville site.

"He loves it. It started with a work experience stint at 15 and then Bedford helped him transition into a flexible job which allows him to keep attending art school," Sue said.

"My favourite thing is my friends. Martina and Vanessa and Jayne, Annie and Guiseppe and Beatrice ... AND lunch breaks" Josh added.

If you would like more information about our Work Experience or School Leaver programs, contact Bedford today.

Opportunities to innovate

South Australia's health restrictions created a number of challenges for Bedford's Community Access and Lifestyle service and Day Options programs: how to continue providing meaningful programs – particularly for clients who were self-isolating?

We suspended our 'Social Saturdays' and sports lessons and many clients were concerned other classes and critical social interactions would be affected.

But not at Bedford. We found new ways to deliver services. Senior Day Options support worker, Kiara Flynn explains...

"We had to get innovative. So, we implemented one on one support services at clients' homes and enhanced existing services at Bedford sites with safety in mind. We also taught social distancing protocols, hygiene and sanitation skills, while maintaining the everyday centre-based activities. It became an empowering experience and really galvanised the team"

Here's what some of our clients thought of the changes...

Dean Franklin Home and community support

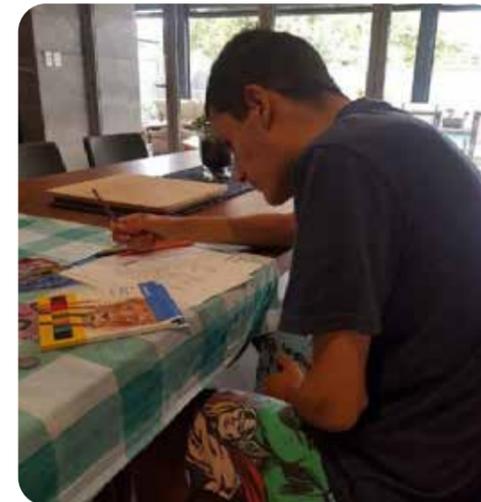
Dean is looking really happy these days as he, and support worker Jamie, spend time together at Wittunga reserve.

Dean has been practicing taking photos and using kinetic sand as a sensory activity. He has also been using an app called Proloquo2go on his iPad to communicate with staff and his family... and he is getting very good at telling them what he would like to do!

The next step for Dean and Jamie is to go for a tandem bike ride, using Dean's new Bike attachment that connects to the back of a single bike, turning it into a double!



David Minicozzi 1:1 support



David was happy and engaged when his support program and Disability Support Worker, Jayden came to him.

David's dad surprised his son one day with a home-made puzzle – and he really enjoyed finishing the entire task even though it was quite tricky.

Micah Hahn 1:1 keeping safe with cooking classes at home

Micah has spent time making some delicious muffins with his support staff Jayden as well as getting out in the fresh air for a great walk in his local area.

Micah and Jayden often have chat about what is happening in Bedford's Day Options Centre so that Micah can keep in touch with how all of his friends are doing!

It is hoped that Micah will be a willing participant in the pilot program where Day Option centre-based clients connect with in-home supported clients via on-line video chats.



Jayden also took him out for walks to a nearby reserve where they enjoyed building sandcastles on the banks of a creek and skipping stones across the water. David says he's looking forward to seeing Jayden again for more fun-filled programs.



BUY LOCAL

BUY LOCALS

When you buy Bedford flat pack furniture 100% of all proceeds go back to supporting South Australians.

So when you think flat pack furniture, think Bedford.


Bedford[™]
FURNITURE



Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse