



BURKE & BEYOND



Term 3 - 2026

SPRING

Newsletter

Term Holiday Dates

Friday 2 October

Quarter 3 Ends

Monday 5 October

Quarter 4 Starts

Monday 2 & Tuesday 3 November
(Service Closure & Public Holiday)

Melbourne Cup

Thursday 17 December

Last day of Quarter 4

Friday 18 December 2026 to
Friday 8 January 2027

Summer Break

Service reopens on
Monday 11 January 2027



Message from the CEO

Lisa Sawatzky

As we move through a period of significant change across the NDIS, our focus at Burke and Beyond remains firmly on the people we support. We are continuing to plan carefully for the reforms expected to affect Social, Civic and Community Participation funding from October, while advocating for arrangements that protect choice, meaningful participation, and continuity of support.

Alongside this work, we are strengthening and broadening our services. This includes expanding our outreach and in-home supports, increasing flexibility when supports are available, building stronger referral relationships across eastern and south-eastern Melbourne, and continuing to develop employment pathways through our Finding and Keeping a Job support. We are also now providing Behaviour Support and High Intensity supports as well as Supported Independent Living.

Change can bring uncertainty, and we are taking a cautious, staged approach as further NDIS guidance becomes available. Participants and families remain central to our planning, and we are committed to communicating openly as the reforms take shape.

Most importantly, our purpose remains unchanged: providing safe, high-quality, person-centred services that support people to build independence, pursue their goals, and stay connected with their communities. Thank you to our participants, families, staff and community partners for your continued trust and support.

Lisa Sawatzky

DANDENONG

Horticulture

While the unpredictable weather kept our Horticulture team out of the garden for a large part of the term, it certainly didn't stop them from growing! The group quickly adapted, spending rainy days mastering tool maintenance and completely reorganising the shed to make it highly efficient.

When the sun finally came out, the team went straight to work on some incredible community projects. Aside from keeping the lawns beautifully mowed and whipper-snipped, the participants put their design and building skills to the test—crafting custom wooden bench seats and creating a beautiful new sign for our community garden.



Car Wash Program

Our Car Wash program made a successful return to Christway College this term! The Tuesday crew loved reconnecting with the school staff, delivering a top-tier, cost-effective service while sharpening their communication, teamwork, and workplace safety skills.

On Fridays, the team grew with the addition of a new member, giving everyone a fantastic opportunity to practice collaborative teamwork. Every participant stepped up to the plate, rotating through all the essential jobs—from washing and polishing the exteriors to meticulously vacuuming and detailing the interiors. We are incredibly proud of our hardworking detailers!



Beyond Rhythm

Term 3 has been a highly successful and rewarding period for the Beyond Rhythm Band program, with participants demonstrating significant growth in teamwork, musicianship, and confidence. Throughout the term, participants developed their skills in setting up and managing equipment, selecting rehearsal playlists, and strengthening their musical abilities through structured instrumental warm-ups and vocal practice. The group's commitment and enthusiasm contributed to successful performances at Disability Pride Day and the Horticulture Program launch, showcasing their progress and dedication. The creativity, resilience, and positive attitude demonstrated throughout the term have established a strong foundation for continued growth and future performance opportunities.



BOX HILL

Overview

This semester at Burke and Beyond Box Hill, our participants have proudly been giving back to the community through meaningful volunteer work that has made a real difference in the lives of others. Participants have been preparing sandwiches and food items for Ronald McDonald House, helping to support families who are spending extended periods in hospital with loved ones.

For many of these families, the financial and emotional pressures of navigating illness can be overwhelming and having access to food and practical support can ease some of the burden during a very challenging time.

In addition, participants have been preparing and contributing food for It's The Little Things, an organisation dedicated to supporting people experiencing hardship. Through these activities, our participants have developed valuable life skills while demonstrating kindness, empathy and a genuine commitment to their community. These experiences showcase that people with disability are not only active members of the community but also generous contributors who make a positive impact on the lives of others. We are incredibly proud of the compassion, dedication and community spirit shown by our participants throughout the semester.



Sophie Nichols

Hi, my name is Sophie Nichols and this year have almost completed my 4th year at the Next Step program Burke and Beyond Box Hill.

This Semester 2 we have learnt all about employability skills and how we can use them in our day-to-day programs where we can achieve our NDIS goals by developing our independence skills in the community, travelling to and from Kew programs to learn how to navigate the PTV app online and learn about different types of public transportation including buses, trams and trains to get to our destination.

I have also learned how to do different things in podcasting and computer skills for the workplace where we have learned how to use different types of branding techniques for posting things up on the Kew Neighbourhood

Learning Centre and Spare Chair cafe on our Instagram page.

We have been learning all about storytelling in podcasting where we have learned how to know if a story is true or not real.

By Sophie Nichols 2026



RINGWOOD

Overview

As Quarter 3 comes to a close and Quarter 4 begins, we are starting to look ahead to the end of another successful year. These past couple of months have been filled with achievements, learning opportunities, community involvement and personal milestones for many of our participants. It has been fantastic to see everyone continue to work towards their goals and support one another along the way.



One of the highlights this quarter has been the success of Ringwood participant Chelsea, who demonstrated outstanding determination in her employment journey. Chelsea, with support from Burke and Beyond and Down Syndrome Victoria, applied for a position with Kmart and successfully progressed through three separate interviews before being offered the role. We are incredibly proud of her achievement. Chelsea's success serves as a wonderful reminder that hard work and perseverance can lead to great opportunities.

Quarter 3 has also marked the completion of several TAFE courses through Box Hill Institute that began at the start of this year. Participants who have participated in the Healthy Me and Hospitality courses have worked diligently throughout the year and have now received their certificates. These achievements reflect months of commitment and learning and we congratulate everyone involved. At the same time, we are excited to welcome some new courses commencing next quarter, providing participants with fresh opportunities to develop skills, build confidence and continue progressing towards their goals.

Recently, Ringwood participated in a range of R U OK? Day activities. These activities encouraged important conversations about mental health and wellbeing, focusing on the importance of checking in with friends, family members and colleagues and offering support when it is needed. Participants engaged thoughtfully in discussions and activities that reinforced the message that a simple conversation can make a meaningful difference. Adding to these efforts, the Digital Futures group created a social media video to help spread awareness of the R U OK? Day message and encourage others to connect with those around them.

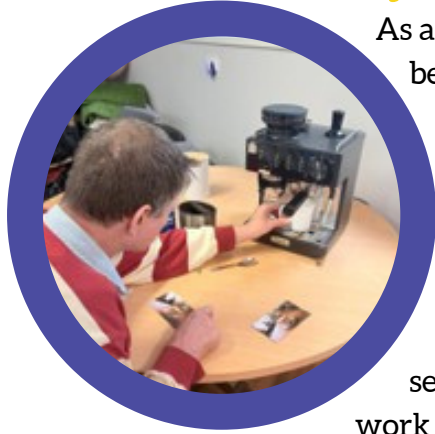
As we move into the final quarter of the year, we would like to congratulate all participants and staff on their hard work, dedication, and achievements throughout Quarter 3. Whether through employment success, educational accomplishments or personal growth, there is much to celebrate. Ringwood is looking forward to an exciting Quarter 4 and a strong finish to the year with plenty more opportunities for achievements and success. Well done, everyone!

BALWYN

Living and Learning

This term, participants at Balwyn have been developing practical, everyday skills through hands-on learning experiences. From building confidence in the kitchen to practicing workplace routines and community communication, each activity is designed to support independence, connection and personal growth.

Work Ready Skills



As an extension of the cooking program at Balwyn, participants have recently begun a Work Ready Skills Program focused on the basics of coffee making. Alongside learning how to prepare coffee, participants are continuing to strengthen important workplace skills such as hand hygiene, taking orders, following routines and working as part of a team. Thanks to a generous donation from the Lions Club of Boroondara, we now have a coffee machine on site. This has created a valuable opportunity for participants to gain hands-on experience in a supportive setting while building confidence and practical skills they can use in future work and community environments.

Cooking Confidence

In the kitchen, participants have been getting hands-on and discovering just how enjoyable cooking can be. From whipping up fluffy pancakes to creating delicious homemade flatbreads using everyday pantry ingredients, they are building confidence while learning valuable cooking skills they can use at home and in daily life.



Money Management & Independent Living



We are also focusing on money management and independent living skills, giving participants opportunities to learn about budgeting, make thoughtful spending choices and practice communication skills within the wider community. These skills play an important role in supporting greater independence, confidence and everyday decision-making.

OUTREACH SUPPORT

Thomas

I enjoy Outreach days with my Burke and Beyond support worker. Once a week, I volunteer at Salvos, go to the library, and attend my speech therapy appointment. Sometimes we also go for walks where I practise my navigation skills around Eastland and locally outside.

I like to volunteer at Salvos because I get to learn new skills and socialise with other volunteers. My favourite part is celebrating birthdays with the group where I get to sing Happy Birthday. Everyone is very welcoming and kind to me.

Outreach also gives me a chance to do my speech therapy practise at the library with my support worker. I also enjoy attending my weekly speech therapy appointments. My speech therapist helps me to practise how to clearly express myself.

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Inclusion that counts

SUPPORTIVE | PROGRESSIVE | ACCOUNTABLE