

Volunteer Profile: Phil Phillips

Volunteers are an extremely important part of The Mai-Wel Group. Each volunteer brings unique gifts to Mai-Wel and our clients through sharing their time, energy and skills.

One such individual, Phil Phillips volunteers for Community Access Day Program (CAD) every Friday and has been volunteering since August 2007.

"When I first started volunteering, a couple of clients were a little shy at first and it took a while for me to gain their trust and friendship. Over time we have formed a great relationship and now we are the greatest of mates, along with other clients I have met during my days at Mai-Wel" said Mr Phillips.

Phil's background is in the building industry, where he was self employed as a Painter and Wallpaper Hanger for 36 years carrying out work all over the Hunter for builders, decorators and residential clients.

In his teenage years many a mile was notched up during the weeks as his chosen sport was cycling. Phil was NSW Junior State 50 miles road champion two years running and the NSW State Track Champion in sprint, time trial and 5 mile rides. He was runner-up at the Australian Track titles in Junior Time Trials and came 3rd in the 5 mile and sprint titles in the finals and travelled around the state and country competing for NSW.

Outside of his volunteering, Phil has been married to Denise for 36 years and they have two children, a son and a daughter, a granddaughter and another grandchild due in June. In his spare time Phil enjoys attending to his veggie garden and pruning the flowers and roses in the garden.

Phil became a volunteer to give something back by helping people with a disability. "I keep coming back for the friendship from the great relationships I have built over the last 9 months with the clients... and I'm sure they look forward to seeing me too" he said.

Employer of the Month

Hunter LabourForce Solutions is a specialist employment service catering to the specific needs of people with a disability. More than just recruitment, they provide training, support and services to enable people with a disability to obtain and retain valued employment in the local community.

Beresfield Bowling Club's CEO, Darren Mulligan is an employer who chooses to make a difference. The club currently employs a number of people with a disability and is one of the many local organisations that have come to understand and capitalise on the value of employing people with a disability in their businesses.

Hunter LabourForce Solutions, a division of The Mai-Wel Group, approached Beresfield Bowling Club 4 years ago looking for an employment opportunity for one of their clients. The result has been an on-going relationship that has seen more people with a disability employed by the club as well as the club reaping the benefits of employing people from a diverse pool of talent.

Darren believes that employing a person with a disability was a great business decision, one that he recommends to anyone who has a place available. "It was definitely a conscious business decision of ours. These people just get in and do their jobs without a lot of prompting at all. They are well presented and have integrated and assimilated into the workforce perfectly. Essentially they are just another person here doing their job - but they are doing it really well".

"Beresfield Bowling Club is a great employer with a great attitude towards staff recruitment," said Kyllie Tegg, Manager of Hunter LabourForce Solutions.

"One of the biggest barriers to employment faced by people with a disability is the attitude of employers. Changing attitudes comes down to raising awareness of disability issues, and repositioning disability as a business concern."

Employers like Beresfield Bowling Club have done so by providing work experience, traineeships and employment opportunities for people with a disability. In turn they have demonstrated that they have an understanding of their customers and their community, and their business has benefited by lower recruitment costs, increased staff retention, lower absenteeism, and increased worker morale.

"Almost 4 million Australians have a disability, and people with a disability represent 16.6% of Australia's working age population. In today's business landscape, it is very important for employers to reflect the diversity of the community in which they operate," said Kyllie.

Beresfield Bowling Club has been nominated for Mai-Wel's Employer of the Year Award. The Hunter LabourForce Employer of the Year Awards have been established to highlight great business practice in disability employment and recognize the achievements of local employers who have demonstrated a commitment to the employment of people with a disability.

Each month an employer will be nominated for their commitment towards employment of people with a disability in their community. "Darren Mulligan and his team typify the new breed of progressive employers, who realise that there is an untapped pool of talent that can add value to your business" Kyllie said.

The Mai-Wel Group - A True Maitland Success Story

A group of families came together in 1960 with a shared vision to provide education and opportunities for their children with a disability. No one envisaged that The Mai-Wel Group would be the successful, best practice and industry leader it is today.

In the past eight years The Mai-Wel Group has grown and diversified. In 2000, 53 people with disabilities were employed in Mai-Wel businesses, 20 clients were assisted in programs and 32 staff were employed.

Today the Group which has expanded programs and services across the Hunter region employs 109 people with disabilities, provides programs and activities to more than 800 clients and employs 130+ support and administration staff. The turnover has increased five fold.

Pennie Kearney, CEO, credits Mai-Wel's success to the commitment to customer relations, dedication and expertise of the Management Team and Staff and more importantly, the support of our local community.

Mai-Wel's significant growth has recently necessitated the appointment of a Business Development Manager. John Lechner has been with Mai-Wel since September 2007 and has already connected various local businesses across different divisions of Mai-Wel. "Recently I placed a person with a disability from Hunter LabourForce Solutions into employment with NewTech Pavers, a long term client of Hunter PACE Setters. We are now looking at supplying NewTech with rags from The Enterprise Centre" Mr Lechner said.

This holistic approach ensures customer needs are met by providing services and/or products from the range of Mai-Wel businesses. This new business model is already paying significant dividends for both Mai-Wel and its customers.

"Most importantly, the increased strength of Mai-Wel's businesses means that they are able to better advance the lives of people with a disability," said Mrs Kearney.

If the Mai-Wel Group is able to assist your business please don't hesitate to contact John on 02 4932 8599.

NEWS

Tocal Field Days

The recent Tocal Field Days provided an excellent opportunity for Mai-Wel to gain exposure to both local residents and businesses.

During the three days, attendees of the Field Days were offered the opportunity to win a beautiful Mountain Ash Two Seater Outdoor Chair donated by Hunter PACE Setters, the timber manufacturing division of The Mai-Wel Group. The lucky winner of the chair was Linda from Yango Bend Cottage, a delightful Bed & Breakfast located in the Wollombi Valley.

You too can enjoy some beautiful outdoor furniture from Hunter PACE Setters; call today and speak to Bill on (02) 4932 8599 or you can test drive the Two Seater at Yango Bend Cottage, www.yangobend.com.au.

New Staff

The Mai-Wel Group welcomes the following permanent and casual staff: Karen Green - Support Worker, CAD • Bronwyn Shields - Intervention Support Manager • Naomi Fuller - Support Worker, Clean Team • Margaret Dowling - Support Worker, HLFS

Employment Anniversaries

Mai-Wel extends its congratulations to the following people who recently reached a milestone anniversary with the organisation and thank them for their continued service.

Adele Hinchcliffe - 35 Years • Evelyn Kucharski - 30 Years • Nadine Church - 5 Years • Mathew Olden - 5 Years • Allen Stokes - 5 Years • Rebecca Morse - 5 Years • Paul Osland - 5 Years

Supported Holiday

Accompanied by Mai-Wel's Social Educator, Greg McLeod and volunteer Phil Phillips, six clients recently embarked on an adventure to Dubbo. (see picture below)

Charles, Daniel, Eddie, Paul, Steve and Warren, travelled by bus to Dubbo to visit the renowned Dubbo Zoo. The group had a great day watching and feeding the animals. The intrepid travelers also visited the Wellington Caves, Dubbo Gaol, and made handcrafted wooden boomerangs. The highlight of the trip was a visit to a 2600 acre sheep station.

Mai-Wel's Greatest Shave

Phillip and Jordan from the Mai-Wel Transition to Work Program decided that they would like to raise some much needed funds for the Leukaemia Foundation. With the support of their friends and family and the Mai Wel community they were able to raise over \$450.

Patrick Tobin from PACE Setters also decided to shave his head for the Leukaemia Foundation and raise some much needed funds. Patrick raised \$250 towards the cause and had a huge audience for the shave, including his mother and sister! This cause is close to Patrick's heart as his mother has survived cancer.



THE Mai-Wel GROUP

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From the CEO's Desk



I am very excited to present the very first Mai-Wel Networker. In this edition we have shared some of the inspirational stories of triumph and achievement that make being a part of Mai-Wel special.

For me as the CEO of this wonderful organisation, I am surprised every day by the courage and determination shown by our clients. I am particularly keen to share with you the story of our Transition To Work clients who are currently developing a campaign to rollout across the Hunter, highlighting some of the issues that they, as young people face. I found the campaign, "I am a young person, NOT a disability", heart warming. I do hope that you find this story equally as inspiring and are able to support this initiative.

The Mai-Wel Group has experienced significant growth and change over the past few years. Our goal of excellent customer service and quality service provision to people with a disability has underpinned our achievements. Our other

focus is on the future as we continue to seek new and innovative opportunities for our clients and their families.

The energy, commitment and skills of our team ensure that our goal, to meet the needs of people with a disability in our area, is achieved. Mai-Wel currently has more than 800 clients and I know the number is probably twice that number.

I hope you enjoy reading the stories in the first Mai-Wel Networker. I look forward to your feedback and support in the future as we strive to advance the lives of people with a disability.

Pennie Kearney
CEO



“Technology Is Killing Us”

The GR8 Mai-Wel Comedy d-b8

And the affirmative have it – technology IS killing us! This was the outcome when the fourth annual Mai-Wel Celebrity Comedy Debate took place at Maitland Town Hall on Saturday 14th June.

The hot topic for discussion this year was “Technology Is Killing Us”. Guest celebrity debaters included Stephen Abbott (aka the Sandman), US comedian Eddie Ifft, and Tahir Bilgic on stage alongside local identities such as 1233 ABC Newcastle Breakfast presenter Aaron Kearney, former Knights Captain and Principal of the Aigis Group, Mark Sargent and with Carlee Potter flying the flag for the girls.

Whilst the Mai-Wel Debate is well known for its comic relief and tendency to get completely off track, there was of course a more serious purpose to the evening; to raise funds for the Mai-Wel Group and the development of a purpose built Community Programs Centre.



“The debate was, as always, a night of fun and frivolity. A chance for the people of Maitland and the surrounding community to come along and enjoy a night of excellent entertainment and catch up with friends over some delectable finger foods and fine wines; and of course assist to raise funds to build a purpose built centre to house our services for our ever growing number of clients with disability” said Pennie Kearney, CEO of The Mai-Wel Group.

The night was a great success, raising the \$12,000 to be put toward the purpose built centre.

Mai-Wel wishes to thank the following organisations without whose support this event would not have been possible; Maitland TAFE, Maitland Mercury, Prime Television, The Herald, 1233 ABC Newcastle, The Event House, Bronte Guest House and Hunter Valley Wedding Cars, McWilliams Mt Pleasant Estate, The Bradford Hotel, Tooheys, Coca-Cola, Eclipse Media and Events, Judy Nadin, Nathan Eshman, Spartys at Spotlight, Greater Union Cinemas, WooHoo, Bunnings Maitland, NJC, The Dockyard, The Entertainment Book, Newcastle Knights, Mantra Resort, Pacific Dunes and Northern Highland Travel.

Event Round Up Wayne Bennett Dinner

More than 120 guests attended Mai-Wel's first fundraising dinner on Saturday 12th April in Newcastle to meet one of Australia's most innovative and inspiring modern day coaches, Wayne Bennett, coach of the Brisbane Broncos.

The night was a huge success, raising more than \$4,000 for our purpose built Community Programs Centre as well as increasing general awareness about The Mai-Wel Group.

Guests dined on a delicious three course meal accompanied by some fantastic entertainment by performer Liz Taylor, an eight time Mo Award winner renowned for her variety shows and vocal talents, and her spectacular visual tribute to Tina Turner. However it was Bennett that stole the show, speaking about his life as a coach, his future and sharing a couple of tales from his time in the spotlight. He spoke positively about the job Mai-Wel does to ‘make a difference’ in people's lives. Bennett also took questions from the floor revealing a softer side to his ‘no nonsense’ approach to rugby league.

Mai-Wel would like to extend sincere appreciation and thanks to the following organisations for their assistance in making the dinners such a wonderful success. 1233 ABC Newcastle, Prime, Maitland Mercury, Hope Estate, The Wests Group, Tooheys, Eclipse Media and Events.

Mai-Wel also wishes to thank the following supporters for their generosity and contributions WHO Presentation Services, Judy Nadin, Newcastle Knights and Stadium Catering, Harrigans River Lodge, Eco Point Myall Shores Resort, Hunter PACE Setters, Grand Mercure Hunter Valley Gardens, Burke's Backyard Magazine, Maddies of Bolwarra, Rebel Sport and Luigi Bormioli Glassware.

Focus on Clients

Jacob is one of the clients from Transition To Work who initiated and developed the TTW Youth Week Ability Campaign; “I am a young person, not a disability”.

He is 18 years old and lives at Rutherford. Jacob has Becker Muscular Dystrophy which causes progressive muscle weakness beginning in the lower body.

Jacob on the campaign: “I helped out in every part of this campaign – just as the rest of the group did. I had input on the slogan, the poster and the whole idea behind it. I also presented the campaign at the launch.”

Jacob on what he wants to achieve personally from the campaign: “I just want to make people more aware that everyone should be treated equally... and also that people need to respect accessible parking.”

Jacob on what he likes: “My favourite food is definitely pasta and my favourite music is probably Rock, especially ACDC. I go and

watch West Maitland in the local Rugby League competition every weekend as my sister's fiancé plays and I use to play for them. Sometimes I go shopping with my family or go to the movies every now and then. I do normal stuff – like any other 18 year old would do!”

Jacob on his biggest achievement: “My biggest achievement to date has been completing my Higher School Certificate (HSC). I did Math's, English, Religion, Engineering, Industrial Technology (Graphics) and Science.”

Jacob on TTW: “This is my first year at TTW. I went to high school at St Mary's and then came here. TTW has helped me become more independent; however my main objective is to gain employment. TTW has really helped with that goal because already I have done work experience with Maitland City Council where I helped develop and distribute a survey and I did Customer Service data entry. Hopefully in the future I would like to get a full time job in a similar role.”

“I just want to make people more aware that everyone should be treated equally...”

“I am a Young Person, NOT a disability!”

“I am a young person, NOT a disability” is an awareness campaign developed by the young people of Transition To Work, a division of The Mai-Wel Group. These young people are passionate about increasing awareness and perception throughout the wider community as they feel that at times they are misunderstood and that their disability defines them.

Clients from Mai-Wel's Transition To Work (TTW) Program collaborated with the Maitland Youth Development Officer (YDO) in association with the recent Youth Week; Australia's largest celebration of young people which took place between 5 – 13 April 2008.

After a series of meetings and discussions, clients from the TTW Program decided that they would like to use Youth Week as a platform to promote young people with a disability to the community, along with other youth services. To achieve this, the clients initiated a Youth Week Ability Campaign that focused on community awareness and acceptance of people with a disability and awareness around accessible youth orientated activities.

The clients worked on a motto, design, vehicle and the campaign itself and

produced a series of posters and postcards for youth services and schools to display and hand out.

Then TTW Coordinator, Leanne Johnson credits the clients for their enthusiasm. “The whole project was very much driven by the clients with only support and assistance from myself and Lisa Ronneburg, Maitland and Dungog's Youth Development Officer.”

The campaign was launched on Monday 7th April at the Achieve Employment and Training Centre where clients showcased their posters and postcards to a variety of local youth service representatives, teachers and government officials. The campaign, which was presented by the clients, was received exceptionally well, resulting in enthusiasm and support from youth services.

However, this campaign and its resources have the potential to be used for other regions and their youth services and further development within the local community. Although some funding was provided by The Youth Week Committee and the Youth Development Officer, further funding is required so that the TTW clients can advance the campaign to continue to create



awareness and perception.

A client from the TTW program explained, “we would like to raise more money so that we can put together information kits, a DVD package, television ads and a website for people to access and learn more about people with a disability. The money we raise could also go towards training on how to create DVD's and film making, photography or public speaking tuition so that we can do this whole project ourselves. We want to be able to own the project and be more involved in the creation of the campaign – because that is what it is all about; making sure people know that I am a young person, not a disability and I can do it!”

If you want to educate and empower the community to better understand and accept people with a disability, please donate today.

The Transition To Work Program aims to assist young people with a disability to transition from school to adult life by assisting clients to develop pre-vocational skills and work readiness, acquire work and social skills, gain confidence in their work ability and sample work in a variety of workplaces by volunteering.

Training takes off in 2008

The Mai-Wel Group has provided training to people with a disability for more than 45 years. More recently though, Mai-Wel Training Services, a Registered Training Organisation, began delivering Nationally Accredited courses to the business sector and to individuals.

Using highly qualified and experienced trainers and flexible training options, Mai-Wel Training Services specialises in the Community Services and Business sector from Certificate I, through to Diploma level.

The training provides an avenue for people working or wanting to work in the community sector to improve their skills and gain nationally accredited qualifications in such fields as Disability Work, Aged Care and Service Management. The training also provides an avenue for any industry that wishes to improve the skills of their staff in IT or management.

Certificate IV in Frontline Management is delivered every second Tuesday. This program has attracted employees of the local business sector who have joined the more traditional Mai-Wel Training Services students in 2008. This course is particularly

suited to people who are keen to learn about their work responsibilities as a team leader or a middle manager.

Further courses are also available for those wishing to obtain both their First Aid Certificate and Certificate in Mental Health First Aid. These courses are held on a variety of occasions throughout the year and are also available upon request.

Two classes in Certificate IV in Disability Work are offered on Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Achieve Employment & Training Centre, 555 High Street, Maitland. A total of 30 participants attend the training on Monday and Wednesday evening and nine of these are currently employed as trainees. Eight of the trainees are employed by Mai-Wel. This quality training ensures that Mai-Wel's ongoing commitment to best practice is incorporated in all aspects of disability work.

Cert IV in Disability Work covers a range of areas including: disability awareness, working in the disability sector and working

within the legal and ethical framework. These topics aim to result in the participant gaining the skills and knowledge to provide quality support to people with a disability as per the organisation's policies and procedures and the Disability Services Act.

Furthermore, the Training division has been looking to the future, investigating possible premises to deliver Certificate I & II in Metal Engineering. One thing for sure; we are looking forward to Mai-Wel Training Services gaining approval to deliver more qualifications, particularly the Diploma in Disability Work and Certificate I and II in Information Technology.

Places are limited in these courses. If you are interested or require any further information, please call the Training Manager, Chris Morris on (02) 4932 8599, chris.morris@maiwel.com.au

Support The Mai-Wel Group

YES! I would like to make a donation to The Mai-Wel Group

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I would like to donate \$ _____ every Week Month Quarter

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Please debit my Credit Card Visa / MasterCard / Amex / Diners. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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I would like to receive more information on the Mai-Wel Group and its services.

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