

MEDIA RELEASE

10 May 2010

**Ability Options Hosts Annual Celebration of 'Ability'
To Support & Promote Independence for People with a Disability**

At a recent annual event to celebrate 'ability' and the achievements of Ability Options in forging new independent pathways for people with a disability within our community, and to acknowledge the individual achievements of clients, the Hon Paul Lynch MP Minister for Ageing, Disability Services and Aboriginal Affairs was on hand to offer his personal congratulations on an exceptional year of growth and continued individual successes.

Established for more than 30 years, Ability Options is a state-wide organisation dedicated to working with people with a disability in the areas of lifestyle, accommodation, employment, well-being and independent living to provide people with disabilities with better opportunities enabling them to enhance their lifestyles and achieve their goals.

Minister Lynch congratulated Ability Options, clients and staff at the luncheon attended by more than 200 guests saying, "Ability Options is a fine example of an organisation's commitment to individuals with a disability enabling them to overcome tremendous challenges to achieve their personal goals.

"In providing clients with the resources they need to concentrate on developing their 'abilities', Ability Options gives people with a disability the opportunity to live with dignity and independence as valued members of our community," Minister Lynch said.

Ability Options Chief Executive Officer, Matt Donnelly said, "Thanks to the support of Government, business and individuals throughout our community, the past twelve months has seen Ability Options continue to grow, consolidating existing programs while continuing to develop greater opportunities for people with disabilities.

"We are particularly proud of our growth in Self Management programs enabling us to provide clients with greater independence because they have the ability to choose the way they live their lives rather than have someone make those choices for them," said Mr Donnelly.

An innovative approach to service provision, Ability Options Self Management services assists people with a disability to plan and fund their own activities or programs in accordance with their interests and life goals.

"This is one significant step forward in promoting independence for people with a disability in our community, enabling them to manage the resources available from community programs, as opposed to people fitting into existing programs or service delivery models.

"The real benefit of Self Management is that people are able to create their own programs from scratch to suit their own personal requirements," Mr Donnelly said.

ENDS

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JOURNALIST NOTES

ABOUT ABILITY OPTIONS

For more than 30 years Ability Options have provided a range of quality options for people with a disability and is recognised as being the best service provider in Australia, ensuring people with disabilities have better opportunities to enhance their lifestyles and achieve their goals.

With the focus on lifestyle, accommodation, employment, well-being and independent living, the services Ability Options provides are tailored to meet the needs of individuals living throughout NSW.

Ability Options Provides Support For:

- Individuals
- Families with children with disabilities
- Families to work with their son or daughter, friends and their local community to plan and design programs that will meet their needs and create greater resilience allowing clients to live their lives with confidence and resilience
- New parents who have a son or daughter with a disability to create plans to give them an early start in life
- Long term accommodation assistance enabling people to live fulfilling lives in their local communities

Ability Options Services Include:

- **Employment** - Offering a high success rates in assisting people to get the job of their choice in the open market
- **Community Lifestyles** – Case Management and Self Management programs promoting independent, quality lifestyles
- **Client Development and Training** – Independent Living skills and Transition to Work programs
- **Accommodation Services** – Enables people to live independently in their own homes
- **Wholesale Nursery** – Provides employment and training opportunities



ABOUT ABILITY OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT

Objectives

- Find, secure and maintain employment for people with a disability that matches their interests, skills and abilities
- Provide an individually tailored employment program aimed at providing support whilst working towards independence
- We support job seekers, workers and employers to achieve their goals.
- We believe in being totally accountable to our funding body, our clients and the community we exist to serve

Delivering a Valuable Service to the Community

Ability Options Employment is important not only to people with disability but to anyone who has significant barriers in finding, securing and maintaining employment. We have found that once our job seekers are placed in employment their confidence grows and they are motivated to improve other areas of their life. We believe there is no greater achievement in life than gaining independence and being responsible for one's own life.

Unique, All Inclusive Program

Ability Options Employment is unique from other providers because we provide an all inclusive program where, although the ultimate aim is to find and maintain employment, all areas of life are addressed and support is provided according to each individual's needs.

This is because we understand it is difficult to maintain employment when there are issues that need to be addressed in other areas of the people's lives. We recruit staff members from a number of different backgrounds, cultures and work experience so our job seekers always receive the highest quality service provided by a case manager that they feel comfortable to work with.

We build valuable relationships with large corporations to educate them on recruiting people with disability and fulfil their corporate social responsibility requirements.

Closing the Gap for Indigenous, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

We work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop strong links with their communities and work closely with Aboriginal Elders and our Aboriginal staff to ensure all support networks are established to guarantee success.

Working alongside people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal people is about 'closing the gap' and building bridges to make a difference in our community.

We also work toward '*Halving the education and work opportunity gap between indigenous and non-indigenous young people. Having now begun the process of accepting our shared responsibility for past failures, we now need to focus on developing our joint capacity for success.*' **Ass Prof. Dodson**