

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**2 August 2010**

**RABBITOH STAR CHAMPIONS CAUSE FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY  
'ABILITY AWARENESS WEEK' 2-8 AUGUST**  
*Celebrating 'ability' and creating a level playing field for life...'*

Following the launch of Ability Awareness Week at ANZ Stadium today, Rabbitohs star Beau Champion supported the call for equal opportunities for people with a disability.

Beau Champion of South Sydney Rabbitohs, (campaign partner) is the voice of the campaign. Featuring along-side Ability Options client Adam Budzinski, Beau is delighted to support this initiative saying, "As a community, we can all do so much to help create a level playing field for people like my mate Adam.

"It's about recognising that no matter who we are, no matter what we do, we all have abilities too and during Ability Awareness Week, we want people to think about what they can do to help create a level playing field for life."

Ability Options CEO Matt Donnelly welcomed the support of Champion and the Souths Cares program that contributes valuable community programs designed to build the individual's self-esteem through workplace mentoring programs, among others.

"With Souths Cares support for Ability Awareness Week, a celebration that everyone has 'abilities', we aim to promote equality and independence while fostering understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities throughout the wider community of NSW, and build a stronger connection between people with a disability and their own communities," he said.

Ability Options provides services for clients throughout the state. Ability Awareness Week is designed to encourage everyone in the NSW community to join together to create a level playing field for people of all abilities and help break down the barriers faced by people with a disability.

"Ability Awareness Week is about celebrating 'ability' and helping the wider community to understand that people with disabilities are like everyone else. They make their own decisions, make fabulous employees and contribute to society in the same way that we all do. By acknowledging that we all have strengths and weaknesses, goals, dreams and abilities too, we are breaking down barriers and opening up opportunities for people to connect with each other," Mr Donnelly said.

Established for more than 30 years, Ability Options is a statewide organisation dedicated to working with people with disabilities in the areas of lifestyle, accommodation, employment, well-being and independent living.

Ability Options provides excellence in services for people with disabilities, promoting independence and providing support to make independence an achievable goal while at the same time, improving the quality of life for people with disabilities enabling them to have empowerment over their own lives and the opportunity to achieve their goals.

Mr Donnelly said, "We are delighted that Souths Cares and particularly Beau are supporting Ability Awareness Week to help create a level playing field for life. It's about fostering understanding and





acceptance for people with disabilities in the wider community, so that people with a disability can be respected for their abilities and have a fair go, just like everyone else.”

To help create a level playing field for life for people with disabilities throughout NSW, or to make a donation please contact Ability Options by calling: 02 88 111 777 or by visiting: [www.abilityoptions.org.au](http://www.abilityoptions.org.au)

**I think, I feel, I do. I have abilities too. I am just like you.**

**ENDS**

**We are able to offer a number of interview opportunities with spokespersons including:**

-  Beau Champion
-  Matt Donnelly, CEO, Ability Options Limited
-  Professor Trevor Parmenter AO PhD
-  **Inspirational client success stories in multiple NSW communities**

**Media enquiries including interviews with spokespersons, photographs and inspirational client stories, please contact:**

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## **JOURNALIST NOTES**

### ***CAMPAIGN PARTNER – SOUTHS CARES SOUTH SYDNEY RABBITOHS***

Souths Cares, the charity arm of the South Sydney Rabbitohs, has established workplace mentoring programs throughout the South Sydney and Coffs Harbour regions by way of the Souths Cares Workplace Mentoring program.

Players and staff involved in the program deliver sessions to jobseekers highlighting strategies to overcome barriers to work, peer pressure, self-esteem building and making better life choices. Players deliver key messages through their own life experiences with their input forming part of a structured approach to provide information and get participants to commit to and complete job seeker training.

## ABOUT ABILITY OPTIONS



For more than 30 years Ability Options have provided a range of support options for people with disabilities and is recognised for the quality of its' services, 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.

For detailed information on all Ability Options programs visit: [www.abilityoptions.org.au](http://www.abilityoptions.org.au)

### 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 people 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 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
- **Wholesale Nursery** - Provide employment and training opportunities

## ABILITY OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT

Ability Options Employment is one of the largest Disability Employment Services in New South Wales with 6 full time offices and 4 part-time centres in NSW. Ability Options Employment is dedicated to finding sustainable jobs for people with disabilities. We provide employment, training and long-term job support services to 1,650 job seekers throughout the state.

We have the commitment and tools to match people with the right skills and experience to the requirements of employers. Ability Options Employment is at the forefront of providing quality Disability Employment Services to Australians. As a recognised leader in our field, we provide job seekers with advice and assistance to help them find a job.

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**

## **COMMUNITY LIFESTYLES**

Community Lifestyles provides a range of programs and services including Self Managed, Supported Living, Case management, Community Access and Respite services. All programs and services focus on increasing the abilities and skills of each individual allowing people to contribute and become valued members of the community. Ability Options provides five core programs:

- Self Management Services
- Case Management
- Supported Living
- Community Access Program
- Respite Services

## **WHOLESALE NURSERY**

Ability Options has a leading wholesale nursery located in the Penrith region. It uses modern growing techniques in the production methods, specialising in the growing of quality “potted colour” annuals.

Wholesale Nursery was originally established in 1995 with two clear and equal objectives: to operate and trade successfully as a fully commercial model delivering financial returns to the organisation and; to achieve this through the employment of people with disabilities while valuing the role of each employee in contributing to the commercial success of the business.

Today, the Wholesale Nursery is a respected supplier to consumer outlets. Our most significant achievement is that our customers now look to the “Hylites” brand of potted colour as a benchmark for quality.

All our employees are vital members of our team and by focusing on our employee’s abilities, not disabilities, we have built a reputation in the industry as a quality plant supplier. The Nursery is accredited under the Nursery Industry Australia (NIASA) Guidelines and fully accredited for all 12 Commonwealth Disability Standards for the employment of people with disabilities.

We provide work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships, supporting school programs and community activities.