



LIFEBRIDGE AUSTRALIA

# STAFF

# UPDATE

JANUARY 2023

Check out what's  
been happening  
lately on our  
socials



# CEO MESSAGE

## Bronwyn Mitchell

### Welcome to 2023!

As we begin the new year, I want to express my gratitude for the hard work and dedication each of you brings to Lifebridge.

Your efforts make a real difference in the lives of those we support and I am proud to be part of such a compassionate and talented team.

There are many changes approaching as we prepare and respond to the Aged Care reforms and the ongoing changes within NDIS.

However, the one constant, the one thing that we have total control over is the quality of work that is provided. This is also the one thing that will ultimately differentiate Lifebridge from the many other providers in the marketplace.

In the coming year, let us all renew our commitment to delivering the highest standard of care and support. Whether it be through daily interactions with customers, or by continuously improving our processes, let us strive to make a positive impact in all that we do.

**It is important to remember that we are not just performing a job, we are making a difference.**

With this mindset, let us bring enthusiasm, positivity, and empathy to our work each day. By nurturing these qualities, I am confident that we will accomplish great things in the year ahead.



To achieve success, it is essential that we all aspire to perform to our full potential and set high standards for the work that we do.

This often involves more than good intentions. It involves setting clear and achievable goals, fostering a strong work ethic, being open to feedback and taking proactive initiative.

**It is also about working as a team.**

Providing support, compassion and kindness when it is required and being open to the collective wisdom that resides within the Lifebridge community. Of course, we must always remember that our customers sit at the heart of this community.

They are the authors of this story and we have been given the privilege of being one of the support characters.

Let's ensure the legacy of our contribution to their story is a positive one.

# CEO Message continued...

In light of recent staff feedback, we will be allocating each of you to a team with a designated "Go To" manager who will act as your escalation point and professional mentor.

Our hope is that through the team concept, we will have the opportunity for face to face meetings this year, albeit in small groups.

These changes are also in line with Lifebridge's preparation for future changes in 2023 - 2024.

Thank you for your contributions and dedication to our purpose.

I look forward to continuing our work together as we make a positive impact in the lives of those we serve.

Bronwyn

## WANTED

Volunteers are urgently required for the following opportunities:

- Kitchen Assistant
- Social Support Groups
- Handyman/Gardener

For more information visit - [SEEK](#)

If you know of anyone who would like to volunteer with us please ask them to contact reception on 1800 043 186 or speak with Amanda Chadwick.



### Senior Manager Community Services Shelley Scorrano

Hoping you all had a great Christmas and found time to recoup and here's to a brand new amazing 2023!

This year we are focusing on more education, staff recruitment and hopefully see you all more face to face. Please feel free to email me any ideas that you may have that you feel would be of benefit to Lifebridge and the year ahead.

We are focusing on new and innovative activities and more group activities for our customers this year so will keep you updated.

Stay safe and keep cool and once again thank you to each and everyone of you for all you do, everyone plays a special part in helping our customers to live their best lives.



## Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey 2022 - Summary Results

A very big thank you to staff who completed the 2022 Your Say Survey in November last year.

Your feedback provides us with important information we need to plan and prioritise our programs and projects for 2023, with the aim of improving our staff employment experience and continue building meaning and purpose into our working lives.

Please see below a summary of what you told us and some of the plans we have identified for 2023.

- Overall Response Rate of 62% (67 of our 108 employees completed the online survey). This compared to 80% in 2021 and a sector average of 74%.
- Overall Job Satisfaction of 85% compared to a sector average of 75%.
- Overall Satisfaction Rate across all 10 focus areas of 66% compared to a sector average of 69%.
- An Employee Net Promotor Score of 36. With a sector average of 12. The eNPS measures the likelihood of employees recommending Lifebridge as a good place to work.

**These are great results. THANK YOU :)**

### Response rates by Department

Department	No of Responses
Community Services Team	11 of 13
Business Services/Finance Team	9 of 9
Leadership Team	5 of 7
Community Support Workers	42 of 79

## Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey 2022 - Summary Results continued...

Results by Focus area - the overall percentage of staff who responded to the focus area with a positive score.

Focus Area	% Positive Response 2022	Compared to 2021	Sector Average 2022
Overall Satisfaction	66%	69%	69%
The Organisation	77%	79%	74%
Leadership	60%	65%	65%
Management	70%	73%	75%
Communication	60%	66%	66%
My Work	77%	80%	75%
Opportunities	46%	45%	52%
Remuneration & Benefits	50%	56%	54%
Recognition & Acknowledgement	64%	69%	67%
Training & Development	60%	53%	58%
Quality of Work Life	78%	79%	78%

### Staff Comments and Suggestions

Below is a summary of the most frequently made comments and suggestions for how Lifebridge could improve the employment experience of staff.

Subject Area	Comments	Proposed Actions in 2023
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communications with customers.</li> <li>• Improve communication between management and staff.</li> <li>• Update customer information in VisiCase.</li> <li>• Respond to staff and customer calls and enquiries on a daily basis.</li> <li>• Stop the negative workplace gossiping.</li> <li>• Treat staff with respect and dignity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly Customer Update and regular reform updates.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All customer information in VisiCase reviewed and updated in 2023.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer service response times detailed and communicated.</li> </ul>

# Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey 2022 - Summary Results continued...

## Staff Comments and Suggestions continued

Subject Area	Comments	Proposed Actions in 2023
Face to Face Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly all staff meetings should be held in person rather than virtually.</li> <li>Create more opportunity for teams of workers to meet and share information and learnings.</li> <li>Bring back the Christmas Party.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Quarterly staff meetings conducted face to face with location based teams.</li> <li>☑ Face to face focus groups scheduled in 2023.</li> </ul>
Support and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support workers with a dedicated manager.</li> <li>Provide regular feedback and recognition to support workers.</li> <li>Conduct annual reviews with all staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ New support and supervision framework including dedicated manager for SW's.</li> <li>☑ All staff involved in a Feedback Focus &amp; Future annual review meeting.</li> </ul>
Work Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide shift variety and limit number of DA's.</li> <li>Ensure enough travel time between shifts.</li> <li>Provide stable and consistent rosters with more hours.</li> <li>Ensure workforce planning meets customer requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ New support and supervision framework including dedicated manager for SW's.</li> <li>☑ All staff involved in a Feedback Focus &amp; Future annual review meeting.</li> </ul>
Staff Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Cert 3 &amp; 4 training in-house.</li> <li>Improve induction for support workers including practical training and performance feedback.</li> <li>Provide SW's customer specific training.</li> <li>Run dementia specific training for staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Cert 3 Individual Support will be delivered in-house by RTO in 2023.</li> <li>☑ Review and improve onboarding of new SW's.</li> <li>☑ Lifebridge Advantage Program incorporating dementia specific training.</li> </ul>

# BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATE

## Industrial Relations Update

Here's a quick update on recent changes to Australian workplace laws relevant to Lifebridge staff:

- Under the Secure Jobs Better Pay Legislation, employees have the right to share (or not share) information about their pay and terms and conditions of employment which includes banning pay secrecy terms in staff employment contracts and associated policies.
- From 1st February 2023 employees can access 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave every 12 months.

FDV is defined by Fair Work as violent, threatening or abusive behaviour by a close relative of an employee, a member of an employee's household, or a current or former intimate partner of an employee that:

- a) seeks to coerce or control the employee, or
- b) causes the employee harm or to be fearful.

FDV Leave may be taken by an employee to:

arrange for their safety, attend court hearings, accessing police services, attending counselling, attending appointments with medical, financial or legal professionals.

A close relative includes spouse or former spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, a person related to the employee according to Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander kinship rules.

If an employee takes FDV Leave, the employer must ensure the FDV Leave and any amount paid to the employee as FDV Leave does not appear on the employees pay slip.

- There is no confirmed date for the implementation of the 15% pay increase for "direct care workers" in the aged care sector. Proposals are still being considered by the Fair Work Commission with the Federal Government proposing that 10% becomes payable from July 2023 and 5% payable from July 2024. The Federal Government also proposes to fund this increase including resulting on-costs.

## CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Community Support worker Toni Amadio on the safe arrival of her baby boy, Bodhi.

Both are well and little Bodhi is settling in perfectly. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Toni and her family.



Lifebridge recently received some positive feedback which speaks to the dedication, passion, commitment and professionalism of our Community Support Workers.

When onboarding a new CHSP customer, their carer explained the reason they chose Lifebridge was because of its good reputation in the community. The Carer, a HR professional had done their research and learned that Lifebridge has a very good staff retention rate compared to other providers.

For the Carer, staff retention was evidence of a good, positive culture which in turn would create a positive, compassionate and stable environment for their relative.

Thank you Martin Cook for forwarding this feedback.

## Expressions of Interest Traineeship

### Cert III - Individual Support

Lifebridge would like to hear from current staff interested in participating in the onsite delivery of a Certificate III – Individual Support.

Lifebridge is currently in negotiation with registered Certificate 3 training providers to deliver the program on site including recognition of prior learning and placement hours while you continue working.

It is anticipated that this would be no cost to the participants as we should be able to access government funding on your behalf. This is part of the governments initiative to attract staff into the care sector.

If you are interested in attaining a Certificate III - Individual Support qualification, please contact Amanda Chadwick, Business Services Manager on mobile 0436 664 408 or via email: [amanda.chadwick@lifebridge.org.au](mailto:amanda.chadwick@lifebridge.org.au)

## All Staff Meetings Calendar 2023

Meetings will be held with smaller, location based teams, face to face at the Kingscliff Cottage and include light refreshments. Agendas will include practical training, customer focused training, small group activities and departmental presentations and updates.

Staff Location/Team	March	July	November	Times
Tweed Heads/South Tweed	Tue 21st	Thur 27th	Wed 29th	3 to 5pm
Kingscliff/Banora Point	Wed 22nd	Tue 25th	Thur 30th	3 to 5pm
Murwillumbah/South/Office	Thur 23rd	Wed 26th	Tue 28th	3 to 5pm





# WE ARE HIRING

## Senior Administration Officer

We are currently seeking an experienced administration professional to support the CEO and Lifebridge Board.

This is a full-time position reporting to the CEO.

For more information or to apply for this position - please visit [SEEK](#).

Applications close:  
Friday 17th February 2023.

## Community Support Worker

We are interested in speaking to people who are passionate about supporting our aged, frail and NDIS customers enabling them to maintain independence and achieve their goals while living at home and participating in their local community in and around the Byron Shire.

For more information or to apply for this position - please visit [SEEK](#).

Applications close:  
Friday 17th February 2023.

## Customer Care Manager - HCP

We have an opportunity for a full-time Customer Care Manager with specialist case management expertise to join our team.

For more information or to apply for this position - please visit [SEEK](#).

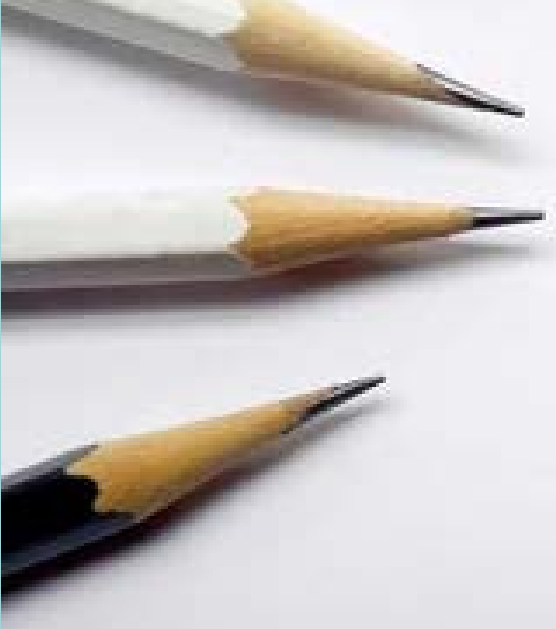
Applications close:  
Friday 24th February 2023.

## Registered Nurse - In home services

We have an opportunity for a full-time Registered Nurse to provide in-home clinical and nursing services to our aged, frail and NDIS customers living at home.

For more information or to apply for this position - please visit [SEEK](#).

Applications close:  
Friday 17th February 2023.



# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WICKING DEMENTIA CENTRE

## Understanding Dementia

Participants in the free Understanding Dementia Course will gain an increased knowledge of dementia, including its causes, symptoms and ways of responding to the needs of people living with the condition.

Starts: 7th February, 2023  
Duration: 7 weeks  
Location: Online Course  
Cost: Free

For more information regarding this course and to enrol head to:

<https://mooc.utas.edu.au/course/31>

## Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury

Participants in this free online course will gain an increased knowledge of Traumatic Brain Injury. The aim of the course is to improve management, rehabilitation and public awareness.

Starts: 27th March, 2023  
Duration: 5 weeks  
Location: Online Course  
Cost: Free

For more information regarding this course and to enrol head to:

<https://mooc.utas.edu.au/course/4605>

## Preventing Dementia

Participants in the free Preventing Dementia Course will learn about the risk factors for dementia from leading world experts. With the ageing of the world's population, dementia is becoming the public health issue of the 21st century.

Starts: 16th May, 2023  
Duration: 4 weeks  
Location: Online Course  
Cost: Free

For more information regarding this course and to enrol head to:

<https://mooc.utas.edu.au/course/32>

Thank you to  
Lara Gibson for  
bringing these  
courses to our  
attention.

# WELCOME TO THE LIFEBRIDGE TEAM

welcome

A big, friendly welcome to the following staff members who joined the Lifebridge Team during the month of January 2023.

- Chris Jones, Rostering and Scheduling Officer
- Kellie Camilleri, Intake and Administration Officer

We are happy that you have decided to join us and hope you both feel very welcome in your new roles.

# CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU



Congratulations to the following staff and volunteers who celebrated their five (5) years and over work anniversaries during January, 2023.

- Susan Conolly - 22 years
- Angela Molyneux - 22 years

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you both for your amazing contribution, dedication and loyalty to Lifebridge through the years.

# GOODBYE - WISHING YOU WELL



During the month of January 2023 we said goodbye to following staff:

- Kadee Ciscato

We wish Kadee well in her future endeavours.

# INTRODUCING KELLI CAMILLERI

We would like to introduce to you our new Intake and Administration Officer, Kelli Camilleri who started with Lifebridge on 16th January 2023.

Kelli is a member of the Community Services Team and is responsible for coordinating incoming customer referrals across all Lifebridge service streams.

This involves monitoring various systems, logging, allocating, tracking and onboarding customers.

Kelli previously worked for Feros Care and has extensive knowledge around the customer experience and CHSP reviews. Kelli was also a member of the virtual care team administration and support.

What's important to Kelli is her family and her three small dogs.

"My three dogs would not even make a decent size dog if you sticky taped them together".

Kelli also loves to cook, can crochet and watching medical shows but isn't a fan of peas. "I really don't like them!"

How best to support Kelli in her new role is to be honest with her and if she makes a mistake, please approach her and let her know.

People admire Kelli because she will go out of her way to help if she can.



Kelli will be working primarily at the Kingscliff office so please feel free to pop in and introduce yourself.

Kelli can be contacted either by mobile 0437 660 448 or by email: [kelli.camilleri@lifebridge.org.au](mailto:kelli.camilleri@lifebridge.org.au)

**WELCOME  
TO THE  
LIFEBRIDGE  
TEAM**

# INTRODUCING CHRIS JONES

We would like to introduce to you our new Rostering and Scheduling Officer, Chris Jones who started with Lifebridge on 10th January 2023.

Chris is a member of the Business Services Team and is responsible for the provision of Lifebridge rostering and scheduling services to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of supports to customers.

Chris previously worked for Stellar Call Centre for over 20 years and has experience with quality, training, call resource and scheduling.

What's important to Chris professionally is closing knowledge gaps and getting quicker or more efficient with any work he does. Personally, it is puppy dogs, family and just simply being a nice person.

Chris loves gaming and boardgames. "Im not good at games but they're fun."

He is also a big fan of excel. "Let me have a bunch of data and a spreadsheet and I'll be very happy".

How to best support Chris in his role is to let him have all the data. One thing he doesn't like very much as double-handling. "I cant stand it".

Chris is very happy to become part of such a welcoming team.



Chris will be working primarily at the Kingscliff office so please feel free to pop in and introduce yourself.

Chris can be contacted either by mobile 0475 150 930 or by email: [chris.jones@lifebridge.org.au](mailto:chris.jones@lifebridge.org.au)

## WELCOME TO THE LIFEBRIDGE TEAM

## An Open Letter from the Hon Bill Shorten, MP

Minister for National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services

Over the past two and a half years, you have been working at the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has profoundly impacted the whole community.

As Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and on behalf of the Australian Government, people with disability and their families, I want to thank you for your professionalism, dedication and resilience in going above and beyond to ensure the health, safety and continuity of high quality supports for people with disability.

Your work is valued by the community: it saves lives and helps to build a more inclusive society where everyone, regardless of their disability, has the same opportunity to participate - socially and economically.

While all Australian governments continue to transition COVID-19 responses as circumstances change, the pandemic is not over and the most vulnerable and at-risk populations still need to be protected against the risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19. This includes many people with disability and this is why you, as disability workers, will continue to play a critically important role.

To protect ourselves and others against serious illness from COVID-19 you are encouraged to continue to be vigilant in all these areas:

- stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations
- continue to use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, such as masks.
- continue to practise good hand hygiene;
- do not attend work and isolate when you are unwell;
- follow public health advice and your employer's workplace health and safety arrangements.

It also remains very important that you continue to actively engage with the people with disability you support around these issues, including on how they can protect themselves and about their plans for what happens if they, or you, become infected with COVID-19.

You can find information, resources and up-to-date advice at the following Australian Government websites:

- [www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-disability-sector/providing-disability-support-services-during-covid-19](http://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-disability-sector/providing-disability-support-services-during-covid-19)
- [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

I am grateful for the work you do to ensure people with disability remain safe. Please take every step to also stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Shorten, MP



# CLINICAL SERVICES UPDATE

## Medication Training

Medication training will be commencing in the new year.

If you have a customer who is requesting assistance to administer medication or a medication prompt then there is a process which must be followed.

Please do not assist to administer any medication under instructions of the customer or the family/carer.

For this to happen there must be a medication authority in place signed by the prescribing doctor.

If the customer, family/carer would like this medication service then please contact the Customer Care Manager for the correct paperwork to be in place.

If you foresee your customer requiring this service in the near future please contact the Customer Care Manager immediately to ensure the correct documentation and process is followed.



## Customer Photos

Prior to taking any photos of a wound or inside the customer's home as requested by a Customer Care Manager, you must obtain verbal consent from the customer.

This verbal consent must be documented in the case notes in VisiCase stating what the customer has consented to.

If you require any further clarification around this information, please either speak with Toni Cleland, Clinical and HCP Lead or a Customer Care Manager.

**At Lifebridge we take privacy very seriously and it is very important to ensure that we respect our customer's right to privacy in their home.**



## MONDAY MATES GROUP

### best way to start a working week

I started as a Support Worker on the Monday Mate's group back in November 2017.

My first group and I was thrown in the deep end with six fantastic men. Instantly we started bonding and embarked each week on another adventure.

The numbers grew, participants changed and the core group has grown smaller now due to life circumstances with only two original members remaining.

What followed from there has evolved to a larger group that includes great characters, fantastic conversations, a wonderful atmosphere and a great sense of comradery.

The activity level has changed but the friendships formed are by far the best part of the Monday.

As of late January the men number 15 along with Ken our magnificent volunteer, Dane and myself as Community Support Workers. I, for one, couldn't think of a better way to start the week than heading off on another outing with the Mate's.

Ben Simpson







# COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE

## **Social and Community Participation programs to transition to a new NDIS group pricing model.**

By the 30 June 2023, all NDIS Social and Community Participation providers that provide group support, must transition to a new NDIS group pricing model.

The Lifebridge Community Services team are currently analyzing the proposed new pricing and what it means for administering our groups into the future.

Under the new pricing structure, Lifebridge will be required to implement an apportioned pricing model, which means accounting for each individual participant, for every day of their attendance, to determine how much support they individually receive.

## **Bringing Customers Goals to Life**

As part of this transition to the proposed new group pricing there will be a much stronger emphasis on providing evidence that group programs are supporting customers to meet their individual NDIS goals.

The NDIS is about customer 'choice and control', having choices and the funding in individual plan needs to be used in a way that links to a goal written in your NDIS plan.

Lifebridge has always focused on meeting customer's individual goals and reporting on them.

Over the next few months, we will provide families, customers, and staff with further updates on the new pricing model.

### **Did you know?**

February is the only month to have a length of fewer than 30 days! Though it's usually 28 days, February is 29 days long in leap years such as 2020 and 2024.

January and February were the last two months to be added to the Roman calendar (c. 713 BC); originally, winter was considered a month-less period.

Originally, February was made the last month of the calendar year. Eventually (c. 450 BC), February was moved to its place as the second month.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE

## Completing In-Home Environment Checklists for new In-Home Customers.

When we onboard a new Lifebridge customer, an In-Home Environment Assessment Checklist is required. It should take around 15 minutes to complete.

It's really important that we get a clear understanding of the customer's home environment and, where we have their consent, a photo of the customer for their VisiCase file.

The customer is not billed for the 15 minutes that you take to complete the assessment.

The importance of the checklist is to ensure customer health, safety and wellbeing during services in their homes.

It is also used to identify any potential hazards that could be a potential harm to the customer and/or staff.

Prior to a visit to a new customer, please check your emails as the Intake Team (Beti Brunning & Martin Cook) will send you a text reminder on the day.

It is greatly appreciated if you can let the Intake team know once you have completed the checklist and photo.

If you identify any serious concerns please advise Andrew Weir, Manager Community Services.

Remember that 'Safety is no accident.'



## Cottage News

Janelle Egas is currently on Long Service Leave until early April 2023. While Janelle is away, both Ben Simpson and Lorraine Francis are co-managing the Cottage.

Lorraine, Monday to Friday and Ben, Tuesday to Thursday. Should you have any enquiries regarding the Cottage based or community group-based activities, please feel free to contact either Lorraine or Ben on the days that they are working.

Keep an eye out in the monthly NDIS and Integrated Services calendars for a range of fresh and exciting new activities.

Copies are available in the Kingscliff office.

# MONTHLY APPRECIATION AWARD JANUARY

A big congratulations to Lara Gibson who is the recipient of Monthly Appreciation Award for January 2023.

Lara was nominated by Abby Champney for her excellent customer service, respect and professionalism.

I attended an in-home service with Lara with four customers. The way Lara spoke about and to the customers, she did with so much respect and professionalism. Lara took so much pride in her work and has such a positive attitude.

This was reflected by the customers as every one of them was so excited to see her and shared with me what an amazing job Lara does. Lara has an amazing bond with her customers and she goes above and beyond in her work.

Lara will be presented with an e-Gift Card to the value of \$50.00 and a Reward and Recognition Certificate.

If you know anyone in your team who you think deserves to be recognised for their excellent work, make sure you complete a HR6e - Reward and Recognition Nomination form, which can be downloaded from Projex and email it to [human.resources@lifebridge.org.au](mailto:human.resources@lifebridge.org.au)



**Know anyone in  
your team who you  
think deserves to be  
recognised for their  
excellent work?**





# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

## YOUR WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAM

EAP Assist supports employees wellbeing with confidential phone counselling.

The aim of counselling is to help resolve both workplace and personal issues before they adversely impact an employee's mental health and workplace performance.

EAP Assist counsellors are all highly experienced and information obtained during counselling is strictly confidential and will not generally be released to a third party without prior consent.

## HOW YOU CAN REQUEST FREE PHONE COUNSELLING?

All Lifebridge employees can request up to three hours of counselling from 9am to 9pm, Monday to Friday.

Lifebridge's dedicated EAP Helpline number is 0407 086 000 or you can email [support@eapassist.com.au](mailto:support@eapassist.com.au)

Alternatively you can book a phone counselling appointment via the EAP Assist Booking Form:

<https://eapassist.com.au/booking-form/>

## GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a deep appreciation for something or someone in our lives.

It can be as small as appreciating the warm sun on your face or as important as gratitude for health and family. It doesn't matter what it is as long as you connect with the positive emotion of feeling grateful.

When you practice gratitude, try to really feel it in your body and allow the feeling to wash over you. The deeper you connect with it, the more benefit it will have.

### Why is gratitude important?

First, from a mindset perspective, what we focus on most often determines our emotional state.

So if you focus more on what you are grateful for, versus what you feel you are lacking or is going wrong, you are more likely to feel better. Also, gratitude improves feelings of hope and optimism, which allows you to more easily seek out positive solutions. When we focus on the negative, we see more negativity around us.

Probably most significantly, research has shown that a regular gratitude practice can have physical benefits such as improved mood, better sleep and even reduce inflammation, to name a few.

Feeling grateful does not negate or minimize the difficulties you may be enduring, but it does help to maintain perspective and not lose hope for a better tomorrow.

Even in our darkest times, there is always some small thing to be grateful for and that tiny ray of hope can help to get you through.

### Three ways to practice gratitude

Like any skill, gratitude can be learned and strengthened. Here are some tips on how to practice gratitude.

1. Each day, think of three things you're thankful for. Make it a daily habit to visualize what's good in your life.

This can directly impact your mood throughout the day, as well as your sleep quality. In fact, research suggests this may be a useful tool when initiating treatment against depression.

To make it more powerful, it is advised to devote at least ten minutes to this practice, rather than quickly coming up with ideas. Writing down these three things you are thankful for is a great way to complete this exercise, and it is useful to come back and read them at the end of the week.

2. Start a gratitude journal. Journaling can be an excellent self-therapy technique. When you write, you use different parts of your brain and access memories and emotions from a new perspective. A gratitude journal has been proven to activate brain areas that are related to morality and positive emotions.

Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude.



People who could find purpose and feel grateful for the good things to come out of a challenging situation show higher resilience, forgiveness, and detachment.

Reading your own words of gratefulness can help you feel better when struggling to be positive.

3. Thank someone new every week. There are many people around us, and we are all connected somehow. How often do we take the time to express gratitude more consciously or thoughtfully?

We might say thank you to the person who assists us at the supermarket checkout or thank our partner for setting the table, but do we take the time to make it meaningful?

Give yourself the purpose of choosing someone new each week and learn how to express gratitude differently.

This could mean adopting a more conscious non-verbal communication (like eye contact and a smile), writing a thoughtful message acknowledging others' behaviour and its positive effects on you, or saying thank you with a nice gift or gesture.

# JANUARY RECIPE TO SHARE

## SPINACH TORTELLINI SOUP

A simple tomato-enhanced broth is perfect for cheese tortellini and fresh spinach.

Increase the garlic and add Italian seasoning to suit your taste.

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1½ cups chopped brown onion  
1 tablespoon minced garlic  
2 teaspoons Italian seasoning  
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
½ cup dry white wine  
4 cups vegetable stock (salt reduced)  
1 (400g) can chopped tomatoes  
1 (3 inch) Parmesan rind  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 package cheese tortellini  
1 (120g) package baby spinach

### Method

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.

Stir in onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 4 minutes.

Stir in garlic, Italian seasoning and crushed red pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.



Stir in tomato paste; cook, stirring constantly, until all the vegetables are coated, about 1 minute.

Pour in wine; cook, stirring once or twice, until reduced by half, about 2 minutes.

Stir in broth, tomatoes, Parmesan rind and salt; bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

Add tortellini; cook, stirring often, until the tortellini are tender, 3 to 5 minutes (or according to package directions).

Remove from heat and add spinach; stir until wilted, about 1 minute.

Remove and discard the Parmesan rind.

# Let's get quizzicle...

## BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE SCENES?

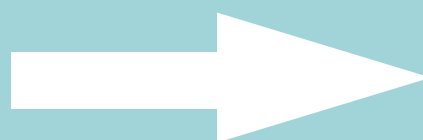
Can you guess the name of the blockbuster movie from the scenes below?



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

1. What does www stand for in a website browser?
2. What is cynophobia?
3. What is the name of the biggest technology company in South Korea?
4. What were the four main characters' names in the TV series "Golden Girls" that ran from 1985-1992?
5. Who has won more tennis grand slam titles, Venus Williams or Serena Williams?
6. "Stars and Stripes" is the nickname of the flag of which country?
7. What country touches the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Bay of Bengal?
8. The name of which African animal means "river horse"?
9. What is the hottest planet in the solar system?

**The answers to this month's quiz can be found by clicking this button**



# THE BACK PAGE

## WHAT'S ON

### Palm Beach Farmers Markets

Every Saturday morning  
6am to 11.30am (QLD time)  
Palm Beach Currumbin State School  
Thrower Drive, Currumbin QLD

With between 75 and 80 stallholders attending each week, Palm Beach farmers' markets offer a huge range of fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and poultry, seafood, dairy products, fresh pasta and sauces, baked goods, artisan breads, smallgoods and health foods, with plenty of options to take away or enjoy fresh.

### Musical Bingo - Salt Bar, Kingcliff

Every Monday Night  
from 7pm  
Salt Bar, 1 Bells Boulevard, Kingscliff

Nothing like starting off the week with Musical Bingo. Musical bingo is the worlds easiest pub game. Get your bingo card, listen to the songs played by the host and check your Bingo Card. You've got 45 seconds to mark your card. If you get two lines of songs on your Bingo Card you win a prize. Easy as that.

Why not get a group together and have some fun with your work colleagues. Bookings necessary at <https://saltbar.com.au/event/musical-bingo/>

### Trivial Tuesdays, Seagulls Club

Every Tuesday Night  
from 7pm - register at 6.30pm

Free to play, win cash prizes, drinks and Lot Two vouchers. Their exciting format includes mini-games like crosswords, wheel of fortune, and fun trivia on the big screen.

Come for a laugh, bring a team and enjoy.

### The Paddock Valentine's Picnic

Sat 11th February 2023  
8am to 2pm  
The Paddock Project  
64 Argyle Street, Mullumbimby

Join in for a celebration of Valentine's Day Mullumbimby style! The Paddock Valentine's Picnic is the perfect event to spend with your loved ones. Activities include flower picking, face painting, LOVE photo portraits, live music, food and much more.

Admission is free, so grab your family and friends and join in for this special event!



### Sunday Sessions at the Shawsy with Lisa Hunt

Sunday 26th February 2023  
from 2pm  
Shaws Bay Hotel  
3 Brighton Street, East Ballina

Get your groove on at the Shaws Bay Hotel.

You won't want to miss the legendary Lisa Hunt. Hunt has a fierce voice, which commands large numbers and will sure to bring a large crowd to the Shaws Bay Hotel.

This is a free event.