

KIDS CAN'T WAIT

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Enabling People to Thrive



by Chief Executive
Andrew Billing



Hello all,

There was a recent article in local media about a person who has used our services since birth.

An adult, they are working and succeeding in the highly competitive, creative sector.

For me, that article highlighted why “Enabling People to Thrive” is St.Giles’ refreshed Mission.

The story highlighted their talent and capacity.

It was a small window to a future where people aren’t prejudiced against, defined or determined by their disability.

It was a joyous moment to see this person thriving and knowing that St.Giles’ teams were humbly part of some of their achievements.

It was the type of outcome that was front of mind when we shaped our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

Along with refreshing our Mission, our current Vision sits in familiar territory – “to be Tasmania’s leading specialist disability service provider for children, specialising in children, people with complex support needs, and their families”.

A sharpening of our understanding of who we are, what we value and how we make our greatest contribution to those we serve, is a positive outcome of our planning process. And it has been a focusing experience to be planning a ‘thriving future’ in the midst of these COVID times.

One of St Giles’ values is optimism, and we continue to draw deeply on this as we intentionally and continuously fine tune our COVID safety and service delivery plans to make sure that our people – those we serve and those who serve with us – have the best possible opportunity to thrive through and beyond any future outbreak.

To all St Giles people, our participants, families, staff, volunteers and donors, thank you for your continued support. We hope you’re thriving and will continue to collaborate with us to enable others to thrive as well!

Changes to Therapy Model

Benefits and impact on families

Teams at St.Giles are transitioning to a new therapy service delivery model that they hope will alleviate challenges associated with the widely acknowledged shortage of allied health professionals, especially those working in early childhood intervention.

St.Giles, a recognised leader in early childhood intervention, believes that growing more diversely skilled teams will lead to improved outcomes – hopefully shorter waiting lists and more timely early intervention.

Newcomers to St.Giles' teams will include teachers, exercise physiologists and social workers.

Initial conversations with this potential cohort are very promising, St.Giles Chief Development Officer Nic Stephen said.

Early intervention is focussed support and services for infants and young children with disability and/or developmental delay, and their families to promote development, well-being and community participation.

The new model sees a key worker connect families to a team of professionals that meets their requirements. The Keyworker Model is supported by evidence-based guidelines.

Within St.Giles' new model staff are working in age-based teams: Early Intervention, School Aged and teams focussed on Aquatic Therapy, Development Assessment and Assistive Technology.

Teams will be statewide as well as regionally based. The new model will be fully implemented by January 2022.

The new teams will involve complimentary skill sets – Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy combined with the expertise of Teachers, Exercise Physiologists and Social Workers.

General Manager Allied Health Nadine Davies said the new structure would allow staff to focus on their areas of interest and expertise.

"They will also be provided with the extra support of working in a team," she said.

"Participants will benefit from working with staff who have a deep interest and expertise in a subject.

"It will also be less complicated because people will be able to access Therapy Assistant programs and capacity-building in preparation for school," Ms Davies said.

"Participants will benefit from working with staff who have a deep interest and expertise in a subject."



Tasmania Police Charity Trust Donates 2 Cars to St.Giles

The Tasmania Police Charity Trust selected St.Giles as the beneficiary of \$37,500 raised during last year's Police Charity Ride.

Their annual ride was run COVID-safe. More than 40 cyclists, including many Tasmania Police officers, covered more than 400km of roads between Deloraine and Strathgordon, passing through Poatina and Tarraleah.

The Tasmania Police Charity Trust aims to make a difference to the lives of Tasmanians in need, especially children.

Funds are raised through payroll donations by staff from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management as well as through fundraising events.

The Trust's 2020 ride directed funds to St.Giles to help with the purchase of two vehicles to provide outreach services to children living with disability in the State's North and South.

St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing said the donation was timely.

"COVID-19 has put pressure onto us all and the needs for children with disability haven't changed," Mr Billing said.

"St.Giles kept going and didn't miss a day's service – this donation allowed us to replace two ageing cars with vehicles fit for purpose."

During its 14-year history, riders have raised more than \$550,000 for Tasmanian charities.



Small and mighty – WIZZYWHAT?

During October, Woolworths teams fundraised for the first three, tiny Wizzybug power wheelchairs for Tasmanian toddlers with disability.

St.Giles aims to have at least one Wizzybug in each region by the first quarter of 2022.

Children from birth to seven years with disabilities and impairments are the majority of the 4000 Tasmanians supported by St.Giles.

The face of Woolworths October campaign, four-year-old George Bryant, comes to St.Giles in Launceston for occupational therapy and physiotherapy. George was born with a birthmark on his brain that triggers uncontrollable seizures.

The St.Giles' team works with George and his family to re-train his brain to learn new ways to get his body working.

The October appeal for St.Giles marked the start of a three-year partnership with Woolworths.

Woolworths 33 Tasmanian stores have chosen St.Giles as their Charity of Choice.



“The Wizzybug will give toddlers freedom of movement and help them thrive alongside their siblings and peers in the garden, out shopping with their family – wherever they want, whenever they want.”

– St.Giles Chief Executive Andrew Billing.



Woolworth's Graeme Connelly, Jessica Hogarth and her son George, 3, who attends St.Giles, and St.Giles Chief Executive Andrew Billing.



Deacon Staak

For most of his life, little Deacon Staak has worn socks for gloves.

The five-year-old, from Launceston in Tasmania's north, was diagnosed with Apert Syndrome at 18-weeks' gestation.

The rare genetic condition causes some bones in the body to fuse together and when Deacon was born, his fingers were completely joined.

"There are three types of fusing," his mum Ave Staak said.

"He has the most severe, which is type three. When he was born you couldn't see his fingers at all, so he's had to have some operations to start releasing them."

"His hands are always freezing"

Deacon's thumbs and pinky fingers on both hands have since been released, but the unique shape of his hands has meant that store-bought gloves never fit.

"His hands are always freezing because of circulation issues," Mrs Staak said.

"What we've done ever since he was born is we've just used socks, [but] having a sock on there means he can't feed himself, he can't play."

Mrs Staak said occupation therapists had tried to assist, but no alternatives could be found.

Then they turned online

A global online community, called Knit for a Unique Fit, has helped give Deacon his own custom-made hand warmers in his favourite colour; red.

The group was founded by US woman Rena Rosen to connect people such as Deacon, who have unique

hands, with people who can knit them a one-of-a-kind pair of gloves.

Incredibly, of the 14,000 people worldwide connected through the group, the Staak family found a knitter in their own regional community of Launceston in Tasmania's north.

Matching knitters to a need

Launceston-based high school teacher Rachel Scott has always loved knitting.

Since joining the online knitting group most of her projects have been from other parts of Australia,

Ms Scott lives just 20 minutes from the Staak family and was excited when they contacted her.

"It's just really cool that I can use my skills as a knitter to make something that there's no other way that he could have got them," Ms Scott said.

"This is a good challenge for me.

"My mum is an avid knitter. She's a retired home economics teacher, so she taught me to knit when I was five or six," Ms Scott said.

"It actually took us a lot to get him to be still to trace his hands, so I guess that shows how active he is."

Once Ms Scott traced Deacon's hands, she made the gloves and gifted them to her new little friend.

Mrs Staak said it was great the family could find someone to help so close to their own home and said the two families had continued their friendship.

By ABC's Northern Tasmania
Manika Champ



**Can you give a
gift to the St.Giles
Christmas Appeal?**
BECAUSE - KIDS CAN'T WAIT

85th Heart to Heart Conversations with St.Giles

St.Giles will turn 85 in December 2022.

Among 85th projects will be a collection of interviews conducted by highly-respected Tasmanian museum professional Bridget Sullivan Arkless.

It is St.Giles' hope to publish the collection for release during our 85th. We are currently seeking funding support.

The project will have a dedicated, interactive digital component, where full interview transcripts will be published alongside sound recordings and images shot by award-winning Tasmanian photographer, Scott Gelston.

The project will compliment St.Giles' 75th publication, Billycarts and Wheelchairs.

Where Billycarts and Wheelchairs, by historians Annie Green and Tom Gunn, collated St.Giles' history, the 85th project – working title Heart to Heart – will be the first person stories of individuals connected in various ways to St.Giles.



Heart to Heart – If you can help us fund this beautiful project please contact danielleblewett@stgiles.org.au

Worksafe Nomination

St.Giles' response to COVID-19 has earned it a 2021 WorkSafe Tasmania Awards nomination.

In February, 2021, two weeks before COVID-19 emerged as a problem for Australia, St.Giles had already established a Covid Response Team that was meeting at 9am daily.

Zoom licenses and almost overnight technology upgrades created the safety of remote meetings and planning.

By the time a national lockdown was implemented in March, St.Giles' teams had already identified infection control challenges and solutions to keep its staff and vulnerable participants safe.

"Our emphasis was on infection control. What did that look like in a pandemic? None of us foresaw just how long COVID would be a daily challenge," St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing said.



Start training today!

2022 Balfour Burn

Sunday, March 20

11am to 1pm

Charles and Balfour Streets

EXCITING NEW DIVISION

Criterion du Balfour:

Mountain bikes and 3 laps of the infamous Balfour Street block!

Inclusivity back at Amy Road

After a mail-out of recognition certificates during 2020, St.Giles was delighted to welcome 80 guests to 2021 Inclusivity, in person on Friday, June 11.

Held at the Launceston Town Hall for the past decade the return to Amy Road was a huge success, St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing said.

Guests and donors included Minister for Disability Services and Bass MP Sarah Courtney, Mayor Albert van Zetten and a diverse range of people and organisations who supported St.Giles during its annual appeal.

An extract from Studio Space Project Vulcan captivated guests.

Supporters were each given a certificate created by Tasmanian artist Christina Graham.



Disability Innovator Hub Launch Program

A Hub of Experience

The first, four-day Launch program of the Tasmanian Disability Innovator Hub was held at illuminate Futures during May.

The five participants are people currently employed in the disability sector who qualified for the program, funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund.

The program was delivered by Adam Mostogl who said the idea was to boost capacity of disability employees.

"Their creative concepts or the new businesses or new programs and then giving them the framework to build those ideas," Mr Mostogl said.



Vaccination Hubs

St.Giles became a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination hub for all Launceston staff on July 20.

All unvaccinated staff were offered the Pfizer vaccine, and St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing urged all Tasmanians to get vaccinated.

“We should remember that it took 63 years – from the 1937 pandemic till 2000 – to eradicate polio in Australia – the pandemic that formed St.Giles,” he said.

“At this point in history we are fortunate, because vaccines have been created.”



Rocky Monster Show

The story of an ex-rock star whose computer-generated genetic experimentations come to life was Studio Space Inclusive Arts first production since COVID-19 shut down rehearsals.

Artistic Director Gerard Lane said the 25 performers had been waiting a long time to bring the hilarious production to a live audience.

“Cast ages ranged from five to 65 and the whole thing was a real hoot,” Mr Lane said.

St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing has stepped up as narrator.

“Five wig changes and a lot of fun for me. It was a terrific production with great heart and ability on show,” Mr Billing said.



Sourdough Start-Up

A sourdough bread-making program for people with disability is being piloted by St.Giles and FermenTasmania within the Disability Innovator Hub with funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund.

The first series of four workshops attracted five participants to the kitchen of Josh Crisp at Sandy's Sourdough who developed the program with Lauren Brown of FermenTasmania. The program combined social stories and practical elements.

It is hoped the programs will identify people interested in pursuing sourdough baking who might eventually be working in a social enterprise in Northern Tasmania.

“Ideally, the program will be repeated”, St.Giles General Manager Profile and Engagement, Danielle Blewett said.





Christmas Niche Devonport and Nichemas Launceston

NICHE – Your favourite shopping event will pop up in Launceston and Devonport before Christmas.

Devonport Niche at the paranapple centre – 9 till 3pm is scheduled for Saturday, November 20.

Nichemas at the Albert Hall the following Saturday, November 27 doors open at 8am till 3pm.

Both events will be COVID-safe.

It is our plan to adapt Niche so that it can continue as we emerge from the pandemic.

We have been buoyed by our patrons' willingness to work with us to make Niche COVID-Safe.

Tramsheds Niche a Success

After 10 years and 45 markets, Launceston's favourite Niche Market returned to the Tramsheds on July 31.

Niche manager Victoria Bayes said the market's reputation for top quality Tasmanian-made items made it a success, with 1500 people attending the COVID-safe event.

The market returned to the Tramsheds while building work is underway at the Albert Hall.

"In 2011, the Tramsheds was our first, long-term venue – Niche enjoyed three successful years and nine markets at Inveresk before we settled at the Albert Hall," Niche market manager Victoria Bayes said.

Tramsheds Niche gave a nod to its quality past with a Niche 'original', Delicious Little Things among the originals invited back.

The delicious little caravan was a celebrity pop-up patisserie by Raelene Bates. Ms Bates created a special Niche menu and made a significant donation to St.Giles.

Ms Bates recalled selling out of lemon tarts in four hours at her very first Niche in 2011.

"We sold out. We baked all night for the next day," she said.

Royal Commission

St.Giles felt honoured to be able to make a presentation in May, to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

“It is St.Giles’ view, like others in our sector, that the NDIS and now this Royal Commission has shone a light into a once dark corner. We urge all stakeholders to continue this work, with the best of intention,” St.Giles chief executive Andrew Billing said.

St.Giles’ presentation centred around the organisation’s (almost) 85-year history of working with the best of intention and included interviews with mother and son, Meegan and Joe Murray (15).

Extract from St.Giles’ submission:

“

St.Giles – Tasmania’s largest children’s disability service – was created with the “best of intention” in the middle of the 1937 polio pandemic.

Care of children affected by polio was dispensed within a medical model.

Disability was a medical problem. Lives were limited and defined by impairment or condition.

Impairment was a disease to be treated; with the “best of intention”.

The language of the day labelled people cripples. In a medical model, they were the objects of a medical intervention.

St.Giles was the patron saint of cripples and with the “best of intention” St.Giles cared for Tasmanian children disabled by polio.

Polio’s second wave arrived in 1957.

In Tasmania, 81 people died.

30 years after the first wave, in 1966, the vaccine arrived.

By October 2000; the World Health Organisation declared Australia to be polio free.

13 years later, in July 2013, young Tasmanians took part in the national trial of the new, National Disability Insurance Scheme; a scheme created with the “best of intention”.

In 2013, Joe Murray was 9 and had already spent much of his childhood at St.Giles.

Joe’s family came to St.Giles where care and treatment were provided with the “best of intention”, in a charitable setting.

Joe and his family worked with collegial teams of physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists.

St.Giles’ teams prided themselves in doing ‘whatever it took’ to optimise Joe’s potential.

Our therapy teams and others in our sector have done the same.

We have built reputations of excellence in paediatric allied health – always with the best of intention.





INVITATION – Our Launceston Wildspace has become popular with school groups and we would love to invite your Playgroup, group of friends, church group or even just you and your kids to book in some time in this fabulous playground designed for adventure play and learning.

To join us for a play contact StGilesWildspace@stgiles.org.au and talk to Lizzie West.

Supported Living Programs

The NDIS has allowed St.Giles to deliver more programs to adults living with disability. During the past six months we've connected with Sailability, offered cooking classes, swimming and bushwalking experiences.



To learn more contact Alex at NorthCaseCoordination@stgiles.org.au

I-Know Trivia

I-Know Trivia was held at the Launceston Tailrace in June when 200 people raised more than \$11,000 for St.Giles projects. The winners were The Aint's – a group of friends and vets from Longford Equine – regular winners and friends of St.Giles.



Shiploads Donation

Our friends at Shiploads donated six pallets of sanitiser to help St.Giles teams during COVID 19.

The significant donation was accepted by St.Giles Chief Development Officer Nic Stephen (bottom left).

