



**ALKIRA**

Dignity and Purpose



## Our Mission

Alkira strives to meet the needs and wishes of people with intellectual disabilities, through care and support, to enrich and challenge them to be part of the world community.

## About this booklet

This booklet aims to give people an overview of our services and how we operate. We hope that it provides a starting point for people to understand what we offer and how we may help people with intellectual disabilities, their families and carers. For more detailed information please refer to the contact list on the back page. We welcome your enquiries.

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## History

The Alkira Centre – Box Hill Incorporated is a community organisation that was formed in 1954 by a small but courageous group of parents. Families were Alkira's foundation and remain the corner stone of the lives of people here. Alkira has grown on the strength of their commitment and now provides a range of services for more than 150 people with an intellectual disability.

The Alkira Board of Management is the governing body, comprising family, business and community representatives, and is responsible for the quality of the services provided.

The State Government funds a significant proportion of our services. We rely on donations and contributions from the general public, companies and families to keep the variety of quality services and support available.

The word "Alkira" comes from an Aboriginal language meaning "bright and sunny". For many it has come to signify "a happy place in the sun".

## The Alkira difference

At Alkira, we pride ourselves on providing quality services in an environment where the dignity and autonomy of the people who use our services is paramount. People at Alkira are actively involved in making decisions, not just about the activities that are offered, but about how things are run. We regard them as *participants*, not recipients. That's the Alkira difference.



## **Our Services**

### **Training and Support Services**

- Day Services
- Transport
- Momentum
- Individual Community Options
- Home & Choice
- Recreation
- Family Liaison

### **Residential Services**

- Permanent Accommodation
- Respite and Crisis Accommodation
- Low Support Living



## Training and Support Services

Alkira Training and Support Services operate at a number of locations in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, offering training and support to more than 150 people with an intellectual disability.

Each person has an opportunity to explore their needs, wishes and goals through our individualised planning process. This information is captured in a collaborative way with each person and those that are important to them in their lives. We refer to a person's individualised plan as a **My Plan** which allows people to match their preferred activities with their needs, interests and goals. All programs and activities offered by Alkira's Training and Support Services are the direct result of people's My Plans.

### Who can use Alkira's Training and Support Services?

Any person with an intellectual disability aged 18 years and over can apply to be involved with our training and support services.

Joining Alkira depends on vacancies and whether our service can meet people's interests, needs and wishes. This will depend on what's available and what people choose to do.

### Choices

People who use our services can choose to take part in group programs, or they may prefer to do an individual activity in their own community with support from Alkira, or a combination of these in the wider community. We can also support people who are looking for



work. The choices that people make will depend on their interests, wishes and needs.

## Day Services

Our extensive programs can help people develop and maintain a wide range of skills, as well as furthering their interests and independence. These programs can be accessed at Alkira facilities or in the community. They cover all sorts of topics, including:

- The Arts
- Further Education
- Health, Fitness and Sport
- Living and Personal Development
- Recreation and Leisure
- Vocational Skills and Opportunities

## Locations

Alkira operates from various sites within the City of Whitehorse. Some Alkira sites can cater for many people while others can only provide for a few. Where people choose to go depends on their needs and where they feel comfortable. Any of the Alkira sites may be used as a springboard for programs and activities that people would like to do, depending on how easy it is to get from one place to another.



Locations include:

- Box Hill
- Mont Albert
- Nunawading
- Forest Hill  
(for people with significant age related issues and/or dementia)
- The local community
- The wider community

## How it works

The Government provides each person with a certain amount of money to buy services from whomever they choose.

People can then choose who they want to manage that money: Alkira, the Department of Human Services or another provider.

At Alkira, people can also decide whether to take part at one of our locations, or in the wider community on their own (with our support), or in their own local community, or in groups with people who are also buying services and who may have the same interests. They can mix it up, buying some services in a group or some on their own, if they prefer.

## My Plan

At Alkira, the types of activities people choose will depend on their interests, needs and wishes and goals in life. Every person is different,



which is why we offer individualised plans, known as **My Plan**.

**My Plan** is a personalised plan for how people would like to spend their time. This is worked out by each person and their family or carers, and anyone else they wish to involve - with help from us. Together we will help people determine their goals and the initiatives they want to pursue for the future.

**My Plan** also gives people the chance to tell us what sort of activities they would like us to run, or to tell us what they would like to change about the programs we offer. Our aim is to help the people who use our services to learn and grow and develop new skills so that they can reach their full potential and enjoy life.

Once people decide what programs and activities they want to be involved in a weekly schedule is worked out for them.

Each person's **My Plan** is reviewed at least annually to make sure that we can continue to meet their needs, interests and goals.

## Core Groups

At Alkira, we make sure that someone is there to help the people who use our services every day that they are involved. Regardless of which activities they choose to do and where and when, everyone who is involved with our Day Services is also able to choose a Core Group Instructor and to be part of a Core Group, made up of about seven people. Being part of the group ensures that they have support and help with their daily activities and that we can answer any questions that may arise.



## Client Committee

People who use Alkira's services can also have a say in making Alkira a better place by being elected to the Client Committee. This is made up of people who have been elected to represent their peers.

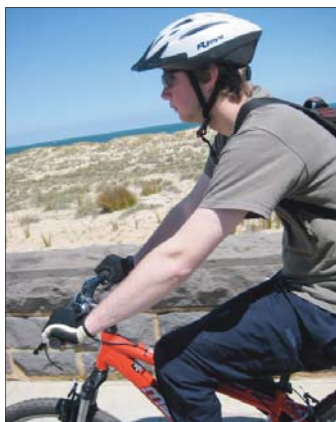
The Client Committee meets weekly to provide a forum for people to raise issues and to help improve Alkira. Members of the Client Committee also have the chance to learn new skills, such as meeting procedures, how to represent others, and gathering and sharing information with all the people who use the service.

Committee members assist in many areas at Alkira, including reporting to the Board Sub-Committees, helping on staff recruitment panels, giving service tours, educating business and community groups about disability and Alkira services, and much more.

Members of the Client Committee provide a valuable contribution to Alkira and are fundamental in ensuring that people who use the service are involved in decisions that affect them.

## Family Liaison

Family Liaison provides assistance to ageing carers who have adult family members living with them. We can help carers access services such as Home and Community Care, or in planning for the future. Assistance might include helping with long term residential options, respite, Council help, Centrelink or filling out forms.



## Try before you decide

To help people make the right decision about the service that they choose, they are welcome to visit and then spend some time with us. This will help familiarise them with our programs and locations and help them decide whether Alkira can meet their needs, interests and wishes.

## Getting here

People can get to Alkira locations by walking, riding their bicycles, travelling on public transport, driving or being driven, using taxis or the Alkira Transport Service.

Independent travel is a skill we encourage at Alkira, but if people can't get here independently and they live within our bus route parameters, they can use the Alkira Transport Service. This caters for about 55 people and operates between their homes and the Alkira service sites morning and afternoon. Access depends on an assessment of people's skills, where they live and whether seats are available. The annual Transport Service fee is included in the annual fee structure and is calculated pro rata for part time users.

## Costs

There is an annual service fee for each person taking part in our Training and Support Services. Fees are due at the start of each year and are calculated pro rata for people who participate part time.

We try to keep program and activity costs to a minimum; however some will incur a regular cost, for example aerobics at the local sports centre, some art and craft activities. This money is usually required at



the beginning of each week. Staff help people manage their weekly programs and expenses.

## Hours

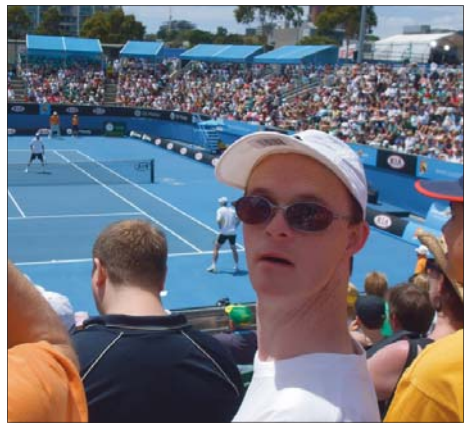
How much time people spend at Alkira or in activities in the community depends on what they choose to do. Our doors are open for programs and activities at all our locations between 8.45am and 3pm Monday to Friday. Staff are here between 8.45am and 4.30pm.

## Momentum

*Momentum* is a three-year course providing a mix of accredited and non-accredited subjects for people aged 18-25 who are looking to consolidate and continue their learning in an adult environment. The course curriculum has been developed to assist people to access a range of pathways for their future, including TAFE certificate courses, vocational options, further education and training, or voluntary work in the community.

## Individual Community Options

This service option caters to those who want to participate in activities in the community on an **individual** basis, with tailored supports (formal and informal). The activities that people choose will depend on their interests and aspirations and may include voluntary work, work experience, paid employment, self development and recreation.



## Home and Choice

This is an alternative type of support for people who have age-related issues or who may have experienced a life event that prevents them from participating in their Alkira Day Service. To begin with, activities are arranged in a person's home, but can also be offered in the community and with friends. Home and Choice is available for any person living with family, in Alkira Residential Services or aged-care accommodation.

## Recreation

As well as providing a huge range of day programs and activities, Alkira offers a wide variety of recreation and leisure opportunities for people to enjoy on week nights, weekends and holidays during the year.

Staff and volunteers are available to help with all activities, which provide fun and social and community involvement.

Activities include pasta and DVD nights, cooking and craft activities, ten pin bowling, trips to sporting events, train trips, going to the movies, dinner at restaurants, visits to the theatre or circus, seasonal activities and events such as fishing and sailing in summer and a day at the Royal Melbourne Show in September.

The event calendar is changed every second month to ensure variety and to make sure people don't miss out on what's going on around Melbourne. People are required to pay in advance to secure a place.

If something in a person's **My Plan** includes a recreational activity, Alkira's Recreation Service department can organise it.

Recreation at Alkira means enjoying life and everything it has to offer.



## Residential Services

Alkira Residential Services are homes in the true sense of the word. Every resident has their own bedroom, where their right to privacy is assured; friends and family visit, chores are shared and residents meet regularly to organise outings and make decisions about their home.

All this occurs with the support of our skilled staff, who are committed to ensuring that there is truly 'no place like home' for people who live in an Alkira residence.

The type of residential service Alkira can provide will depend on people's needs. We offer long term (permanent) accommodation and low support living for people with an intellectual disability who are no longer able or no longer wish to live with their family or carers. Respite and crisis accommodation is also available.

## Access

We would love to be able to accommodate everyone who needs our services, but permanent accommodation can only be accessed through the Department of Human Services Eastern Metropolitan Region disability service register. When a vacancy occurs, people may be offered a place according to the level of support needed, compatibility with other residents and urgency.

## Sharing with friends

Sharing a house with friends is one option for people. Thirty permanent residents are currently living in our six houses, supported by teams of rostered staff. Sharing a house means dealing with everyday issues,



making friends and respecting each other's rights.

Support staff are there to help residents in various ways to ensure that they are happy and healthy in their homes and that everything runs smoothly. This includes helping each resident work out a **Residential Support Plan**, to provide a framework for their lives. This plan includes recreational and leisure opportunities as well as activities to develop and maintain skills.

As well as a **Residential Support Plan**, each resident has a **Health Plan** to ensure regular health checks and that specialist appointments are made when necessary. The **Residential Support Plan** and the **Health Plan** are part of every resident's **My Plan**.

Residents are encouraged to be active participants in the running of their house and to be involved in decisions that affect their daily lives. They can join a House Committee to have a more active say in running their home and be elected as the representative to report to the Residential Services Committee of the Board of Management. Residents are also involved in helping to select key support staff and house staff.

Our houses are located in:

- Mont Albert
- Box Hill
- Box Hill North
- Forest Hill
- Nunawading



## Respite Services

Respite is available to people who attend Alkira Training and Support Services and who live with their parents or carers. Respite is also available to any adults with intellectual disabilities who live in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and whose carer is over the age of 65, or in the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, over the age of 45.

Respite is intended to help families in crisis or emergency situations, but it can also be used for families who are planning a holiday or who need to attend to personal business. It can provide an opportunity for people to socialise with others as a step towards living independently or in supported accommodation.

Urgency, compatibility and whether we can meet people's needs are all factors we consider when respite is sought.

## Low Support Living

Low support living allows people who are able to, and want to be more independent, to share a house, while still getting support from family and a network of paid workers. People can apply for individual funding from the Department of Human Services so that support staff can be employed.



# Getting involved

## Volunteering

Volunteering at Alkira involves giving **and** receiving, because whatever you choose to give or do, you will receive so much in return. Your level of involvement is up to you. You can volunteer regularly or occasionally and the jobs you choose can be as ordinary or as extraordinary as you want them to be.

You can help our staff run weekday programs, such as cooking, gardening, swimming or scrapbooking. You can join us after hours for movies, trips to the zoo, picnics and the footy as part of our Recreation Service. You can be a buddy to someone who needs a friend or a pen friend, or you can help in our Op Shop. Whatever your involvement, your skills, knowledge and company will be welcome.

We will support you by ensuring that you have flexible hours, orientation and ongoing training and a clear and flexible job description.

To be part of the Alkira team, you will need to agree to police and reference checks. However, this is a straightforward procedure and only some records would exclude you from volunteering.

Give us a call (see Contacts and Enquiries). Together we will develop a role for you that you will enjoy and that fits with your lifestyle. In return you will have fun, make friends and have the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a difference to the lives of others.



## How we can help you

Whether you need a volunteer, a lively band for your next event, some fantastic artwork for your office, a guest speaker for your next event or items packaged or assembled for your business, Alkira is the place.

Many local groups can vouch for the talents of people who use our services and who offer their time to help others in places such as the Box Hill Hospital and Meals on Wheels.

Alkira people also welcome the opportunity to hone their skills in the workplace, doing work experience for short or long term projects and ongoing employment.

Many satisfied businesses can also vouch for the professionalism and punctuality of Alkira's vocational training program, which offers services to local businesses at competitive prices, including packaging, assembling, collating, mail outs and secure shredding.

If you are looking for entertainment, the Alkira Bandits can perform blues, contemporary, country, rock or folk. The Bandits is a 12-piece, vibrant and experienced band that is available to perform at special and community events.

The Alrassa Artists can also provide quality artwork for exhibition or sale. Alrassa combines the talents of Alkira artists with its sister agency, Nadrasca.

Guest speakers are also available. If you are looking for someone with an inspiring story to tell and skills and talents to display, then call Alkira. The people who use our services, their families and Alkira staff can speak from their heart to any group about the challenges of living with an intellectual disability.



## Donations, Sponsorships and Bequests

Would you like to make a gift to Alkira? We welcome donations and bequests. All contributions, no matter how small, make a big difference to our ability to continue to provide quality services and programs to people with intellectual disabilities. Visit our office or our website. All donations are promptly receipted with a letter of thanks and are acknowledged in our literature, unless otherwise requested. Acknowledgement for business sponsorship is discussed in person. We would also deeply appreciate being remembered in your will and are happy to talk to you about how your gift would help future generations. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

## Your views and ideas

We welcome feedback, whether its compliments or complaints. If people tell us what they think, we can make our services even better. Communication is the key to successful relationships anywhere, so please talk to us, call, email or send a letter if you have something to say about our services.



## Contacts and Enquiries

Alkira Centre – Box Hill Incorporated

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3 Thurston St, Box Hill is the base for all administration for Alkira Services.

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