

# Media Release

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## Opening the door to employment for people with disability

Did you know that 47% of people with disability who are of working age are not in a labour force? ([Australian Government – Dept of Social Services](#)). It's a statistic that has barely changed in the past 25 years, and one that for-purpose organisation VMCH is determined to help shift.

**April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day, recognising and celebrating the rights of people on the autism spectrum. It's also a day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of people with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives – including finding and maintaining paid employment.**

Cody, aged 23, is one step closer to realising his dream of working in the I.T industry thanks to VMCH's Employment Pathways program.

For the past eight months, Cody has worked at Puckapunyal Australian Defence Force base with hospitality contractor [Ventia](#), supporting kitchen staff with meal prep and service.

"I struggled to find a job before this," Cody says. "I was a bit nervous when I first started, but I'm definitely more comfortable now. I like making the soldiers happy and giving them the food that they like. Working with others is definitely a good experience and has helped me build skills. Eventually I'd like to work in computers. This is helping me find the confidence to do it."

Cody is one of seven VMCH clients currently working at Puckapunyal through Ventia, and resource management contractor [Veolia](#).

VMCH Senior Manager Group Programs and Employment Harley Dalgleish says the organisation, which also runs its own social enterprise businesses, has set itself a target to support 100 people with a disability to find and sustain meaningful employment by 2025.

"We're committed to not only supporting people with disability find employment but breaking down barriers for businesses to employ them.

"We work closely with our clients and their employers to ensure the relationship is working for both of them. Often businesses may feel it's too daunting or there's too much red tape to employ a person with disability, but it's just not the case," Harley says.

"By normalising the employment of people with disability in a range of roles and industries, we reduce the anxiety of businesses to embrace this fantastic opportunity."

Tammy Steve, Operations Manager at Ventia, says the partnership with VMCH made the process of employing people with disability an easy one.

"We're a big company and on occasion can be limited on time. Having that introduction with VMCH disability support staff to work on employee's individual needs and plans has been great. Ventia is really proud of the work we do in the disability sector and our partnership with VMCH has been great, their support on site supporting our staff makes our job easier."

Tammy added the benefits of employing people with disability also extended to fellow employees.

"I've seen great personal growth in my team, as well as the people we employ through VMCH," she says.

## OFFICIAL

“When Cody first arrived, he was very shy and found it hard to interact. To see him now; laughing, smiling and confident, is amazing. That’s also thanks to our Army client, whose staff are great at relationship building and bringing out the best in people.”

Cody’s supervisor, Macca (Sharon McMenenmin), who has worked at the base for 39 years, says she loves “everything about working with Cody”.

“Because it was his first time in hospitality, he blew me away at how quickly he picked it up. You just tell him something once and he was right to get on with it. His confidence and communication skills have bloomed. The whole experience has been very rewarding to witness.”

**For more information on VMCH’s Employment Pathways program, visit [vmch.com.au/disability/for-adults/job-skills/](https://vmch.com.au/disability/for-adults/job-skills/) or call 1300 698 624.**

### Media enquiries

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## About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, love, joy, hospitality and courage aren’t just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we’ve been around for over a century, we’re always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

