



## FRESH SKILLS FOR THE NDIS ROLLOUT

**Full course name:** Certificate IV in Disability

**Project lead:** Wodonga TAFE

**Partner:** Kirinari Support Services, Aspire Support Services

**Delivery location:** Wodonga

### A CHANGING SECTOR – THE CONTEXT

Disability service providers in regional Victoria are grappling with an under supply of workers. They're also busy preparing for the transition to the NDIS funding model, leaving them short of time to invest in developing their workforce.

Wodonga TAFE's consultation with its industry partners highlighted that many disability support workers don't have disability-specific qualifications, or are in need of more advanced training to meet the needs of NDIS participants.

### A TAILORED COURSE – THE SOLUTION

This project is an innovative partnership between Wodonga TAFE and two of the region's biggest disability service providers: Kirinari Support Services and Aspire Support Services. It is made possible by funding of up to \$147,500 from the Regional and Specialist Training Fund.

The project aims to upskill employees of both providers through a fast-tracked version of the Certificate IV in Disability course it has developed.

It recognises prior learning and follows a blended learning model. This is a combination of intensive workshops for skills development and online learning and activities for knowledge development.



### UP AND RUNNING – THE FIRST COHORT

A pilot group of 12 students, six from Kirinari and six from Aspire, started the course late last year and finished in June. Eleven graduated, while one moved to Ballarat mid-course.

Julie Fry, team leader, community services and health at Wodonga TAFE, says the feedback from all parties has been excellent.

*"The outcomes exceeded our expectations," Ms Fry says. "Participants explained they now feel they can join the dots between the doing and the 'why' behind the doing."*

*"Most important was the participants' understanding the NDIS, person-centred practice principles and active and rights-based support."*

Danny McGuigan, human resources manager with Kirinari, says the course has made a noticeable difference to the work of the participants.

*"Their skill set has improved, their ability to work with and engage with our customers has improved," he says. "We have noticed an improvement in all areas of their work."*

## “IT’S IMPORTANT WITH THE NDIS COMING IN”

### Student case study: Colleen Maybury

Colleen Maybury of Kirinari Support Services has been in the industry for more than 15 years - but she still found plenty she could learn from the Certificate IV course.

*“I learnt new stuff around the NDIS, and some OHS stuff,” she says. “I learnt a lot, and it refreshed my memory about stuff I’d already learnt.”*

Ms Maybury started in disability care when she was 19 and did the Certificate III in Disability almost 10 years ago. She works as a team leader in a group home with four clients in Thurgoona.

*“I make sure all our paperwork is done, make sure the clients are looked after well – we have pretty high standards,” she says.*

She started the Certificate IV course last November and finished in June. She attended face-to-face day-long sessions once a month and did the rest of her work on Moodle, an online learning management system.

Juggling her study with full-time work and raising her two-year-old child was difficult at times. She agreed that the course as a whole was a positive experience, however, and it came with the bonus of a pay increase to recognise her new qualification.

*“The course was good for my work,” she says. “It’s important with the NDIS coming in, where you want to impress the customers.”*

## TEST AND IMPROVE – LESSONS FROM THE PILOT

- Students said it was beneficial to take the course with their workers from another service provider, and Mr McGuigan also feels this was important. *“Whenever you can have staff meet people from other organisations that might do things slightly differently, it’s an opportunity for them to grow and expand their own view, and hopefully bring information back to the organisation to help us do things better,”* he says.
- Feedback from the pilot group will be incorporated into future delivery. This will include allowing more time for students to complete course work.
- The pilot underlined the importance of including basic NDIS information. Not all staff understood the difference between block-funded models and the NDIS “user pays” approach.

## PLACES IN DEMAND – WHAT’S NEXT

The long-term goal of this specific version of the Certificate IV course is to put itself out of business. Both industry partners view the project as a success and 12 more students began the course in August. Given this demand, Julie Fry says it will continue in 2020 and beyond until *“all workers who require upskilling and who are supported by their organisation to participate in the course have completed the qualification”*.

The Regional and Specialist Training Fund is a targeted *Skills First* funding stream that supports training for specific skills in regional and specialist areas that are not being met by the current training market. Training providers who hold a current *Skills First* VET funding contract are eligible to apply for higher subsidies and one-off grant payments for selected courses in specific regions to meet local industry demand or specialised occupations. Funding will be considered where there is a strong connection between industry, training and job outcomes.

To find out more visit:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding/Pages/rst.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding/Pages/rst.aspx)

or email the RSTF team at:

[rstf@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:rstf@edumail.vic.gov.au)