

Media Release

10 November 2022

BariStars - ability with every cup

Approximately 23% of Australians start their working day with a takeaway cup of coffee, and the mood of the day is often set by how the barista greets you. For those looking for a cup served with a smile and a whole lot of ability, it's worth looking for the BariStars coffee trailer.

Launched on 10 November by CatholicCare CEO Alastair McGibbon, with a blessing from Bishop Terry Brady, BariStars is an incredibly rewarding initiative from CatholicCare's Disability Services – providing training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

In the past, NDIS Supported Employment offered as part of CatholicCare's Disability Services has focused on gardening and cleaning services, however, an intensive training program and the purchase of a mobile coffee trailer thanks to a donation from the Estate of Bishop Bede Heather has seen a group of incredibly motivated and enthusiastic participants join the ranks of Sydney baristas pouring caffeine wakeups for regular customers. Bankstown Sports Club generously provided a mobile coffee cart, coffee machine, and grinder for training purposes, and Vittoria Coffee generously gifted BariStars with two additional coffee machines and two grinders for the mobile trailer, along with a six-month supply of coffee beans, plus tea, cups, sugar, napkins and syrups for both the mobile trailer and for training, ensuring the aspiring baristas are guaranteed to serve all customers only the finest coffee.

Every participant from the Supported Employment program receives full barista training and on-the-job support to learn the required hospitality skills to prepare and serve a variety of coffee orders, hot chocolates, and cold drinks along with an assortment of sweet treats and hot pies.

"The ability to serve a cup of coffee is taken for granted by so many, and it is a testament to the passion and dedication of each participant that our brand new BariStars are preparing drinks and serving customers with tremendous enthusiasm and enough pride to power the coffee trailer all week," said CatholicCare Sydney's CEO Alastair McGibbon.

"We often refer to those in our Supported Employment program as Sydney's happiest workers, and today we add multi-skilled as they have undertaken the training needed to stand up and learn a new range of responsibilities. The BariStars mobile coffee trailer already commits to service a local business 5 mornings a week, and I believe it will find itself in high demand once word spreads."

It is anticipated that the mobile coffee trailer will not only become a financially viable business, but also one that increases the wellbeing of all BariStars participants. It promotes the benefits of meaningful employment for people with a variety of disabilities and raises the profile of CatholicCare and its multitude of social services.

Brewing a bright future for himself, BariStars freshly trained barista Tom says it best,

"I liked learning how to make all the different coffees; flat white, latte, cappuccino. The thing I like most about being a barista is frothing the milk. I enjoy hearing the hissing noise as the milk froths."

CatholicCare is the social services agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

For over 80 years we have walked in solidarity with individuals, families, and communities to realise our vision of a society where everyone is valued and supported.

Our services help people thrive at every age. With over 70 programs delivered across Sydney, we assist with relationships, parenting, ageing, disability, addiction, pastoral services, and mental wellbeing.

Our mission is to promote dignity, strengthen families and connect communities while supporting those who are most vulnerable or in need.

To arrange interviews, please contact: Meredyth Hayes Bell, Senior Communications & Marketing Specialist on 0417 269 948 or Meredyth.bell@catholiccare.org.

Photography: Giovanni Portelli

Photo 1 – (l-r) CatholicCare Disability Educator Ken So, CatholicCare Disability Educator TJ Masima, Barista graduate Tom, CatholicCare Disability Educator Anastacia Tohi, Barista graduate Thuy

Photo 2- Barista graduate Tom preparing coffee



CatholicCare