







In March 1991, Castle opened its doors in King Street, Newcastle with funding from the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services – as it was known then. We had five employees and the first year's target was to place into open employment 30 people with mild intellectual, sensory and/or physical disabilities.

Since 1991, Castle has focused on supporting people with a disability to prepare for, find and maintain long-term employment. In the past 25 years, with the support of the region's employers, we have been able to make enormous positive impacts to our participants and to the businesses that have joined us to deliver these outcomes.

Our recent history is impressive, building on the foundations laid in the first two decades. In 2012 we successfully tendered for a federal government contract that added North Sydney, Central Coast and Manning regions to our established services in the Hunter and Lower Hunter. We look forward to further expansion in the 2018 tender rounds.

In 2013, based on our past performance, Castle was chosen as one of the select providers to pilot the NDIS program, and it was launched in November of that year. We remain an integral part of what continues to grow to a full national system roll out.

In our 25th year Castle has grown to 17 locations, with 194 staff delivering support to 2500 participants. We look forward to growing our service delivery through the next 25 years by continuing to provide quality disability services.

# Castle Milestones

#### 1991

5 Employees

**Employment Assistance Program** 

#### 1992

Contracts signed to provide

Post Placement Support Program

**NSW Winner Category A** (employers of up to 100 people) *Charlestown Sizzler Restaurant* – nominated by Castle Personnel.



Prime Minister Paul Keating and Castle Personnel Chairman Mal Anderson presented the award to Sizzler.

#### 1993-94

Coordination of Sizzler project.

Placement of 5 State Managers
to coordinate the National Research
and Development Program

Partnership With Industry.

Unit established specialising in assisting people with a psychiatric disability to find jobs, and long-term support to retain positions.

#### 1995-96

Partnership With Industry
was instrumental in assisting a
number of large corporations to
address their Equal Employment
Opportunity obligations, and alter
their recruitment procedures to
be more accessible for people
with a disability.

1996

38 Employees

#### 1996-97

Commenced Contracted Case Management.

#### 1997

Jobnet Contract

#### 1998-99

**133** jobseekers with a disability achieved employment outcomes.

#### 2006-07

Department of Education Employment & Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 4-star rating in their Disability Employment Network (DEN) capped program, and officially recognised as the largest DEN Provider in Australia.

Castle nominee Hunter New England Health Service receives *Prime Minister's Employer of the Year Award*, Large Employer Award and National Employer of the Year Award.

#### 2007-08

Purpose-built living skills centre complete for high-support community participation clients.

Castle Personnel funds and operates

Transition Living program.

#### 2009

Castle Personnel becomes a Registered Training Organisation accredited to provide flexible, unique and individually tailored educational solutions.

#### 2010

Successful in two tenders to deliver 2010-2012 Disability Employment Services (DES) contracts, increasing Castle's capacity to be the largest and one of the most successful nationally accredited 4.5-star DES providers.

Successful in DEEWR National
Panel of Assessors tender to deliver
Supported Wage and Ongoing Support
Assessments across NSW.

Disability Employment Services (DES)

Program – Hunter Region

#### 1999-2000

Approved as **ATLAS** provider – a program funded to provide adult learning programs to school leavers with a disability.

#### 2000

**Active Linkage Initiative** 

#### 2000-01

**175** Jobseekers with a disability placed in employment.

#### 2001

48 Employees

#### 2001-02

Castle Personnel becomes the first disability service provider in Australia to achieve certification under the Department of Family and Community Services new quality assurance framework.

**339** jobseekers with a disability placed in employment.

#### 2002-03

Castle's commercial products **ACIS** and **Gemma** prove successful in international markets.

Castle enters the Residential Services Industry for the first time.

#### 2004

Employment Services
Community Participation
Transition to Work

#### 2005

**Disability Employment Network** 

#### 2005-06

Castle successfully nominates Hunter New England Health Service for the Prime Minister's *Employer* of the Year Award.

#### 2006

**62** Employees

#### 2011

Approved as Workcover Rehabilitation Provider to assist injured and ill workers return to same employer or alternate employment.

Board of Studies registration as an Accredited HSC Provider.

Castle invited to present 4.5-star service delivery model to DES agencies across Australia at DES National Capacity Building Workshops.

Development of a sensory garden for participants with moderate to high support needs.

106 Employees

Workplace Rehabilitation

- Restart Program

#### 2012

First DES provider in Australia to achieve Disability Service Standards (DSS) Certification.

Approved intermediary provider for selfmanaged packages and supported living fund.

Approved to provide Life Choices packages.

#### 2013

**Disability Employment Services** (DES) Program – North Sydney, Central Coast, Manning Region

#### 2014

Transition to Work – Central Coast, Manning Region

#### 2016

17 office locations spanning Manning, Central Coast and Hunter Regions, and continues to grow and expand its DES and NDIS programs to the broader community. Castle Personnel has supported 2,500 participants through disability service provision to date. 1,017 job placements made between November 2015 and October 2016 alone.

192 Employees

Transition to Work - Upper Hunter

#### 2017

2018

#### 2019

#### **Castle Personnel Chairs**

1991 – 1992	Mr Len Cusack Founding Chair
1992 – 1994	Ms Pat Callaghan
1994 – 2003	Mr Mal Anderson
2004 - 2010	Mr Barry Gibson
2011 - 2014	Mr Frank Webber
2014 - 2015	Mr Graham Luxton
2015 - current	Ms Jenny Potter

# Castle Employer Profiles

**Highlighting the success of Employers** and Castle Personnel Participants





The level of co-operation goes far beyond the recruitment process, and most importantly includes quality support during the pivotal early stages of an employee's engagement.

"

### Automotive Holdings Group (AHG)

AHG says a strong relationship and dedicated Account Manager galvanises the long-term partnership with Castle.

HR Relationship Manager David Williamson says Castle understands the business and provides job-ready candidates eager to play an active role in operations.

"The level of co-operation goes far beyond the recruitment process, and most importantly

includes quality support during the pivotal early stages of an employee's engagement," says David.

"We're proud to be associated with Castle Personnel as it delivers life-changing services to people with disability, and empowers them to be independent through gainful and meaningful employment opportunities with businesses such as ours."





# **Beavis Party** & Event Hire

Castle and Beavis have been working together for over eight years, and it's their wonderful long-term partnership that has generated some amazing results.

The connection with Castle has seen a number of people employed in the event management industry.

"There's been so many employees arranged through Castle and all of them have worked out really well – many have become full-time employees," says Beavis Manager Ashton Massey.

"We've been dealing with Castle for many years and as our business has grown, Castle has been there. It's certainly been a positive experience."

Beavis is widely known as "Your Event Team" and the locally owned-and-operated business specialises in event hire for weddings, corporate, charity, sporting, open days, functions, and more.

# Firestorm Fire Protection

Firestorm Fire Protection provides services across a range of industries, specialising in mining, transport and commercial facilities.

"Seamless" is the one-word description from Firestorm Fire Protection who have been working with Castle over the last four years.

Firestorm's partnership with Castle began in 2012 and General Manager Kristian Bischoff is so impressed with the benefits that come with a Castle jobseeker.

"With Castle, we're always able to source suitable candidates for the role and are pleased to give back to the community by providing work for people who sometimes experience barriers to employment," says Kristian.

"It has been excellent," he says.

"The guys are keen to get stuck into work, go about their job and they fit in well with the team."

Kristian complimented Castle on its "very professional introduction" and said "Castle made the recruitment process and initial start-up very easy".

It is a two-way street and Firestorm has in turn made the process simple and enjoyable for Castle.





### Jim's Mowing Cessnock

Jim's Mowing Cessnock is great for Castle jobseekers looking for experience in landscaping and home maintenance.

Owner-operator Warren Harrington works closely with Castle and feels rewarded when guiding people back into the workforce.

"I have to say my experience with Castle has been excellent. I find the Castle team very helpful and passionate," says Warren.

Warren says one of the benefits for him is the reward of training jobseekers and setting them up to transition into the workforce.

"It's quite satisfying working with people and giving them guidance as they look to enter back into work."

"I have had a variety of jobseekers over the years. Some have moved on to other work and some have stayed with me. At the moment I have a young man who has been with me for 14 months and he's worked out very well."

Warren describes Castle as a "very professional organisation".





# JW Electrical & Air Conditioning

"It has been an exceptional experience and very easy," says JW Electrical & Air Conditioning Owner Jake Wheeler.

Jake works closely with Castle's Taree office and is a big believer in creating opportunities and delivering excellent services in the local community.

"Castle has really made the process simple with their understanding of what's needed from both the jobseeker and us as the employer," says Jake.

The partnership has developed into a great working relationship and has benefited both Castle and Jake.

"We've employed one jobseeker from Castle so far, but it's been such a great experience and we will definitely look to Castle for future employment opportunities.

"Not only have we been able to provide employment opportunities, but through the business connections of Castle I've also been put in touch with more clients, which is a great bonus!"



# "

Castle have a real proactive approach and are always prompt in returning our calls if we have a question, which is great.

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### **Mr Rental**

Mr Rental leases household goods and appliances including whitegoods, TVs, furniture, fitness equipment, computing equipment and smartphones.

For two years Castle's expertise has provided Mr Rental Franchisee Guido Magri with more-than-suitable jobseekers for casual roles – saving time and effort.

It's a relationship cemented by the can-do and helpful attitude of Castle's Account Managers.

"We work closely with our Castle Account Manager who is excellent, easy to work with and always helpful," says Guido.

"Castle provides good service and works with us to obtain the best jobseekers for the role."



# David Gaghan

Former Castle Personnel participant David Gaghan has worked with local business Broadley Signs since 1994. The story of his employment is the absolute essence of Castle's ability to change lives.

Managing Director Greg Broadley is hazy on the exact date, but says David was introduced 22 years ago. He does however, specifically remember Castle Personnel was at the core of David's employment. David was a participant in Castle's Disability Employment Service (DES) program seeking full-time open employment.

"It was a good fit for us with David having some recognised work experience from a previous placement he had undertaken," says Greg.

"But we also knew that David would require quality supervision to ensure the placement was sustained.

"We have grown as a business with David and he's now responsible for opening the premises Monday to Friday. He is extremely reliable. The staff have a special bond with David and continue to assist him with his shopping and independence. It's a great story."

During his 22 years of service David has developed new skills and says he is learning new things every day.

"I hope to be here for many more years,"
David said. "It's awesome!"





# **Johnny**

Johnny is 23 and wheelchair-bound having cerebral palsy since birth. He has been coming to Castle Community Central for nearly seven years and has a special relationship with his Support Workers.

Johnny used to be transported in through his residential provider but as he explains, "probably about three or four years ago I started to catch the bus and train myself. Sometimes one of my Support Workers helps me with this, or my residential provider". But as Johnny's Support Worker Alex points out – this is a huge achievement of independence.

"The best thing about Castle is its one-on-one support," says Johnny. "I'm pretty friendly to everyone at the centre."

Johnny enjoys the Tuesday swimming trips to hydro. "Because of my cerebral palsy I don't have much movement. The pool is good for my muscles. There is a worry they might seize up."

Johnny had to have surgery to straighten his back.

"If I didn't have it done I was going to be pretty well bedridden. And I was going to be maybe not living, so ... yeah. It was squashing me inside and I couldn't breathe properly," he says matter-of-factly.

"It was nice when the Castle people visited me in hospital."

Johnny says he loves his time at Castle and hopes to have many more years of friendship and laughter shared here.

# Coming to Castle has increased my social network. There has been a lot of change for me socially coming to Castle.

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Kaitlin is 26 and has cerebral palsy.

"I have been coming to Castle Community Central since 2009," she says.

"It took me a few years to settle down and do something with my life."

The 'something' was writing and illustrating her first book, *The Zebracorn*.

"It just came when I was sketching one Sunday afternoon. I'd always wanted to write a book because I've always told stories through many creative ways including puppetry and visual arts such as painting. I wanted to inspire. I wanted to share something with the world and I wanted to achieve something that was academic because I didn't do very well at school," says Kaitlin.

"I wrote it, illustrated it and paid for it out of my own money to be published. It took a month to complete the book.

"I have a supportive family," she says. "I was secretary of the craft group too. I now have a website. It's something I've always wanted to do. Coming to Castle has increased my social network.

There has been a lot of change for me socially coming to Castle and I've found a close friend my own age here."

With Kaitlin's independence growing she travelled to Sydney for her birthday and stayed overnight. She went out in Darling Harbour and danced the night away. Kaitlin also travelled to Sydney for a literacy course.

"I have to work on my literacy skills so I can write better," she says.

Kaitlin lives at home with mum and dad.

"I take my hat off to my parents for raising a little rascal. I have an 18-year-old-sister too. We love each other."

Kaitlin was asked independently to attend the Knights Awards presentation evening in 2016, attending the night with Robbie Rochow and Jarrod Mullen.

Kaitlin looked amazing as they went off in a stretch limo to the presentation night – three mates together in the back of the car.



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#### I've always found tranquillity and peace of mind at Castle.

"

## Richard

Dick Green Junior, or Richard as Castle carers prefer to call him, has some harrowing tales to tell, but he is also a great example of the change of approach to mental health. Born in 1950, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1979. He's now 66 and appreciative that Castle has told him he can attend the Maitland Road facility any time he chooses. He lives in a shared house and either walks or rides his pushbike to see friends.

"Back in 2013 I came down here a few times and then they gave me the all clear to drop in whenever I like," he says.

"I've found something profound about coming here. It's always brought me back to myself. I've always found tranquillity and peace of mind at Castle. It's just made me think harder about myself. It helps put things in perspective and put my own life together. Focus on my own life.

"I suffer from bipolar and found out in 1996. Before that, I was isolated in a country area, and had no fix on getting help. I formed a group for people in the same boat in 1987 – the Country Freedom Group. I knew it was the anniversary of the group so I went up to Maitland to see if it was still going and ended up putting myself back on the books. It's the 30th anniversary of my diagnosis. And here I am."

The changes Richard has experienced personally in the approach to mental health are extraordinary, from starting his own self-help group to being accepted at Castle.

"The 30th anniversary of my illness I found very lonely," he says. "I'd lost my parents in '92, both in the same year."

Richard's self-awareness and intelligence shine through. He has a great rapport with his Support Worker, Trudy.

"I always wore my swimmers under my trousers. We were in town one day and I asked if I could go for a swim. She says 'as long as you're back in two minutes'. So I had a swim and man, boom, it centres you. When you are high it brings you down, when you're low it lifts you up. So every Friday after that I've been for a swim. Two-and-a-half years, all year round.

"I'm a free spirit," he says, possibly channelling those days in the 1960s and '70s that he can't shake. "I drop in once a week and sometimes four times a week. I know everyone here. If they see me in the street or anywhere in town they say g'day."



### Katrina

Katrina is 27, lives at home with her mum, and has been coming to Community Central for the past eight years.

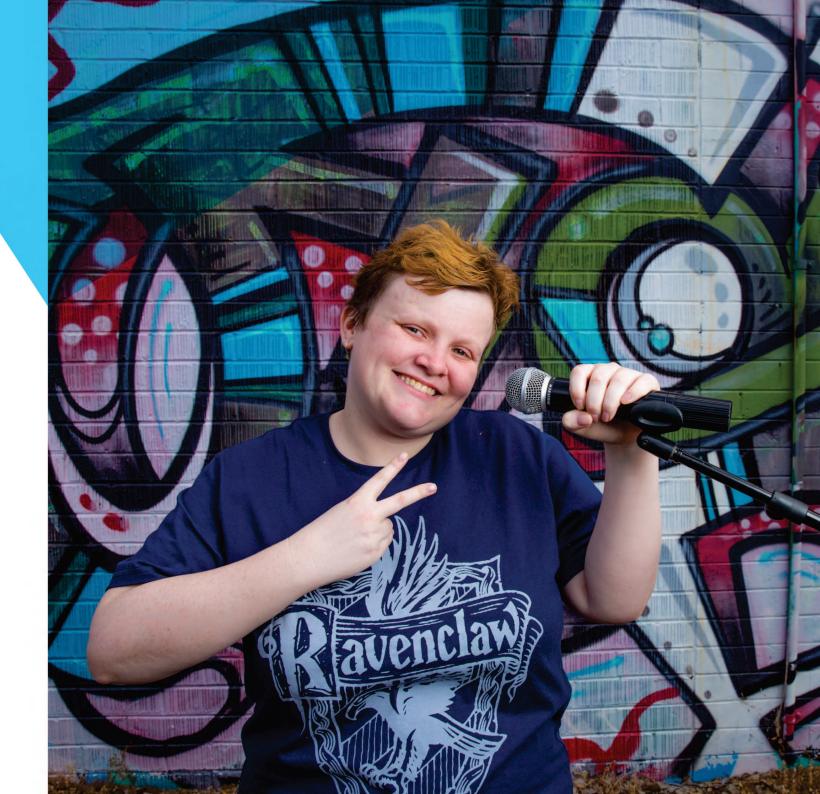
"The best part about coming here is making new friends," she says. "I've made so many. And I've had a few of my birthdays here as well. I've learnt a lot of things. I even got into work experience at Coles."

Katrina says ever since she started coming to Community Central her whole life has changed for the better. "I've learnt to be more independent. I can catch the public buses in now. It's been really great coming to Castle."

Katrina hasn't let a diagnosis of epilepsy define her, partly because she has such an incredible voice. "I do a lot of singing," she says. "I play in a country band called *Rascal Flats* and have also written a song that Castle has filmed me performing."

She's protective of the staff and promotes their value to the extent of singing their praises. "I've made songs for some of the workers here."

She's a very capable young woman and she does help at the centre if needed. "They joke that I should work at Castle," she says. "I help them. I help anybody. I love helping people, especially my friends."



# Niki

Niki is 31 and a long-standing Castle participant. She has been coming to the community centre for 13 years.

"I have some good friends here," Niki says, which helps her with her self-esteem.

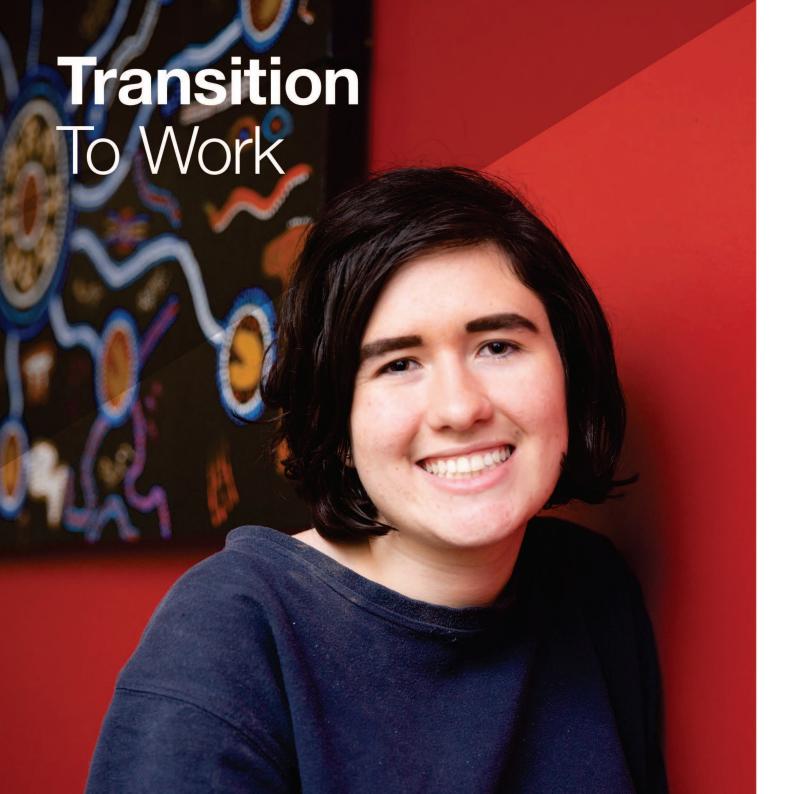
"I still live with mum and dad, but I come in here four days a week."

Niki engages in the normal activities – Monday cooking, Tuesday craft, and Friday group activity. But on Thursday she normally goes out with Erin her Support Worker. They share a bond.

"Niki tags along on one-on-one support," says Erin. "We had a bit of trouble with one young girl and getting her out of the house. Niki kind of coaxed her out one day and is like a mentor. She has been a great help with her."

Niki receives ongoing support so she can socialise more, doing things like going and seeing bands, with Erin.





Castle Personnel is making enormous strides in transitioning young adults into the broader community and employment through its Transition program. Castle Transition runs sessions which are practical, pragmatic and popular. These range from life skills to music and creative arts, driver's license test training, resume building and work experience opportunities. Transition caters to the stage between school and moving to employment.

### Lara

Lara is a new participant at Castle and has been attending the Transition program for a little over a year.

"I'm really enjoying Castle. The transition house is probably my favourite session," says Lara.

Lara has a newfound interest in performing arts since joining Transition.

"I didn't really do it in school because I wasn't passionate about it," she says. "And now I am more passionate because I've come to Castle and enjoy the sessions. I'm more into it than I was back in school."

Lara was struggling at school for a while and didn't know what she was going to do.

"Someone told us about Castle and said it would be good for me – the Transition program, learning life skills and help with unemployment. I spoke to one of the NDIS planners and that's when I signed up. So far I've really been enjoying it."

# Olivia

Olivia is 22 and has been a Castle participant for more than three years.

"Overall I have enjoyed each of the sessions I have been in," Olivia (Livvie) says.

Livvie lives at home and is competent and confident enough to step into a Castle receptionist role each Friday. She dabbled in art class while still at school, but discovered it wasn't her forte. She is more of a writer. Fiction is her genre, but she bases her stories on things that have already happened.

"We have a social day and a social night," says Livvie. "We go out into society and recently we went to the Newcastle Leagues Club. We do a whole lot of activities with Castle as well. Castle people come with us. We have the EB Games coming up too!

"We often get brochures and information relating to further education. The first one offered usually is WEA Hunter." Olivia says she's not pursuing any courses at the moment. "I'm just continuing with my writing. Normally my parents or Case Worker reads it to check my progress. Some of it I blog, just to see how much interest there is."

"

I've made plenty of new friends here.
My sessions are going great. My
favourite is creative activity because
my interest is part-time acting.

"

## Kane

Kane is 20 and in his third year at Castle, which he describes as "really good".

"I've made plenty of new friends here. My sessions are going great. My favourite is creative activity because my interest is part-time acting."

Kane performed in a couple of showcases during primary school, and then did two high school plays including *Little Shop of Horrors*.

"Last year I did *Mary Poppins* with Metropolitan at the Civic Theatre. I love acting. It is my passion – the getting into character and getting on stage."

Kane says his high school English teacher told him about Castle.

"When I was in Year 12 I had no idea what I wanted to do, so I was basically like – I might just get a little job or something like that. That's when she (English teacher) told me about Castle and a month later I looked into it. A couple of my friends came here before I started. I looked around and then I decided – yeah, I'll do it."

Theatre remains a possible vocation for Kane.

"That is my dream. I keep an eye out for opportunities, but I'd take any job at the moment. That's just me. It's hard to get an acting job. You really have to go to Sydney and I'm not sure my mum would like me moving away on my own. But she does support my acting."





