



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New Access and Inclusion Program: Empowering Individuals and Inclusivity in Port Augusta**

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Port Augusta City Council is excited to announce the launch of the Access and Inclusion Program (AIP), an initiative designed to address local unemployment and promote inclusivity within our community.

The AIP aims to empower individuals with disabilities and equip them with the necessary work experience, skills, resources, and support to enhance their employability.

“Unemployment currently remains a significant challenge in Port Augusta, with approximately 25% unemployment or underemployment. This issue not only impacts quality of life but also limits prospects for future employment. We recognise that this problem has become generational, and Council has engaged in a program to create a proactive solution”. CEO John Banks stated.

“Port Augusta ranks among the top 6 disadvantaged communities in South Australia, grappling with significant financial distress and homelessness. Individuals with disabilities face increasing difficulties in finding suitable employment and developing the necessary skills and experience to secure long-term jobs. This not only affects their economic outcomes but also hinders the long-term viability and sustainability of our community. We want to actively break this cycle.” Mayor Linley Shine stated.

Strategy Manager Theressa Hines advised “The AIP will commence with an initial 26-week trial period, allowing participants to gain essential work skills and on-the-job experience. Council is working alongside Community Bridging Services (a disability employment provider) to ensure the program offers the necessary support and guidance to participants of the program”.

“We believe fostering inclusivity and providing job readiness training will benefit not only individuals with disabilities but also the entire community. The AIP will create a more inclusive workforce that recognises the skills and contributions of all individuals, regardless of their abilities”. CEO John Banks stated.

During the trial period, Councils Strategy Team will collaborate with other regional employers to engage them to join the program, as well as providing employment opportunities for the AIP participants. The initial program duration is set for 26 weeks, with the possibility of extending to 52 weeks upon agreement. Council is also working with sponsors for the program.



Current AIP participants Shona and Hayley.

*For further information please contact Council's Media and Communications Officer on (08) 8641 9100*

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