



Successful partnership: Katoomba RSL Club CEO Nick Darius speaks at the Nova Employment 100 jobs in 100 days campaign launch while club employee and former Nova client Russ Billingham looks on.

Nova looking for 100 more success stories

By Damien Madigan

For the past three years, Russ Billingham has become an indispensable part of Katoomba RSL Club.

Mr Billingham, who has cerebral palsy and is legally blind, got his start at the club through Nova Employment, which focuses on finding jobs for people with disabilities.

So it was fitting Nova launched its 100 jobs in 100 days campaign at the club last week before an audience of business and community leaders. Mr Billingham was one of four Nova clients who shared their success stories at the event.

"I couldn't find a job [when I first moved to the Mountains five years ago]. I was getting really frustrated as I was a person who really wanted to work," he said.

"I got a few job interviews myself to no avail and then I heard about Nova... I've been here for three years now. I'm happy here and I also live independently now, too."

Nova Employment Katoomba outlet manager Lyn White said "there is no better feeling" than to have played a part in success stories like Mr Billingham's.

"Every club member knows him; and he knows every member," she said.

Katoomba RSL Club CEO Nick Darius said the club has employed three Nova clients and is looking at taking on more.

"One of the benefits as an employer is the help

and assistance you receive from Nova. Russ finished his Nova [placement] back in 2012 yet still they come down and look after him to see if he needs any support," he said.

Nova Employment's Springwood outlet manager Rachel Hampshire said "people who have a disability provide an important part of our working community in Australia and add value to each individual industry".

"Part of our job [at Nova Employment] is to identify our job seekers' skills, abilities and interests and match them to employment. By doing this we experience higher than average retention rates and more job satisfaction from our clients and employers," she said.

The 100 jobs in 100 days campaign — which is supported by the Blue Mountains Gazette — exceeded its Blue Mountains target in placing people in jobs last year.

Nova CEO Martin Wren praised the community support for the campaign at the launch.

"When you look at our community it's made up of people who want to contribute, and we do well when we include every one of those individuals in the things we do," he said.

"We are well on the way to doing that now when it comes to the opportunities that are available for people who have a disability in relation to their careers."

For more details on the campaign visit www.novaemployment.com.au or call 4780 6600 (Katoomba) or 4752 3000 (Springwood).

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