



**2023 AUSTRALIAN
DISABILITY SERVICE
AWARDS**

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Specialised housing is reuniting families after tragedy strikes

Surviving a near-fatal hemorrhagic stroke 2 years ago, and after spending 7 months in hospital, Kevin* was heartbroken when he discovered he was unable to return home to his wife of 40 years, Julie.

Left with a permanent disability, his high physical support needs ruled out going home and he urgently needed an alternative. Kevin was fortunate - he is back with Julie, both now living in an ultra-modern apartment fitted with smart technology, catering for his high support needs.

Paul Simmons and his wife Angie co-founded Ability SDA, a specialist disability accommodation provider with homes in Sydney and on the NSW Central Coast. Paul said it was “such a thrill to see Kevin and Julie doing life together again after being separated”.

Last night, Ability SDA was named a winner at the **2023 Australian Disability Service Awards** organised by One Community, and held at Melbourne’s Convention and Exhibition Centre. They took out the major award for Best Accommodation Provider.

“Our apartments allow for couples and families to reunite after being separated as a result of disability. Kevin and Julie brought all their favourite things to their new apartment, including pot plants and their two aging cats,” said Paul.

“There is a large undersupply of accessible, affordable housing in Australia. It is a significant problem, with some people forced to live in accommodation not suited to their needs. Sometimes they are even forced into emergency housing.

“When we saw the need and demand for specialised housing we set to work collaborating with occupational therapists and top accessibility consultants to deliver high quality, functional homes.”

Ability SDA joined 12 other winners and finalists from around Australia for the **Australian Disability Service Awards** when hundreds gathered for the disability service sector’s night of nights, as their achievements as industry leaders and changemakers were showcased.

Winners included a wearable device that gamifies physiotherapy exercises; a rehabilitation service offering a one-stop shop for people with acquired brain injury; and a program that is transforming coastal communities with universal beach access.

One Community co-founders Shelley Youman and Kellie Puxty said the Awards ‘shine a light on the tangible and significant impact that innovative services have on supporting people with disability live their best lives’.

“Ability SDA has highlighted the need for a flexible approach that meets the needs of people who, already facing major challenges in their lives, may also be facing isolation from family and loved ones,” said Shelley.

Category winners for the **2023 Australian Disability Service Awards** are:

- **Best Accommodation Provider**, Ability SDA, NSW
- **Best Assistive Technology Product**, LUSIO MATE, LUSIO Rehab, NSW
- **Best Community Program**, U-BEACH (initiative of CQUniversity), QLD
- **Best Early Intervention Program**, Therapy Pro for Kids, Therapy Pro, QLD
- **Best Employment Program**, Metanoia Rays, NT
- **Best New Business**, Navigate Support Coordination, WA
- **Best Regional, Rural or Remote Service/Program**, Aussie Ergonomics, QLD
- **Best Workplace Inclusion Program**, Real Life Assistants, NSW
- **Most Outstanding Allied Health Organisation**, NeuroRehab Allied Health Network, VIC
- **Most Outstanding CEO/Director**
 - Lonestar Makoni, Breaking Barriers Disability Services, NSW
 - AND
 - Scott Lynch, Community Therapy, NSW
- **Most Outstanding Plan Management**, Leap in!, QLD
- **Most Outstanding Support Coordinator**, Laura Cleary, Level Up Development, NSW
- **Most Outstanding Support Worker**, Yoshea Ledgard, Endeavour Foundation, QLD

Go to our website for a full list of finalists www.adsca.com.au

Professional images/photos available upon request.

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