



BUSINESS WORKS

GREAT JOB

Anthony Hopewell cleans a Smith Brothers Plumbing vehicle watched by construction manager Nick Wilmshurst and manager MJP Employment Services Olivia Sorre.

Job gives Anthony winning smile

By Rebecca Kersten
Photography Heidi Linehan

A Dover Gardens man with an intellectual disability has had his life transformed thanks to a partnership between a specialist employment agency and a plumbing business.

When Anthony Hopewell began work at Smith Brothers Plumbing five years ago he had never had a paid job, had few skills and little work experience.

Anthony, 50, has now established himself as an important part of the business.

"I wash fleet vehicles, clean up and tidy the gardens," Anthony said.

"I like working and I like the people and all of the jobs I do at Smith Brothers... though looking after the gardens is the best part."

Anthony won the job through MJP Employment Services (MJP), an initiative of Minda which connects people living with an intellectual disability to the general labour market.

MJP has helped more than 1400 people with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities to find work since its inception 19 years ago.

Manager Olivia Sorre said many employers are willing to employ people with a disability although they may not be aware of specialist agencies.

"MJP matches job seekers with an intellectual disability with employers who are looking to diversify and add to their workforce," Ms Sorre said.

"Many small businesses are not disability confident, so we help them every step of the way and the results can be extremely rewarding for employer and worker.

"We have placed people in a wide range of businesses, including cafes, nurseries, manufacturing, aged care and retail."

MJP job support officer Fritz Hortelano often accompanies Anthony during his shifts.

"Smith Brothers Plumbing are happy to have Anthony in the business... we work in partnership and I keep him focused on the job as well as offering motivation and support with personal issues if needed," Mr Hortelano said.

"Since beginning work his confidence has soared, he has learnt new skills and is earning an income.

"Anthony always has a smile on his face, fits in well and works hard."

MJP is a member of Edwardstown Region Business Association (ERBA) which supports local businesses through networking and sharing knowledge and resources. ERBA is supported by the City of Marion.

Find out more about MJP online at >
mjpemploymentservices.com.au

Connect with ERBA on >
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ERBA goes to Antarctica

MJP manager Olivia Sorre was photographed with an ERBA sponsored teddy bear during a 16-day trip to the Antarctic in December last year. Olivia was the SA Travel Mentor for a leadership program involving five young indigenous people. The expedition involved kayaking, ice climbing and snowshoeing a mountain peak. Called Outback to Icecap, it was a partnership between Yalari, a foundation that provides scholarships to Indigenous students and the Leadership Group, an Australian-based business.

