

## Philip's Spotless career leads to Advisory Council on Disability role.

Being appointed to a council that provides advice to a government minister is an achievement in anyone's book.

For a person with an intellectual disability, it is a testament to their value and ability to speak up and be recognised.

On January 1, Philip Badger commenced a two-year term as a member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability.

The role of the 14-person council is to provide guidance to the Minister for Disability Services, Helen Morton, on the development and implementation of policies, services, programmes and activities that affect people with disabilities and their families.

Philip's sister, Linda Branley, describes the appointment as a "real achievement" and says Philip is justifiably proud of himself.

"He thinks it's pretty good!" she says. "It's a great privilege."

For more than 20 years, Philip has been employed as a Linen Porter with Spotless Linen Services, at St John of God Hospital in Subiaco.

Linda Branley says her brother loves the stability of working. She credits EDGE and Spotless with providing the structure which allows Philip to live independently.

"When Phil first got the job, EDGE had to get him to work. They taught him the safest route, made him capable – then stepped back, stepped back, stepped back . . ." she says.

These days, – and despite a 6am start – Philip rides a pushbike to and from work – a round trip of more than twenty kilometres – all by himself.

EDGE Job Coordinator, Mark Dodd says he's thrilled with Philip's appointment to the Ministerial Advisory Council and believes it'll send a positive message to the wider community.

"Philip will inspire people!" Mark told INSIDE EDGE "This will make more people with disabilities come forward and want to get involved."



Philip Badger and Spotless Team Leader Marie Knott.



Patrick Healy with AdWest's Karl Massey (left) and Mark Brennan in their Wangara factory.

## A job interview that really changed a life!

The job interview that changed Patrick Healy's life sounds like a scene from a movie. The plot would go as follows –

**Working man is injured in a workplace accident – loses both legs. Despite years of job – seeking, he doesn't get one interview. Eventually, a new job agency takes him on. Steel factory boss is looking for staff. Man is a qualified welder/boilermaker. Applies for job. Inventive factory employee meets him and configures machinery so it can be operated by hand, not foot. Boss offers him a job. Man accepts, saying "I thought I'd never contribute to society again." Boss tells him "You're going to contribute greatly to my business."**

The story is true, Patrick Healy is "the man" and AdWest's Mark Brennan and his business partner Karl Massey, are the bosses who gave Patrick a go in their Wangara steel fabrication company.

"We're huge believers in everyone deserves a chance," says Mark Brennan "If you find the right person, it's not a charity, it works both ways. It's more about the personality, the disability doesn't come into it."

And that's exactly how Patrick Healy likes it. He hates the idea of being defined by his disability.

"I operate just the same as a normal person," he told INSIDE EDGE "I go to the footy, I go fishing – everything's the same. I enjoy working, it gives me satisfaction and I like to be independent."

Still, it took a bit of "thinking outside the square" for this story to have its happy resolution. Before the interview, Mark Brennan admits he was nursing some doubts.

"My initial impression was how can you have someone in a wheelchair going around in a cluttered, busy steel factory?" says Mark Brennan " But then I got to thinking – what if that happened to one of our guys . . ."

"At AdWest, they really look at what people can do, not what they can't do," says EDGE Employer Consultant Didier Monot. He describes a company culture that encourages people with disabilities to be "just one of the team".

"It's not only the bosses – it's the supervisors and all of the staff, too."

Didier explains that while EDGE helped secure funding to facilitate the modification of machinery, Patrick and AdWest made the collaboration a success.

And while his boss is quick to praise Patrick's attitude, the man himself is happy to get on with the job.

"I'm just an average bloke who believes he can work even though he is in a wheelchair. It all depends what you believe" he said.

Make a great movie, wouldn't it?

## That's only the first twenty five!

Most people would balk at the prospect of spending four hours a day in the cold. Adrian Hull not only does it without ANY complaint – he loves it!

Responsible for stacking the milk at Coles Melville Plaza, Adrian was recently recognised for 25 years of loyal service with the company. Staff celebrated the milestone with Adrian at a special morning tea, in his honour.

"It was magic!" Adrian said.

Adrian's parents, Denis and Marilyn, were also invited. Denis Hull said there hadn't been a day in 25 years that Adrian hadn't looked forward to going to work – something he attributes to his son's happy disposition and Coles' positive company environment.

"When someone like Adrian feels so comfortable and accepted at work, that doesn't happen by accident," Mr Hull told INSIDE EDGE "The company and Adrian's co-workers have been wonderful."

"Adrian's built up this reputation as a happy, friendly, approachable young chap and that's been his hallmark over the years."

"He's a credit to himself, a credit to us as a family and a credit to the company," he said.

Coles manager Craig Lilleyman says Adrian is one of three people with special needs on staff – and believes they're all assets to his team.

"Once people with disabilities are trained properly, they just get on with what they have to do, no trouble," said Mr Lilleyman.

"And they have the least amount of sickness – I can't really remember the last time Adrian had a sick day."

To recognise Adrian's 25 year anniversary, Coles offered him the choice of a gold watch or a \$650 voucher. Adrian took the voucher – how he'll spend it is a mystery – he's still deciding!

Just 15 when he joined Coles as a trolley boy, over time Adrian has moved "up the ranks". For many years he kept the checkouts neat and stacked with bags, as well as returning items to the correct places on the shelves.

Last year, Adrian was given a new set of responsibilities – management asked him to take on the job of keeping the milk fridges well stacked.

"Initially, the feedback was that Adrian wasn't fast enough, so we introduced more support to help him," says EDGE Job Coordinator Martin Albrecht.

"With Adrian's fantastic attitude and willingness to do a good job, he got there. The combination of giving him a bit of advice, a bit of confidence and time to adjust, worked."

"We helped Adrian's colleagues, too. Many of them had never worked alongside someone with a disability – they understand him better now."

"That's what EDGE is about, we don't just support the person with a disability, we provide support to the employer too."

"Adrian makes my job easier every day," Dairy Manager, Paul Pearce told INSIDE EDGE. "He's very reliable, efficient and always turns up on time."

Mr Pearce said working alongside someone with a disability had been a good experience for his staff.

"To us, he's just part of the team, we enjoy spending time with Adrian, and treat him the same as everyone else."

Adrian told INSIDE EDGE it makes him happy to be able to work, he likes the customers and his friends. Asked if he can see himself working at Coles for another 25 years, his answer was unequivocal – "I'll still be here!" he said.



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