

Tyler mixing it up at the Waverley Brewhouse

Tyler joined the Waverley Brewhouse in March 2022 as a Food and Beverage Assistant. He's a great example of how, with a positive mindset and the right support, a person with autism can thrive in a busy small business.



Tyler mixing a cocktail at the Waverley Brewhouse

A model disability employer

When the Hospitality Disability Network of WA (HDNWA) approached Chris Howell, Venue Manager at the Waverley Brewhouse, he was very open to using HDNWA's services. 'I believe that you can give everyone a chance and with the right support and guidance they can be an asset to your business,' says Chris.

Using his experience of employing people with disability to make a difference, Chris noted that 'like any other staff member, Tyler needed some time to build up his confidence in the role, but with great support from the whole team he's really come out of his shell. I now get regular feedback from customers and my own team about how he's doing. Tyler is always here early and prepared for his shift.'



HDNWA's proven model of taking the time to understand a venue's way of working and support structures for candidates enables it to streamline the process of finding a successful match. In addition, HDNWA's team is staffed by people with hospitality backgrounds, enabling them to understand the reality of fast-paced hospitality venues where there's a constant focus on the customer experience and what this means in terms of selecting the best candidates.

'Working with HDNWA has been great,' says Chris. 'They really took the time to get to know our business and what we needed in a new staff member. I simply just let them know that we had a vacancy, and they presented some great candidates for me to consider. To date we've had four staff come through HDNWA and each have been fully supported by their team.'

Partnering with the Autism Association of Western Australia

The Autism Association of Western Australia is a Disability Employment Services provider through its AIM Employment Program. As a provider member of HDNWA, candidates like Tyler benefit from opportunities at pre-screened supportive employers, such as the Waverley Brewhouse.

'We've had in excess of 20 employment placements since the start of our partnership with HDNWA,' says Ian McTear, AIM Employment Manager. 'The HDNWA team are accepting, flexible and accommodating. Their knowledge of autism means they are able to adjust their questions and processes according to the strengths and challenges of each individual.'

HDNWA's strengths-based approach to supporting candidates is designed to achieve sustainable employment, as has been the case with Tyler. 'Their strong relationship with their members also allows for a smooth onboarding process, maintaining open communication with both the employer and us, drawing on our expertise and support where needed,' says Ian. 'We also find that with the right job match, individuals with autism are likely to remain committed to that employer long term.' Tyler's experience at the Waverley Brewhouse has certainly proven Ian's point given he's been working there now for more than a year.

Tyler's journey to a great job

Having completed a Certificate II in Hospitality at school, Tyler thought that working in hospitality might be something he'd enjoy. 'After working in a few other jobs I was trying to figure out what path I wanted to work in. Since I enjoyed my Cert II in high school, I thought working in hospitality might be a good idea.'

Reflecting on his first shift last year, he can see how Chris and HDNWA's support set him up to thrive in a fast-paced environment. 'The first day was a busy day in the restaurant. I mainly ran food out to guests – it was pretty full on, but it was a good opportunity for me to see how busy the Waverley can get.'

He's delighted to have a supportive team, describing them as 'very great and very supportive of me and what I need and just great to work with.' He went on to say how he's learnt how to better interact with people and now has the confidence to speak to strangers, which is really helping in his personal life too. 'I've opened up a lot more and come out of my shell.'

Committed to career and skill development, Tyler's manager has encouraged him to get involved with the training on offer. 'I get really into the training they offer here. We recently had coffee and wine training and are having beer training upcoming with the brewer.'

Such development opportunities have helped him achieve his goal of working in the bar area. 'The managers had spoken to me about getting me trained in the bar. It's been something I was nervous about as it's not something I'd done before, but now it doesn't stress me out, instead it's something I look forward to.' He enjoys



making drinks and seeing how people enjoy them, which is a big step from when he first began working at the Waverley.

In terms of his current career plans, Tyler wants to learn more about bartending. He's also looking to enrol in a Certificate IV in hospitality, and potentially management training. While he's building his confidence in his abilities, he's looking forward to the possibility of being a duty manager and long term is even thinking about opening his own small bar and venue.

Attracting talent through HDNWA

The Waverley Brewhouse is like many other businesses in WA's hospitality sector who have been finding it challenging to attract talent. But as Chris notes, 'I've been able to have a reliable, dedicated staff member that has been an asset to the team.'

This is testament to the strength of HDNWA's industry-led model in matching highly motivated candidates, like Tyler, with genuine opportunities where they can look forward to a career in the sector at venues across the state.