

# New outlook for achiever

By  Jessica Anstice

Ashleigh Allen, a determined and passionate Steps to Employment participant, has been awarded the State Government's Community Achiever Award.

The Inaugural Community Achiever Awards celebrate outstanding employees who have a disability and the social enterprises that support them with pathways to meaningful employment.

The Outlook Community Centre student has a unique passion for life. Ashleigh is described as a go-getter, and isn't afraid to speak up.

Starting out as a young person who had no idea what she wanted to do, Ashleigh tried anything and everything that was presented to her.

In finding her ideal role, Outlook facilitated work in childcare, with Myer stores, and many other sectors.

"She has the biggest heart - she will help anyone who needs it and is an amazing friend and mentor to those around her," Ashleigh's support worker said.

"She has built and maintained community relationships through sports, youth services and is independent when accessing these.

"Ash has started to build an independent lifestyle by organising group hangouts, getting her from different places independently and accessing local events."

When presented with the award, Ashleigh said she felt "so excited" and "proud" for working hard at Outlook over the past four years.

"This award is a great achievement to me," Ashleigh said.

"The first year was tricky as I wasn't really interested in work placement apart from childcare and I didn't want to try anything else.

"I wanted to work in my dream job which turned out not working for me - I didn't like it. So I started doing different placements until I



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found good areas I liked to work in and now I will be looking for a job next year."

Through her journey to finding employment, one of the biggest highlights for Ashleigh was making new friends.

"I have made new friends which I wasn't

keen on doing at the start but now we have the best time," she said.

"Outlook has made me a better person as they have helped me find new guidance in my life."

Outlook student Thomas O'Brien was also

received the Community Achiever Award.

Thomas is a supported employee at Mornington, giving two days a week.

He also performs his studies at TAFE and gives motivational speeches to students in high school, TAFE and university.