COLLEGE NEWS

Winter 2026

Creating a brighter future



STEPS Pathways College students, team members and supporters on Steps for STEPS walk

Steps for STEPS challenge raises $42,925 for STEPS Pathways College

STEPS Pathways Charity wrapped up its 2026 Steps for STEPS campaign, raising $42,925 to support STEPS Pathways College and our students on their independence education journeys.

Proudly presented by Caloundra RSL, the fundraiser culminated in a 24km walk across the Sunshine Coast in a single day, with several of our STEPS Pathways College students and team members travelling from Maroochydore to the college campus in Caloundra.

STEPS Pathways Charity Manager Katrina May said the campaign proves the power of community.

“Our STEPS Pathways College students work hard every single day to become more independent and create a brighter future for themselves,” Katrina said.

“We could not have done this without our dedicated supporters, who wholeheartedly believe in our mission to empower our STEPS Pathways College students and contribute significant funds to make these futures possible.”

“We can’t wait to do it all again next year and continue showing everyone just how far the belief in a better, more inclusive world can take you.”

Thank you to everyone who supported our students this year, whether it was by sponsoring them, signing up for the challenge, or walking side-by-side with them.

STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

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Principal's message

Welcome to the winter 2026 STEPS Pathways College newsletter.

Through the time that our students spend at STEPS Pathways College, they are empowered to live well in every sense, from the food they eat to the relationships they form to the ways they look after their mental health. When I read the stories in this edition, I see the power of self-advocacy combined with community support and how they combine to help our students create a brighter future.

So, let's look at what's been happening at STEPS Pathways College. With the wrap-up of our 2026 Steps for STEPS campaign and our recent feature on Channel 7's House of Wellness, there is so much to celebrate and be thankful for.

You'll read about students Bella and Lachlan using their voices to shape a more accessible community, and the thoughtful ways that our campus supports student wellbeing through spaces like the 'Chill Out Room.' Finally, you'll meet trainer Ella and student Tom, who speak to the personal growth taking place here every day at STEPS Pathways College.

I hope this edition gives you a meaningful glimpse into the experiences, opportunities and connections that make STEPS Pathways College so unique. Thank you for reading.

Stephanie Patey
Executive Principal and CEO
STEPS Pathways College and STEPS Social Business

How you can help

The generosity of our community helps make STEPS Pathways College possible.

Your donation is fully tax deductible and has the power to change a student's life for the better, giving them the skills they need for independence, empowerment, and connection.

With your help, we can continue to build a brighter future for young people living with a disability and autism.



Thank you!



Century 21 Lifestyle team on Steps for STEPS student walk

Thank you to Century 21

Century 21 Lifestyle is a trusted real estate agency on the Sunshine Coast and a dedicated community partner whose ongoing support of STEPS Pathways College makes a meaningful difference.

Their commitment to our recent Steps for STEPS campaign – check out the photo of their fabulous pit-stop with refreshments for our students – reflects their belief in creating opportunities and empowering everyone on the Sunshine Coast.

As locals who live, work and raise families in the Sunny Coast region, Century 21 Lifestyle bring a warm and down-to-earth approach to everything they do.

We are incredibly grateful for their generosity and the positive impact they make on our community every single day.



Melissa Doyle AM, Carmel Crouch AM, STEPS Pathways College graduate Tom, and Shane Crawford on House of Wellness set

STEPS Pathways College featured on House of Wellness

STEPS Pathways College was recently featured in an episode of Channel 7's primetime health and wellness program House of Wellness. Co-host and STEPS Pathways College Ambassador Melissa Doyle AM presented the segment, sharing the stories of one of the College's first graduates, Tom, and STEPS Managing Director Carmel Crouch AM.

Carmel, whose four decades of disability advocacy led to the creation of STEPS Pathways College, said she is proud to offer other parents an opportunity to give their children the future they deserve.

"Every person, no matter their ability, has the right to dream, to achieve, and to live a life full of meaning and happiness, and that is exactly why we made STEPS Pathways College a reality," Carmel said.

Tom shared what independent living looks like for him in Melbourne, where he's working two jobs and showing support for his favourite AFL team: St Kilda.

This was an amazing opportunity for STEPS Pathways College and we would like to thank Melissa Doyle AM and the House of Wellness team for inviting us on the show. If you would like to watch our segment, you can stream Season 11, Episode 5 on 7plus. Scan the QR code to watch!



Students use the 'Chill Out Room' to rest and relax

College curates sensory space for students

STEPS Pathways College offers a dedicated 'Chill Out Room,' providing students with a calming space to reset and recharge.

The room is designed to support students who experience sensory processing challenges and give them a safe environment to manage their emotions when they feel overwhelmed.

The STEPS Pathways College team has thoughtfully curated the space, which features a variety of tactile and sensory-friendly zones. Students can relax on soft bean bags on shaggy carpet, stretch out on a large lounge surrounded by cushions and plush toys, or settle down in cubicle-style seating for quiet time.

To further promote a sense of calm and avoid overstimulation, the room has low-level warm light from a lamp, and minimal decorations, including a small piece of carpet on the wall for tactile soothing.

The sensory 'Chill Out Room' aligns with 'Healthy Living and Personal Wellbeing,' one component of STEPS Pathways College's '10 Key Areas of Learning' curriculum, empowering students to self-regulate.

By optimising our campus to support our students and their emotional wellbeing, we're giving them the tools needed to commit to their learning journey and pursue their goals.

Student voices shaping community change

Students Bella and Lachlan have joined Sunshine Coast Council's 'All Access Abilities', a focus group that offers insights to the council to help make local events and public spaces more accessible for everyone in the community.

Bella and Lachlan joined 'All Access Abilities' to make their lived experiences heard, as well as the experiences of their peers.

Students at STEPS Pathways College are taught the importance of self-advocacy and clear communication, and this committee is a fantastic way to put these skills into practice.

Another aspect of our '10 Key Areas of Learning' curriculum is community connections, which covers modes of transport and road safety. These lessons help our students learn how to explore their community independently, confidently and safely, whether they are riding a bike or catching public transport.

By joining this disability advocacy committee, Bella and Lachlan are seizing the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they've learned and making the Sunshine Coast community a more inclusive and accessible place to live.



Boarding College students Bella and Lachlan



Make a difference. Become a volunteer.

Volunteers are an integral part of STEPS – and we want your help to deliver lifechanging opportunities to our students.

Whether your skills lie in the kitchen, classroom, garden or beyond, we have a role that suits your unique experience and interests.

If you are unable to commit to a regular volunteering role, we have opportunities for one-time positions at our many community events.

For more information, please contact our Volunteer Relations and Event Coordinator, Karla.

07 5458 3040
volunteer@stepsgroup.com.au

Mark your calendar!

STEPS Grand Winter Ball: Saturday 25 July
STEPS Pathways College Open Day: Thursday 17 September



Visit our website for more information and to RSVP
stepspathways.com.au

Trainer profile

What do you teach at STEPS Pathways College?

I am a Student Support Officer. In my role, I provide support to students as they navigate their emotions and experiences throughout the day.

What do your students teach you?

Working closely with the students has taught me the importance of patience and the value of slowing down and truly understanding their needs.

What do you enjoy teaching your students?

I genuinely enjoy spending time with the students and supporting them as they make small but meaningful changes in their lives.

What is the most valuable thing that you have learnt in this role?

The most valuable insight I have gained in this role is that our students teach us a great deal; not only about their disabilities, but about their strengths and remarkable resilience.

What has been a highlight of your time at STEPS so far?

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is witnessing the incredible progress the students make towards their goals. Being part of their journey and seeing their growth is, without a doubt, the highlight of my work.



Ella



Tom

Student profile

What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

I really enjoy listening to music; one of my favourite bands is Coldplay. I also really enjoy reading and I like Harry Potter and science books.

What classes do you enjoy taking at STEPS Pathways College?

I enjoy our budgeting and money management classes, and cooking in the kitchen.

What do you enjoy about STEPS Pathways College outside of the classroom?

I've made some really good friends, like Paden and Hailee.

What are some valuable life skills you have learnt so far during your time at STEPS?

I have a better understanding of what wellbeing is and how to maintain and improve my mental health. I also feel more comfortable having conversations with other people.

Who is someone you look up to?

David Attenborough. I think he has a very calming voice.

What are your goals for the future?

I want to be more independent and be able to do more things for myself.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend STEPS Pathways College?

Do it! It will mean you can have more opportunities in the future.

Interested in enrolling at STEPS Pathways College

Download our Prospectus

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Snapshots of recent STEPS Pathways College activities







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