



## **“A time of change”**

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**Summary:** Our presentation will explore the experience of a peer support project aimed at helping deafblind people move from a large institution to group homes in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stockton Centre is a large institution, established in 1910 and run by the NSW government in Australia that is currently devolving. Hundreds of people with disability are moving from the institution to new group homes in the community. Included are deafblind people who have been living in the institution since they were small children. Most of these deafblind people had been misunderstood as having profound intellectual disability, experienced extreme neglect and were deprived of communication for most of their lives.

We will:

- Introduce you to the Hunter Deafblind Peer Group
- Describe the focus of the peer support project and why we became involved
- Outline the stages of our involvement and share what we have learnt so far
- Describe the online tools we used for staff training, consultation and peer support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Summarise what was unique about our experience as a peer support organisation and the important combination of independence, lived experience and practice knowledge.  
Using lived experience to increase our understanding of living with deafblindness.