



Chris Bates, Margaret Quinn and Anna Daly of Neighbourhood Connections. N23MP802

Connecting with abilities

FIVE Armadale residents have formed a connection that is changing their lives. The five, with intellectual disabilities, are working together to overcome the obstacles to living independently. Their five houses are within walking distance and they help each other to shop, cook, exercise, socialise and catch public transport. The Neighbourhood Connections members have also become fast friends. Co-ordinator Fiona Porter said the network helped

people to grow in experience and self-confidence. "This kind of living makes the best of each person's abilities," she said. "For example, if someone else in the group is good at cooking, they will help the others. Someone else might be good catching public transport. "And because it helps people build and use their own networks, it is highly efficient and sustainable." The group has a community worker, who spends about 12 hours each week

encouraging and supporting the residents. Neighbourhood Connections, set up in 2006, is modelled on a British network of 100 groups. A group of eight people is in Rosebud, with another likely in Frankston soon. "We want to hear from anyone interested in joining any of the three groups as a member," Ms Porter said. » Phone 9591 6400 or email fiona@marillac.com.au

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