

Doin' it for the kids

A wage subsidy program is making a real difference in the community of Wagga Wagga in NSW.

The Wagga Wagga Police and Community Youth Club (PCYC) has been providing a variety of services and programs for the community for over 42 years. From sporting activities such as karate and boxing to after-school care and traffic education, the team at the Wagga PCYC work hard to make their community a better place, especially for the young people of the area.

But because PCYCs depend on donations and funding to run their services, it can sometimes be hard to make ends meet, meaning services can suffer. This means that every little bit helps.

That's why when a young Indigenous man named Aaron Atkinson came to apply for a job at the Wagga PCYC, the club's manager Michael Small didn't hesitate to hire him.

It wasn't just because Aaron is a hard-working young fella who's dedicated to doing his bit for the community. It was also because Aaron was eligible for a Wage Assistance card, which offers employers who hire eligible card-holders salary subsidies.

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"It makes it easier for us," says Michael. "We have budget restrictions, which means we can't always afford to hire staff and keep programs running."

"But Wage Assistance has made an enormous difference for us. Not only can we afford to hire Aaron, we can also use the money that would have otherwise gone on wages to maintain important programs."

One of Aaron's responsibilities at the PCYC is to help run after-school homework sessions for local kids. A talented musician, he also runs a music program, where kids can come and listen

to or play music, or arrange for lessons through the club. On Thursdays, Aaron runs sports activities and a barbecue.

"Our main aim at the PCYC is to give kids opportunities to improve their lives," Michael says. "We work with disadvantaged kids, and help kids who are on the wrong track to get back on the right one."

"We need all the support we can get to keep doing what we're doing, and Wage Assistance has given us the support we need to employ someone who is making a real difference for the young people of our community."