

# › DoveTale

WINTER, 2018



*News from across Uniting AgeWell communities*



# » CEO's message

As we move further into a consumer-driven and increasingly competitive aged care market, Uniting AgeWell continues to identify opportunities to enhance the quality of the services we provide.

With this in mind, we recently announced plans to close and redevelop our Brighton aged care residence – Girrawheen Community – and build a more substantial and contemporary aged care facility to meet the current and future needs of the local community.

Girrawheen staff delivered an excellent standard of care and service over many years. However the building – which was opened in 1989 – and its overall layout no longer met community expectations and organisational standards.

After announcing the closure and rebuild project in May, we worked closely with residents and their families to support them to relocate to another facility of their choice, and ensured they had priority access to our other sites. Many residents chose to move to other Uniting AgeWell residences, which I feel reflects the wonderful care and support they have received and the level of trust they have in our organisation.

All Girrawheen staff were offered redeployment opportunities and I am thrilled the majority chose to stay with Uniting AgeWell.

The closure of Girrawheen ahead of its rebuild was a difficult decision for the Board, but we are confident it was the right decision for all involved. We will continue to support seniors in the Bayside region through our ongoing home care services, carer respite and social support programs operated through the Girrawheen day centre.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the local community for their many years of support of Girrawheen, particularly the volunteers, church and school groups who have regularly visited residents and brought joy and happiness to their lives.

It's exciting to see phenomenal growth in the number of home care packages Uniting AgeWell delivers. With a 20 per cent increase in package clients since December 2017, it's also an encouraging vote of confidence in our services. Spanning a broad geographical area across metropolitan and



regional Victoria and Tasmania, we're able to support more people like Joseph McCrann of Mildura to continue living an active and independent life. Joseph's story is featured in this edition of DoveTale.

Creating memorable experiences for our clients and residents and helping them to realise a long-cherished dream, is the focus of our Wishing Well Program. Now in its sixth year and funded through our Annual Charity Golf Day, the Wishing Well program has made many dreams come true, with each wish as diverse as the individuals who imagine them. You can read on Page 3 about one very special and moving Wishing Well experience that involved some of our seniors leading this year's Anzac Day march. If you'd like to get involved in this year's charity Golf Day and join Platinum Sponsors Paywise and BlueAPACHE, turn to page 8 to find out how.

And as we focus on the wellbeing of the people in our care, I want to take this opportunity to encourage all DoveTale readers to have their annual flu vaccination. I know availability of the vaccination was a temporary problem in some areas, but if you can access the 'flu shot' I encourage you to get it as soon as possible to protect yourself, your family and the general community.

**Andrew Kinnersly**  
CEO



## › Silver service for our veterans

**Uniting AgeWell clients were treated to a very special Anzac Day in Melbourne this year, thanks to a joint initiative between RSL Victoria, RACV Victoria and our Wishing Well program.**

Nine clients from Geelong, Bendigo and Melbourne led the Anzac Day march to the Shrine of Remembrance in vehicles driven by RACV Victoria volunteers.

The silver service experience included a place in the VIP marquee for the commemorative service, and thanks to Uniting AgeWell's Wishing Well, overnight accommodation in the city and a dinner for those who travelled from outside Melbourne.

Wishing Well Coordinator Simone Cosgriff said it was an honour to organise the wish and be part of such a meaningful event.

**“It really was a very special day and it was so heart-warming to see the genuine and sincere thanks from the veterans and their families.”**

“They were beyond grateful for what they described as an exceptional and unique experience of a lifetime.”

Noble Park Community resident Robert Filmer (pictured) was among the Uniting AgeWell clients who attended the march along with his wife, Pam.

It was the first time the Vietnam War veteran had marched on Anzac Day.

Able Seaman Robert Filmer was a ship's diver in 1965 and 1966. Aged just 22, he had the immense responsibility of diving into murky waters to search for and dismantle bombs placed under ships by enemy forces.

“I did an induction course at Rushcutters Bay, in Sydney, and they taught me to dive there,” he said.

“We were trained to look for bombs in all conditions, even at night time.”

Robert spent 82 days at sea on HMAS Sydney putting his life on the line to protect his comrades. Upon returning, Robert rarely spoke of his time in the war – until he was invited to lead the march this year.

Now aged 75, Robert proudly wore a new suit and his medals for the Anzac Day march. He and the other Uniting AgeWell clients were cheered on by thousands of people who lined St Kilda Road to pay their respects to the veterans.

**The Anzac Day wish and those of other Uniting AgeWell clients through the Wishing Well program, are made possible through generous donations and funds raised at the Annual Uniting AgeWell Annual Golf Day.** 🕊️



To make a donation, visit:  
[unitingagewell.org/donate](https://unitingagewell.org/donate)

## ➤ A step in the right direction

**Older Australians benefitted from the Commonwealth Government's 2018-19 Budget handed down in May, with a number of funding commitments and enhancements to the aged care approvals process.**

While these commitments are welcome, funding for services for these vitally important members of our community is being contributed at a much slower rate than we would all hope.

It was pleasing to see funding for 14,000 new high level home care packages, however this will not meet the huge demand for home care services.

Based on the latest government reports, over 100,000 people are waiting for home care packages. Almost 80,000 were assessed for high level packages and approximately 45,000 are receiving services at levels below their assessed need.

This is a concern for everyone in the community. It is particularly concerning for Uniting AgeWell staff who have the difficult task of trying to ensure every eligible person who wants our services can access an appropriately funded package.

It is a similar case in residential aged care. The Government announced 13,500 new residential aged care places, but with 49,000 places required by 2021-22, this will not meet demand.

The Uniting AgeWell Board and Executive team recently met to discuss issues like these, and the myriad of possibilities the future holds for the organisation.



We spent the day thinking about how Uniting AgeWell will continue to provide excellence in all aspects of our care and services.

We also discussed what makes us different to other providers who also strive to serve our communities across Victoria and Tasmania. Whilst it's hard to sum up in a few words we think it's certainly based on our traditions and history, as an expression of the Uniting Church.

We also believe our commitment to service and inclusion is evident in everything we do and we will certainly strive to continue our ambition to 'truly know and support' everyone who trusts us with their care or the care of their loved ones.

I look forward to sharing our progress with you in future editions of DoveTale.

**Raelene Thompson**  
Board Chair

## ➤ Former Chair gets royal honours

**Former Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Janet Wood was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in this year's Queen's Birthday honours list.**

Janet, who has been heavily involved in the Uniting Church for more than 20 years, was recognised for significant services to aged welfare, human rights and health advocacy.

A current member of Uniting AgeWell's Community Advisory Committee, Janet served as inaugural Board Chair of Uniting AgeWell (then called Uniting Aged Care) from 2004 to 2007.

During her tenure, Janet led the organisation through major structural reforms with wisdom and sensitivity and a profound sense of commitment to older Australians.

The Uniting AgeWell community warmly congratulates Janet on this very worthy recognition. 

# › Providing highest protection against flu

The winter months bring with them an increased risk of influenza. 'The flu' is a particularly contagious infection that can cause severe illness or death in vulnerable people.

Following the worst flu season on record last year, Uniting AgeWell implemented an enhanced flu vaccination and infection control program to provide the best possible protection for clients.

CEO Andrew Kinnersly said the organisation's comprehensive flu immunisation schedule ensured all employees had easy access to vaccinations free of charge. This year, it was an "absolute expectation" that all staff received the flu vaccine if they were medically able.

"We have made it very clear to our staff, through staff meetings, newsletters, videos and posters that we expect them to receive the flu vaccination unless they are medically exempt," he said.

"We have also included this expectation in all new staff position descriptions and reiterate it in interviews, so everyone is aware of our position."

Uniting AgeWell introduced its inaugural Infection Control Month in April, coinciding with wide-ranging education and training, to raise awareness and ensure all of its residences were well prepared for the flu season.

The wider community also plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of influenza and other infections, Andrew said.

"Our primary concern is always the health, safety and wellbeing of the people in our care and we are committed to providing them with the best possible protection," he said.

**"I encourage all family members of our residents and people who may visit our sites to have the annual flu vaccine."**

"It's also vital that you remain at home if you are feeling unwell to help protect against the spread of flu."

Members of the community can help protect against the spread of flu by following some simple steps, listed right. 



## Help us fight infection

Follow four simple steps to help protect the people we care for

- 1** Use good hygiene – wash hands, use hand rub provided before and after visiting
- 2** If you are unwell, stay at home until you fully recover
- 3** Have the annual flu vaccination
- 4** If restrictions are in place at any residence, please follow them



## ➤ Knitters yarn bombing Launceston

**The phenomenon of ‘yarn bombing’ – where people cover objects or landmarks in knitted wool – is taking the world by storm.**

And now Launceston has its own knitted room, where everything is covered in bright hand-knitted wrapping.

Residents at Uniting AgeWell’s Kings Meadows Community, Aldersgate, have spent months creating the masterpiece under the guidance of long-term volunteer Elaine Breen (pictured).

“Our Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator went to an exhibition at a local church where there was a knitted room on display and she thought it was a fantastic idea,” she said.

“I run the knitting group, so she approached me and asked if we could create one of our own.”

**The vision – a woman knitting on her chair in front of the heater, with her shelf filled with books nearby, while kittens play with the leftover balls of wool.**

When the knitting group heard about the concept, they became excited and shared their own ideas for the room.

People from the aged care residence, the adjoining independent living units, volunteers and staff all pitched in to create the masterpiece.

“A couple from the units, Stephen and Karen Carins, have spent hours and hours making furniture and knitting,” Elaine said.

“Steven made the bookshelf and Karen knitted the covering for it. They’ve done so much.”

The project was complete with dozens of details, including a tree and birds, a teddy bears’ picnic, a game of noughts and crosses and a doll sitting on a tricycle, all behind a knitted picket fence.

A sample of the knitted room was on display at the Kings Meadows Open Day in May, allowing visitors a sneak peek of the project.

A knitting area was set up in the main lounge during the open day, so visitors could knit a leaf, which was attached to the knitted tree with their name on it. 🍃



*The completed project – on display at Uniting AgeWell’s Kings Meadows Community, Aldersgate – will open to the public on 30 June.*



# › Why you should make an advance care plan

As we age, it becomes increasingly important to ensure those closest to us and those caring for us know what our wishes are.

An advance care plan allows you to express your values and preferences about your medical treatment and ensure your decisions are respected if you can no longer speak for yourself.

There is now an even more important reason to develop an advance care plan. The Victorian Government introduced new laws in March giving legal recognition to advance care directives, which can be written into your plan.

The Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions Act 2016 enshrines advance care directives in Victorian law. It means Uniting AgeWell clients, and all Victorians, can be certain about the effect of these documents and health practitioners will be clear about their obligations.

“This is a great time to talk to your family or carer and health professional about developing your own advance care plan,” said Uniting AgeWell Palliative Care Specialist Kerry Whitlock.

**“Your directives will help your family in what may be a very difficult time and ensure health practitioners understand and respect your wishes.”**

Under the Act, an advance care directive can include the following:

- › Instructional directives: specific instructions (or directives) about treatment you consent to or refuse.
- › Values directives: describing your views and values. Medical treatment decision makers and health practitioners will be required to give effect to a values directive.

You may also appoint a:

- › Medical treatment decision maker: to make decisions on your behalf if you can no longer make decisions.
- › Support person: to assist you in making decisions for yourself, by collecting and interpreting information or assisting you to communicate.



Visit the Victorian Government’s health website ([health.vic.gov.au](http://health.vic.gov.au)) and search for ‘Advance care planning’ to download valuable resources and instructional guides for developing advance care directives. 🐦



*If you would like assistance to develop your own advance care directives, talk to your Care Manager or GP, or call us on T: 1300 783 435.*

Uniting AgeWell is hosting Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care information sessions at several sites in August. A panel of experts will provide advice and information at the following sessions:

- › **Noble Park Community:**  
Tuesday, 14 August
- › **Manor Lakes Community, Wyndham Vale:**  
Monday 6, August
- › **Strathdon Community, Forest Hill:**  
Tuesday, 7 August
- › **Aldersgate Community, Kings Meadows:**  
Thursday, 9 August
- › **Rosetta Community, Berrisdale:**  
Wednesday, 15 August
- › **Mornington Community, Lillian Martin:**  
Thursday, 16 August
- › **Queenborough Rise Community, Sandy Bay:**  
Tuesday, 21 August

The sessions are part of the Planning Ahead Information Series, designed to assist older people to understand complex or emotional topics, like mental health and legally protecting your assets, that become so important as you get older.

**To find out more about an information session near you, visit [unitingagewell.org/planning](http://unitingagewell.org/planning) or call T: 1300 783 435.**

## Op shop settles in new home

Uniting AgeWell's Kalkee Op Shop, which provides valuable funds for aged care services in Geelong, has relocated to a newer and brighter shop after 17 years.

The volunteer-run enterprise – previously at 50 Francis Street, Belmont – closed its doors on 15 December, 2017, after the owner of the property sold it to developers.

Volunteer Coordinator Heather Burger said the sale was the catalyst for bigger and better things for the Kalkee Op Shop.

"Our old site was actually two separate shops next door to each other," she said.

"Now we are all under one roof in a building renovated just for us."

Just down the road at 93 Francis Street, the new Kalkee Op Shop opened on 5 March. Since reopening, it has continued to provide support for older people and the wider community.

Along with funding Uniting AgeWell's falls and balance group and music therapy for clients, the op shop proceeds pay for furniture, renovations and other projects.



*Kalkee Op Shop volunteer of 10 years, Jann Brearly, inside the new shop.*

In the past two years, proceeds from the op shop have enabled the purchase of a special wheel-chair accessible bus for transporting clients, along with two renovations at the Kalkee Community, Nangatta aged care residence.

Volunteer of 10 years, Jann Brearly (pictured), said the op shop was there for any community member who needed a hand up. She said the volunteers collaborated with other charities to ensure people in need were looked after. 🐦

 **Kalkee Op Shop is open from Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, and Saturday, 9am to 1pm, at 93 Francis Street Belmont. For more information call T: 5241 7098.**

## Golf Day making dreams a reality

**Planning is well under way for Uniting AgeWell's major fundraising event of the year at the stunning Commonwealth Golf Club this November.**

The Annual Charity Golf Day supports the Wishing Well program, which brings hope, joy and happiness to a person's life by making their dream come true.

In 2017, funds raised from the golf day enabled 26 clients to live out their dreams, including Brian, who fulfilled a long-held dream to travel on the Spirit of Tasmania, and a client who had an indulgent makeover before an anniversary dinner with her husband, and another who attended a Jimmy Barnes concert.

These wonderful experiences empower older people and, for many, bring back happy memories and feelings of independence.

While these wishes sound simple, they take a great deal of organisation and support. Many require

carers and family members to attend to provide appropriate care for the client, ensuring their wellbeing is supported as they enjoy the thrill of their wish coming true.

None of this would be possible without the funds raised through corporate sponsorship and participating teams at the Annual Charity Golf Day.

This year Uniting AgeWell aims to raise more than \$50,000. With more than 20 wishes already pending, there's a lot of work to be done. 🐦

 **If you would like to take part in the Uniting AgeWell Charity Golf Day on Monday, 19 November 2018, call T: 9133 5005 or email [golf@unitingagewell.org](mailto:golf@unitingagewell.org)**

Special thanks to our Platinum Sponsors:



# ➤ Choir steps into the recording studio

A group of residents from Uniting AgeWell's Launceston sites experienced a day in the life of music superstars recently, as they harnessed the power of music to bring joy and evoke memories.

The Aldersgate Choir – comprising residents from Newnham Community, Aldersgate Village and Kings Meadows Community – attended TasTAFE's music studio recently to record their first album.

Uniting AgeWell Leisure and Lifestyle Assistant Adam Page said musical engineering students from the Alanvale campus recorded the CD in a 90-minute session.

"After the recording session each member of the choir was given a copy of the CD so they could listen to themselves singing in the choir whenever they wanted," he said.

"They have proudly played the CD to their families and one person handed a copy to their grandchildren."

The album includes uplifting classics like *Amazing Grace*, *Waltzing Matilda* and *You are my Sunshine* that the choir members would have sung throughout their lives.

Adam said singing those songs encouraged reminiscence and evoked uplifting feelings in the members, some of whom have dementia.

**"Some of our residents are reserved but they really come out of their shell when they perform in the choir."**

"It's a moving experience for staff and a very positive experience for the choir members because of the joy it brings them."

It is the first time many of the residents have been in a choir or sung in front of anyone and Adam said they were gaining confidence every practice.

"Singing in any social situation is an uplifting experience," he said.



"This group is so supportive and enthusiastic that it gives those more apprehensive singers extra confidence."

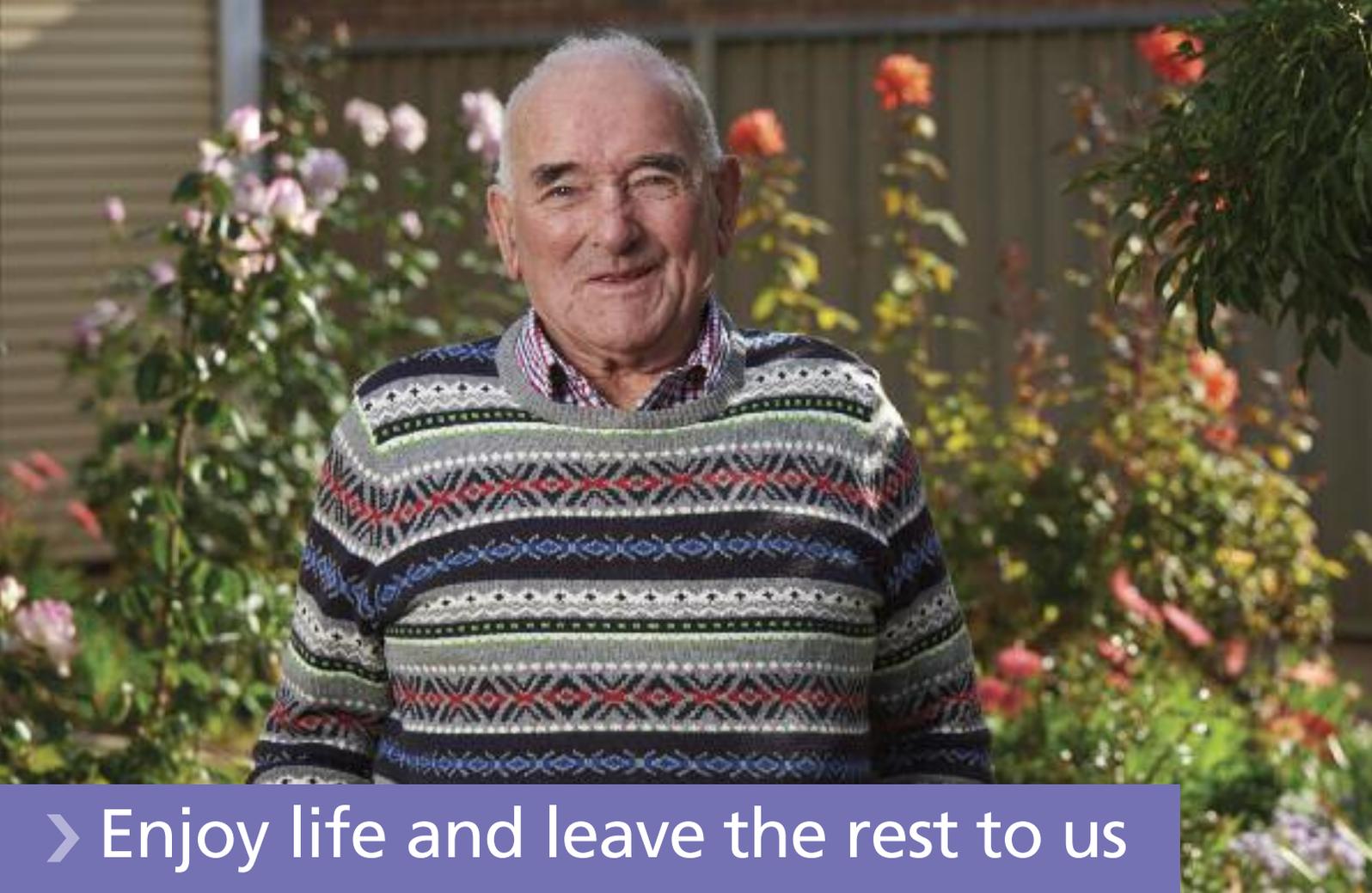
The choir recently travelled to Uniting AgeWell's Latrobe Community, Strathdevon to perform in front of residents and it plans to perform more in the future. 🐦



The Aldersgate Choir CD is for sale for \$5, with the proceeds going towards leisure and lifestyle activities at Aldersgate. To purchase a copy, call T: 6341 1400.

Uniting AgeWell has partnered with the University of Melbourne for a study into the effects of therapeutic singing groups on people with dementia and their family carers.

During the 20-week study, people with a dementia diagnosis and their carer or family member are taking part in a singing group. The results of the study will be made available to the public later this year.



## ➤ Enjoy life and leave the rest to us

**Uniting AgeWell client Joseph McCrann turns 91 in June but he shows no signs of slowing down. Every morning he leaves his Mildura home for the shops, library, woodwork classes, carpet bowls, day trips or whatever else is in his calendar.**

Joseph is able to enjoy his active life thanks to Uniting AgeWell that arranges his home care, social support and occasional transport in the background.

**“I like to get out and meet people and my Uniting AgeWell package makes it easy for me,” he said.**

“The bowls, bus trips, woodwork – my Client Advisor does all the organising and I just go along. When I need anything I ring her and she arranges it or she suggests things for me.”

Loddon Mallee North Program Coordinator Judy Nugent said Uniting AgeWell was able to tailor home care to help older people like Joseph live independently with choice and peace of mind.

“Research shows that remaining socially connected, active and independent at home is extremely important as people age, so we support locals in doing this through our home care packages,” she said.

“Our packages are flexible and may include help with cleaning and gardening around the home, social engagement activities or assistance with personal care, such as showering.

“They go a long way in assisting seniors to remain at home through the provision of physical and social support measures, and are all about supporting seniors to live well as they age.”

Through Joseph’s home care package, Uniting AgeWell arranges daily meal delivery, lawn maintenance, medication packaging, cleaning and computer classes.

Living in Mildura with all his family in Ireland or interstate, Joseph said it was a relief to know someone was there to assist with the household tasks.

“I can move around alright but I can’t do everything at home because I get stiff hands,” he said.

Joseph said the ongoing support from Uniting AgeWell enabled him to live independently and safely, without worrying about his future.🕊



*If you would like to discuss tailoring a home care package to suit your needs, call Uniting AgeWell on T: 1300 783 435.*



*Box Hill Community chef Govinda Aryal and resident Joan McKenna, who dressed up for the Asian cooking demonstration.*

## ➤ Celebrating diversity through cuisine

**Uniting AgeWell Box Hill Community celebrated the diversity of the site's culture with a live cooking demonstration of favourite recipes contributed by residents and families.**

The aromas of Asian cuisine filled the air in May when site chef Govinda cooked a stir-fry and fried rice in front of an expectant audience.

Hotel Services Manager Carlo Napoli said the cooking demonstration was part of the site's celebration of culture.

"We asked the residents and their families to send in recipes of their favourite dishes to cook at home," he said.

"We wanted to create and serve up two authentic Asian dishes in front of the audience and serve an additional vegetarian selection and traditional Cantonese taro coconut milk with sago dessert."

Carlo said Uniting AgeWell was embracing the diversity of its clients and planned to host regular cooking demonstrations with a variety of cuisines. 🐦

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## Celebrating the achievements of women

Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Raelene Thompson was the keynote speaker at the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Tasmania and Victoria's International Women's Day event on 8 March. Staff from across the Synod came together to celebrate the achievements of women at the event, sponsored by Uniting AgeWell, UCA Funds Management and Uniting. Raelene praised the Australian women who had fought throughout generations to create a better life for women today. More than 80 per cent of Uniting AgeWell's staff are women.

## Masterclass named finalist in LASA Awards

The team behind last year's Masterclass – in which Uniting AgeWell chefs battled it out for the 'gold cup' – was named a finalist for LASA's 2018 Excellence in Age Services Team Award. The award recognises a team that encourages workplace diversity, positive workplace culture and increased staff wellbeing. The Hotel Services Team's Masterclass brought together chefs from across Uniting AgeWell sites and challenged them to create a main meal and dessert in 90 minutes, using fresh produce and adhering to aged care nutritional guidelines.

## Virtual Forest closer thanks to Fair funds

Uniting AgeWell's Newnham Community is a step closer to buying a state-of-the-art Virtual Forest, after 2000 people attended its Aldersgate Village Fair in March. The Virtual Forest, to be displayed in the residence's memory support unit, is an interactive screen that responds to users' hand movements and actions. The Virtual Forest assists residents with dementia to manage anxiety and frustration.

## Uniting AgeWell volunteers recognised

Celebrations were held across Uniting AgeWell's sites during National Volunteer Week (21-27 May), honouring the contribution of volunteers. Uniting AgeWell has more than 700 volunteers, who selflessly give their time to its residences, programs and services. They provide friendship to clients, contribute to events, garden, and assist with administration, transport, and much more. If you are interested in becoming a Uniting AgeWell volunteer, contact T: 9133 5019 in Victoria, or T: 6208 3208 in Tasmania, or email [volunteers@unitingagewell.org](mailto:volunteers@unitingagewell.org).

# ➤ Pouches to warm orphans

When Jirrahlinga Koala Wildlife Sanctuary called for community help to keep its joeys warm this winter, the Uniting AgeWell Kalkee Day Respite clients were quick to respond.

They worked together over the course of a month, to handmade soft pouches for baby wallabies, kangaroos and possums at the Geelong sanctuary.

Kalkee Day Respite Coordinator Mark Synot said undertaking meaningful activities was important to the clients.

**“We wanted our clients to come here and have some purpose, so they could feel good about what they were doing.”**

“Making the pouches allowed us to give back to the community, which is important, and help solve a real problem.”

The clients, between the ages of 55 and 95, researched how to make the pouches and then worked as a team to hand-stitch them.

Using materials donated by the Kalkee Op Shop and other locals, some of the clients cut out the material or held pieces of material together, while others stitched the pouches.

Jirrahlinga Koala Wildlife Sanctuary Founder and Director Tehree Gordon said the pouches would make “a big difference” to the lives of the baby animals her sanctuary took in.

“These inner pouches are perfect because they will keep the animals clean and warm, they are firm like their mother’s pouch and they are soft, so they won’t irritate their skin,” Tehree said.

Tehree brought a six-month old kangaroo joey named ‘Skip’ to Kalkee Day Respite in May to thank



the clients for their efforts. All the clients, including Keith Webb (pictured) were invited to hold Skip.

“I understand how much work goes into making a pouch, so I want to thank you for your hard work,” Tehree told the clients.

“You will help save the lives of lots of little creatures.”

Uniting AgeWell client and animal lover, Di Baker, was thrilled to hold a kangaroo joey for the first time when Tehree visited.

Di said she was motivated to help animals after hearing stories about them being orphaned in road accidents. She wanted to help them in whatever way she could.

**For more information about Uniting AgeWell’s respite and carer support services, call T: 1300 783 435.** 



How can we support you to live well with choice and peace of mind? Find out today, by calling our friendly team on 1300 783 435 or visit [unitingagewell.org](http://unitingagewell.org)

We appreciate your feedback and welcome any story ideas.

Contact: Communications and Social Media Advisor Caitlin Pearson at [cpearson@unitingagewell.org](mailto:cpearson@unitingagewell.org) or call T: 9133 5018.



Uniting AgeWell

Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia

Front Cover:

Karia Wicks and Wayne Radford enjoy regular barbecues with fellow residents at Uniting AgeWell’s Wesley Court independent living units in Launceston.