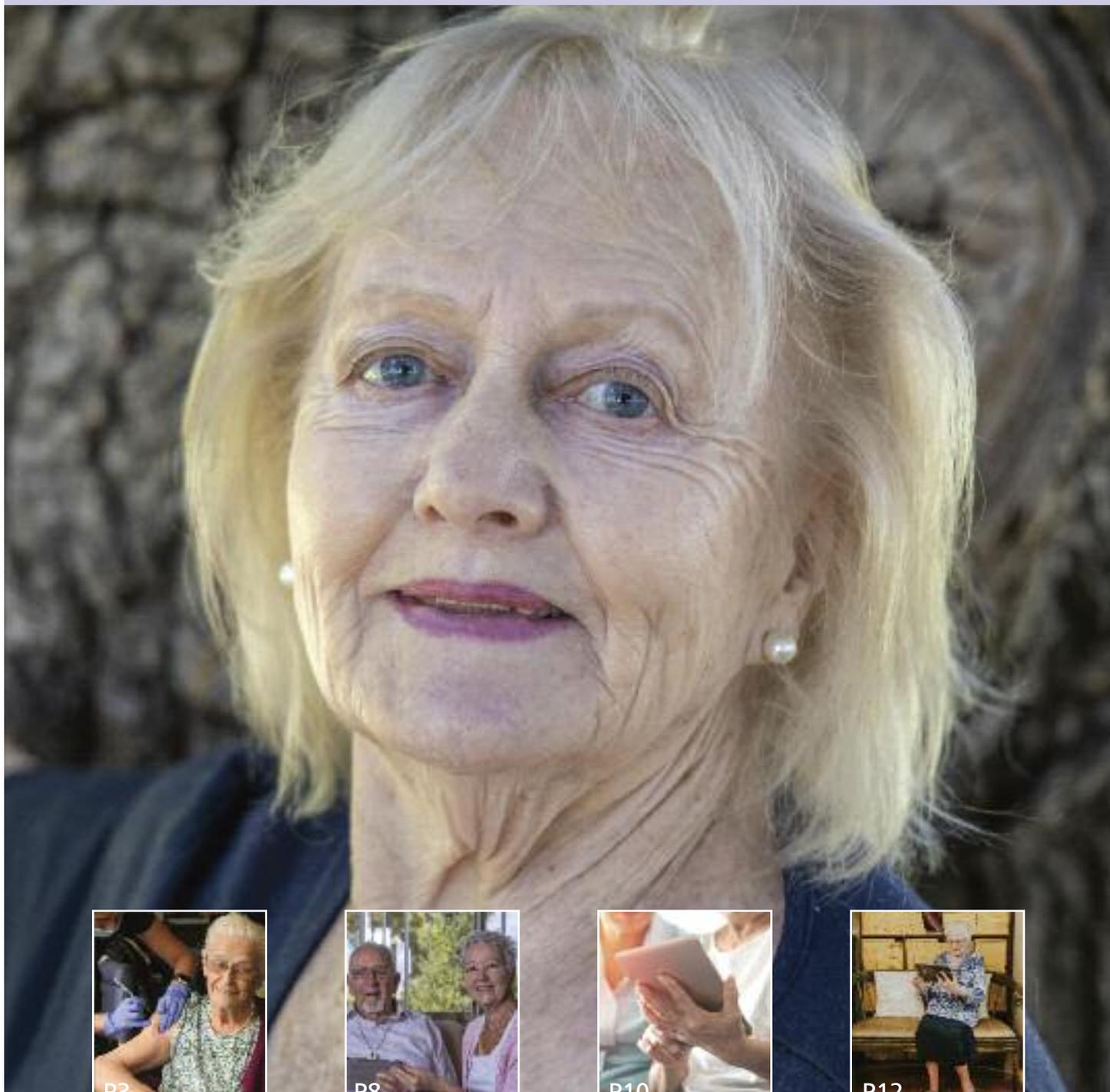


# COMMUNITY

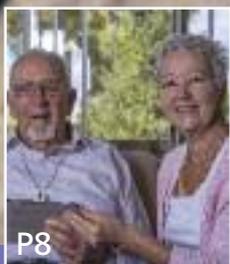
## Chat

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*Living and ageing well*

# Home is where the care is

*In the last edition of Community Chat, I reflected on the resilience and adaptability of our communities as we confronted the challenges and risks presented by COVID-19. And while the pandemic is tragically still taking a huge toll across the world, it is with a sense of relief and gratitude that Australia is in a COVID-Safe phase; a state that none of us should take for granted nor become complacent about.*

The willingness of Uniting AgeWell staff and our clients to embrace change, to explore other ways of doing things to keep themselves active, connected and safe, is inspiring. It took a village and a shared commitment to achieve this outcome and as a result, we have strengthened the ongoing supports we are able to provide to our clients. You can read about some of these initiatives in this edition of *Community Chat*.

Uniting AgeWell continues to grow its services both in number and geographic reach, particularly in home and community care. In 2016, Uniting AgeWell managed 500 Home Care Packages. Today, that number is 2,200 and our Commonwealth Home Support Programme clients now number 8,000 and growing. This growth is built on our commitment to delivering high quality services and placing our clients at the heart of everything we do.

This mindset is central to the key recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, along with the need for significant investment and reform in the aged care sector to deliver accessible, integrated and sustainable quality care and services to meet the needs and aspirations of older Australians.



The Government's Federal Budget announced on 11 May was its response to the Royal Commission's recommendations, describing it as a "once in a generation change to aged care".

While at the time of writing we are yet to analyse the full detail of the Government's response, we certainly welcome the \$17.7 billion in funding the Government has undertaken to provide to the sector over the next four years; particularly the additional funds to support older Australians to remain living at home. This includes 80,000 new Home Care Packages to be released over the next two financial years and further support for informal carers, including respite services. Uniting AgeWell is well placed to respond to the demand for these services.

We remain extremely grateful for the ongoing trust, support and feedback of our clients and their families, and for the dedication and commitment of our amazing staff and volunteers. Through our shared experiences, we will strive to shape a brighter future for older Australians as we continue to deliver quality care with compassion, dignity and respect.

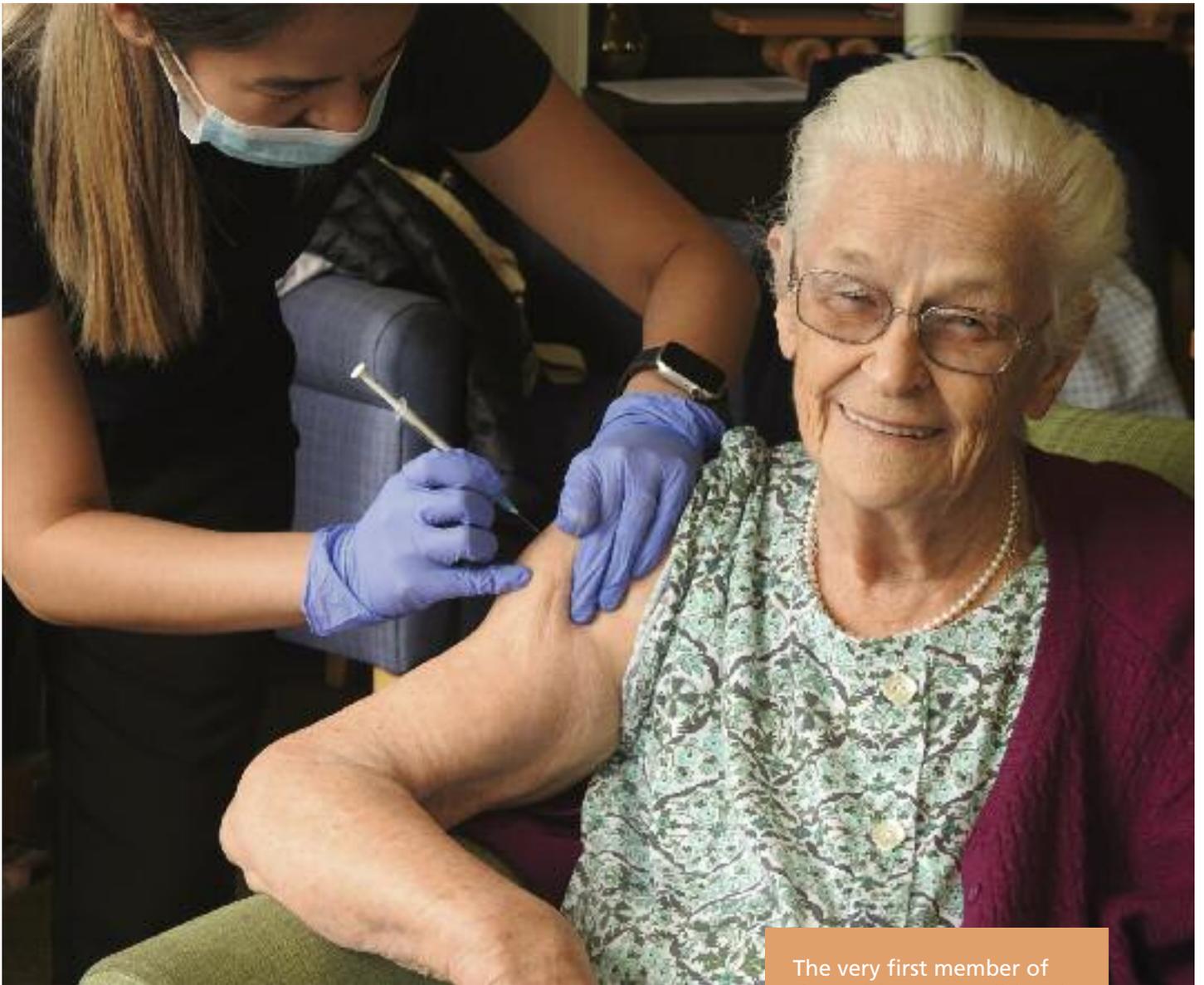
**Andrew Kinnersly**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Uniting AgeWell

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If you do not wish to receive future issues of *Community Chat*, or if you would prefer to receive a digital version, please email [mcr@unitingagewell.org](mailto:mcr@unitingagewell.org) or call 1300 783 435.



The very first member of the Uniting AgeWell family to receive the vaccine was Strath-Haven, Bendigo resident Jean Balmer, 93, who said she would be encouraging all her family, including her nine great-grandchildren, to have the vaccination.

# Vaccinations become available

*The COVID-19 vaccination program is well underway across Australia. And older Australians are among the first to be offered the choice to have the vaccination.*

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly is encouraging all clients, residents and staff to get vaccinated. “We should be doing everything we possibly can to stop the spread of COVID-19” he says.

All people aged over 50 are now able to receive the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine via a participating GP practice or a State vaccination clinic. People with mobility challenges are encouraged to contact their GP to discuss options for a home visit to receive a vaccination.

It is also important to understand the benefits and risks of vaccination so you can make an informed decision. If you’re unsure, it’s a good idea to speak with your GP or other health professionals. They can help you make a decision that is right for your personal situation.

You can find vaccination clinic locations and make a booking via the Government Eligibility checker at:

**<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-checker> or call the COVID-19 vaccine helpline on 1800 020 080.**



# Meeting your growing needs

*If you are receiving services from Uniting AgeWell, you are part of a 10,000-strong extended family of people with needs as unique as yours, all choosing Uniting AgeWell to support them to live well as they age.*

## Growth in metropolitan Melbourne

Last year Uniting AgeWell strengthened and expanded its service network to deliver in-home care and support services as part of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) to residents of Brimbank, Maribyrnong, and Hobsons Bay. And from 1 July 2021, Uniting AgeWell will further expand its CHSP services to residents in Melbourne's east, including those living in the City of Knox, following the award of further growth funding by the Department of Health to deliver in-home care and social support services in the region.

The growth in demand for services in the north-west corridor is significant, as those who settled in the then fledgling suburbs in the 1950's and 60s begin to need support as they age.

Rohan Bond, Uniting AgeWell Program Manager West Metro Home Care, says the pandemic took its toll on family carers who reported being exhausted, resulting in a growing need for respite care.

Respite care can be tailored to individual needs – so it can be in your own home, centre-based, it can include social

support groups and outings or residential respite care for longer breaks.

## Welcome to the Mornington Peninsula

Uniting AgeWell is also expanding its services to include Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.

This follows the decision in February by the members of highly regarded Mornington-based aged care provider Andrew Kerr Care to transition their residential care, day centre and home care services and assets to Uniting AgeWell.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly says the decision will enable Andrew Kerr Care and Uniting AgeWell to strengthen their support of older people on the Mornington Peninsula, while ensuring the legacy of Andrew Kerr Care continues for decades to come.

“We are extremely proud to have been selected by Andrew Kerr Care as their preferred partner and are very excited about growing aged care services on the Mornington Peninsula,” he said.

“Selection of Uniting AgeWell was based on our commitment to quality and demonstrable track record in aged care services, but importantly for our empathy with our residents and clients' needs.”

All Andrew Kerr Care staff have been offered employment with Uniting AgeWell, so care will continue to be delivered by local people clients know and trust.

The transition will occur on 1 June this year.

# How we can help you!

Uniting AgeWell offers a huge variety of services to suit your needs, either through your Home Care Package or as a privately funded service. Here are some you may be keen to take up.



**Café Club Program:** a range of 1:1 and small group social outing options, including a coffee group catch up, a wellbeing luncheon and more.



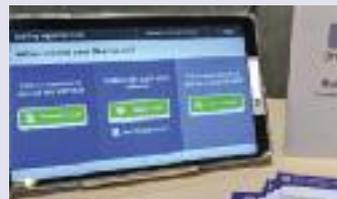
**Health and Wellbeing Program:** this includes physiotherapy and occupational therapy and support to help you with personal care, your overall health, as well as wound and medication management. We'll also transport you to the gym and to doctors' appointments.



**Hospital Recovery Program:** a suite of benefits including six weeks' nursing care and daily meal preparation after going home from hospital, as well as weekly house cleaning, shopping, companionship, physio and occupational therapy support. There's also pet care during and after your hospital stay.



**Short-Term Restorative Care Package:** an early intervention program that aims to reverse and/or slow functional decline in older people and improve their wellbeing. It provides home care support and a multi-disciplinary range of goal-oriented services at home, including occupational and physiotherapy and equipment needed, fully paid for up to eight weeks.



**Uniting AgeWell Video Calling Tablet:** Video call our staff, family and friends at the touch of a screen. We are lending clients these tablets for free, for those who don't have one. It comes with inbuilt internet connection, also at no cost, plus a simple step-by-step guide on how to use it.



**UMPS Personal Smart Home System:** Get one through your home care package, and UA will install it and show you how it works. It uses a small device fitted into the plug to monitor when everyday home appliances like the kettle, bedside lamp or TV are switched on. It learns your daily routine, and your designated contact can check on their App what's being switched on and when, and if your pattern varies, they'll be alerted.



For more information phone **1300 783 435**.  
(Please note some services may not be available in all areas.)



# The science of happiness

*Ground-breaking research by Flinders University in partnership with Uniting AgeWell is on track to be completed later this year and is set to shape the future of aged care in Australia.*

Uniting AgeWell is the only aged care provider in Victoria and Tasmania involved in the nationwide research which will be used to improve the quality of life of older people with the potential of being adopted as best practice across Australia.

A Good Life – Outcomes Measures looks at what determines quality of life for older people living at home and in aged care facilities, as well as developing quantitative tools to measure an individual's wellbeing levels.

And this, according to Uniting AgeWell Senior Manager Research and Innovation Nina Bowes, means strategies can be put in place to enable growing older to be an even more positive experience.

“This research means that overall wellbeing will be quantifiable, so we will be able to better work in partnership with people to put services and supports in place to help improve their quality of life. And we will be able to re-evaluate them again, and compare their answers to measure exactly how much their life has improved,” Nina explains.

Uniting AgeWell Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kinnersly says: “Enabling our clients and residents to live their best life possible underpins everything we do at Uniting AgeWell. And this research is key to understanding the science of ageing well.”

## The need for research

With the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety shining the spotlight on quality of life of people receiving aged care services, there has never been a greater need for a framework to be developed for and with older people to be applicable across the health and aged care sectors.

That's the viewpoint of Professor Julie Ratcliffe, Head of Health and Social Care Economics in the Caring Future Institute at Flinders University, South Australia who is leading the research.

Earlier, Julie outlined the model to a workshop of the Royal Commission, suggesting it be adopted by health departments across the country.

Julie says a range of generic quality of life frameworks have been developed internationally, but so far none have been specifically developed and validated by older people for older people. Nor have any been unique to Australia.

The three-year research model commenced in 2018 involves more than 2400 participants across Australia, and is expected to be completed later this year.

It has been carried out with five founding partners – including Uniting AgeWell, and four other aged care providers across the rest of the country. A second study involving older participants with diverse cultural and language backgrounds expands on this research and is being run concurrently.

The first stage of the research involved interviews with older people about what quality of life means to them in home and residential care settings. There's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to quality of life, but after analysing the answers, researchers determined the top six criteria:

## The big six in the pursuit of happiness

- ✓ independence – doing as much as possible, control over your own life
- ✓ social connections – support and connection with family and friends, and carer support
- ✓ emotional wellbeing – feeling generally relaxed and positive about everyday life and reasonably confident about the future
- ✓ mobility – adapting well to changes in physical mobility and limitations experienced by this
- ✓ activities – group and independent activities, making new friends and social contact
- ✓ pain management – ensuring pain does not impact on your life

The second stage was consulting with older people on how best to frame questions around their levels of wellbeing. This process was undertaken using detailed psychometric evaluations to explore practicality and validity of a series of questions for each of the top six criteria, to work out the final questions to be asked.

The third stage, about to get underway, is to weight the answers and develop a scoring tool to quantify the person's wellbeing.

Julie says because so many Uniting AgeWell clients and residents were interviewed and have contributed to the development of the research, their views are key to the findings.

In summing up Andrew says: "Happiness means different things to different people, but now we can better determine what each individual needs to be the happiest version of themselves and we can put strategies in place to achieve this."



## Happy at home

One of those interviewed for the research is Bett Beaton of Balwyn who lives at home with her husband Glynn (pictured above). Both are retired teachers, both are aged 86 and both are very proud of their brood – four children, 11 grandchildren and four-and-a-half great-grandchildren.

Lots of things make Bett happy – family, friends, doing patchwork, reading, doing a spot of gardening, being independent and still driving to the shops and good programs on television.

Both she and Glynn have home care packages through Uniting AgeWell, and the help she gets with housework and some meals makes Bett very happy.

"Oh, and my husband reminds me that I'm also very fond of him," Bett laughs "but after 62 years of a wonderful marriage I jolly well should be!"

## Not lonely anymore

Elaine Bissett, who moved into Uniting AgeWell Latrobe Community, Strathdevon two years ago, also took part in the research.



"I was so lonely after my husband died," the 76-year-old says. "I just couldn't stand it!"

She enjoys the exercise classes, her daily walks around the beautiful gardens with her new friends and all the singing and dancing activities.

"I love it here," Elaine says "there's always someone to talk to."



Colleen Singe and her father Gordon

# When carers need care

*Bendigo's Colleen Singe looks forward to the days her dad has respite care. It means she can take a break from worrying.*

The 60-year-old works full time, helps out with her grandchildren, leads a busy life at home with her husband and is also her father's primary caregiver.

"I'm exhausted," Colleen says. "There's a lot to cram into my days, and I'm always on edge in case Dad phones and I need to rush over to help him."

Colleen is not alone. And while there's no one-size-fits all when it comes to carers looking after loved ones at home, exhaustion is a common theme for many.

Uniting AgeWell's Admissions Manager Sharon D' Rozario says carer stress and exhaustion is real and can change the relationship between family members, not always in a positive way.

"Sometimes quality time can be replaced by practical carer duties. Carers can quickly become exhausted and the older person may worry about this too. There's no doubt respite care can make a positive difference," Sharon says.

Colleen's dad Gordon, 94, lives in the family home on an acre of land just outside Bendigo and is in the early stages of dementia. He grows his own tomatoes and loves sitting on his deck watching the kangaroos and the magpies. He gets some assistance through his home care package with Uniting AgeWell, but Colleen constantly frets about him.

*"It's draining, I love Dad to bits and I worry he's been lonely since Mum's death, I worry that he will fall, I just worry."*

The only time Colleen really relaxes is when Gordon is enjoying the care and comfort of various types of respite care. Gordon is part of a group of zoomers established by Uniting AgeWell during COVID-19. He and other clients were lent computer tablets and taught how to zoom on them when they were unable to attend the day activity program at Uniting AgeWell Strath-Haven Community.

Gordon is part of the “anything goes Monday group” where they chat about anything and everything under the sun. And Gordon accesses respite care at Uniting AgeWell’s Seven Hills Respite House, a small cottage-based respite service that operates on weekends, and more recently for up to three weeks of comfort, camaraderie and care at Uniting AgeWell Strath-Haven Community, which is close to where he lives.

“Dad absolutely loves spending time in respite care,” Colleen says. “He gets involved in all the activities, loves chatting to people and enjoys the fantastic meals. I’ve told him he should move in fulltime, and he’s thinking about it now.”

There’s also the “You’re Not Alone” support group for carers of loved ones with dementia operating in area. Margaret Kitt, CHSP Respite Coordinator, helps run the group, which meets on the first Tuesday of the month.

There is both laughter and tears as the up to 10 regulars swap stories and share tips on coping. Sometimes she arranges for guest speakers. “Those attending all feel a sense of relief that there are others going through the same experiences,” Margaret says.

## Even short breaks help

Some AgeWell Centres have bus trips and also arts and craft classes for clients to give their carers a break. Short-term respite care is also available in your home for a few hours so your loved one can be looked after while you go out or have a break.

Jayne and Barrie Flower are grateful for every day they spend together in their beloved Bendigo home of the last 45 years. Barrie cares for Jayne, 74, who is in heart failure and has a serious lung disease which entails being on oxygen around the clock.

Barrie, 75, who has arthritis in both knees and myopathy in his feet, together with Jayne, have home care packages through Uniting AgeWell. For them, this means assistance with meals, house cleaning and gardening as well as some nursing care for Jayne and respite for Barrie.

“Barrie helps me with my personal care, but when that gets a bit too much for him, I’ll ask our care advisor to organise someone to come in,” Jayne says.

A respite carer comes in for two hours every week to give Barrie the chance to run a few errands and just to have a bit of a break knowing that Jayne is safe and being looked after. “We’ve been married for 54 years, she’s my inspiration,” Barrie says. “We’re a team.”



For details on respite care options contact your Uniting AgeWell Care Advisor or call **1300 783 435** or visit **unitingagewell.org**



## When carers aren’t able to give care

Sometimes carers need urgent and immediate care, like Helen Courtney, 82, who had a fall and broke her arm in the middle of the pandemic. Helen’s first thought was:

“It’s my left arm, and I’m left-handed. How can I possibly look after myself as well as my husband now?”

Helen cares for her 88-year-old husband, John, who had a severe stroke a year ago. She does the shopping, cooking and helps John with day to day things that his limited mobility, caused by paralysis to his left side, does not allow.

So when Helen was told by the doctors she would need complete rest for her arm to recover, she had to come up with a solution. Fast.

The couple are each on a home care package through Uniting AgeWell and live in an apartment at Manningtree Hawthorn – an Independent Retirement Living complex which abuts the Hawthorn Community aged care residence. Both are owned by Uniting AgeWell.

They decided that John would go to Hawthorn Community for three weeks respite care, so Helen could concentrate on getting better.

John, who is an avid reader, says he enjoyed his stay there and found the meals were very good. “I enjoyed the companionship too, the staff are caring and very friendly.” And Helen rested up and recovered.



# Embracing technology with confidence

*Just like in the real world, your instinct is your best protection in cyber space too. Here we explain how to stay cyber safe.*

Jason Plumridge, Head of Advisory at leading cyber security business Pure Security, spends his days trying to think like a criminal and figure out why and how they're setting up scams in cyber space, to help people and organisations stay one step ahead.

The good news, says Jason, is that the benefits of digital technology are rapidly advancing. The bad news is that this comes with a huge increase in the number of hacks and scammers, with their methods rapidly becoming more devious and less easy to spot. However Jason has some very practical old-fashioned advice for you all – if something doesn't look right, sound right, or feel right then it probably isn't, and you should trust your instincts.

Scams, phishing and identity theft are on the increase and target you on your phones, your computer, internet sites, ATMs and more. Criminals are becoming very sophisticated at pretending to be from reputable agencies or organisations and duping people into handing over their details. While cyber thieves tend to target organisations more than individuals, they're also pretty clever at getting people to provide information they normally wouldn't.

## Everyday rules for cyber safety

- › Trust your instinct.
- › Do not share your usernames, passwords or PIN numbers with anyone.
- › Don't use public wi-fi. Instead, use your mobile phone to access the internet.
- › Use multi-factor authentication for online accounts where you need a combination of two devices to access accounts. Kind of like double-checking that this is in fact you, eg. a second one-time code is sent to your mobile phone.
- › Be careful about which Apps you download and only use reputable ones. Apps available on Google or Apple Stores are verified and checked.
- › Keep your software updated. Set a reminder on your calendar to check available updates at least monthly.
- › If you want to shop on eBay use PayPal to pay.
- › User larger reputable retailers for online shopping, and always look for the padlock  beside the url. This means that the website is encrypted and is as safe as it can be.

Activity	What is it?	What you can do
<b>Phishing</b>	<p>Phishing is another word for scams.</p> <p>Watch out for these which come up as emails or messages to your computer, tablet or mobile phone.</p> <p>They aim to find out your Username and/or password to enable them to hack into your online accounts.</p>	<p>Learn to recognise messages as scams – look carefully at brands, logos and language. Cyber criminals are becoming very sophisticated in trying to copy how an organisation communicates with you. If you are unsure – phone to check! So if a message comes from your bank, for example, don't use the information in the email but go to the bank's website, get their phone number and call them to check it out first.</p> <p>If you are unsure, don't click on the link. Just delete the email or message.</p>
<b>Malware</b>	<p>Malware is any software intentionally designed to cause damage to a computer, server, client, or computer network. A wide variety of malware types exist, including computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, ransomware, spyware, adware, rogue software, wiper and scareware.</p>	<p>Ensure you have anti-virus software and that it is up-to-date. Make your details safer by using the security features available. Use a PIN code to log in, don't share it with anyone and make sure it is not obvious – like your name.</p>
<b>Bogus phone calls</b>	<p>Examples of bogus phone calls include: You might receive a phone call with someone saying they're from a reputable organisation. They may say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; you owe money</li> <li>&gt; suggest you will be arrested or make a personal threat</li> <li>&gt; ask you to verify your information</li> <li>&gt; make you feel scared or intimidated.</li> </ul>	<p>Hang up immediately. Do not engage in conversation.</p> <p>Do not verify your information - hang up.</p> <p>Find the customer information phone line of the organisation from Google, and call the organisation to follow up.</p>
<b>Identity theft</b>	<p>Identity theft is when a cyber-criminal manages to get hold of your personal information to steal money or gain other benefits.</p> <p>They are so clever. They can use these details to create fake identity documents in your name, get loans and benefits or apply for real identity documents in your name, but with another person's photograph.</p>	<p>Be very careful about how much information you provide to organisations online.</p> <p>Be particularly careful about providing your Tax File Number and your date of birth, or other unique identifying information to anyone.</p> <p>Employ the Everyday Rules.</p>

## What to do if you think you have been scammed

### Report it immediately to:

- > your bank
- > the Australian Cyber Security Centre at <https://www.cyber.gov.au/acsc/report>
- > the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Scamwatch at [www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam) or by calling T:1300 55 81 81.

**!** If you have been or are being threatened or have had money removed from an account call the **Police on 000.**

### Useful websites:

[www.cyber.gov.au](http://www.cyber.gov.au)

[www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au)

# Home, sweet home

*There's never been a better time to learn how to zoom - just ask Mildura's Ruth Morris, who has mastered the computer tablet and is zooming with the best of them.*



Ruth, who is on a home care package with Uniting AgeWell, is a retired typist and stenographer, and loves chatting to her two children and five grandchildren on zoom, as well as a cousin she last saw 20 years ago.

One of her grandsons is in Sydney, and the other day he phoned Ruth on zoom from the laundromat. Ruth didn't actually see whether he washed his whites separately but says he's pretty smart so she's sure he would have! And recently Ruth zoomed with her daughter who was watering the garden, and was taken on an impromptu tour of the flowerbeds, which she loved.

The 85-year-old hired the tablet complete with headset from Uniting AgeWell towards the end of last year and her Care Advisor taught her how to use it. It was part of the Uniting AgeWell roll-out of computer tablets for clients with home care packages across both Victoria and Tasmania.



Ruth quickly got the hang of it, and now loves it so much she's going to buy her own. And one with more Apps! "It's wonderful to be able to see and talk to the family," Ruth says.

## Equipment to make life easier

There are many people, like Ruth, who are adapting their home care package in order to live their best lives at home. And this includes buying equipment to make life easier.

Take retired maths teacher Elmar Himmelreich, 82, who lives with his wife, Pam in their Melbourne home of the last 45 years.

He has CANVAS syndrome, a very rare disorder that causes dizziness and affects balance, nerves and sight which becomes blurry. Put simply, if Elmar stands up he falls down.

He's got an electric bed and has used his home care package through Uniting AgeWell to buy a special electric bath chair that lowers him into the tub.

And his home care package facilitates sessions with his physiotherapist on zoom to keep his strength up. This keeps Elmar in the best possible shape to listen to classical music and watch the birdlife in the garden. "There's something so wonderful about being in your own home," he says.

## Thinking outside the square

AgeWell Centres continue to be flexible in creating the "new normal" against the backdrop of the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape.

Uniting AgeWell Regional Manager AgeWell Centres Paul Warwick says the centres in Victoria are now open, subject to rigorous social distancing and limited numbers.

Our clients' safety remains our top priority," Paul says, "and what the pandemic has taught us is that things can change very quickly, so we continue to think outside the square to deliver services to them."

Individually designed tailored exercise programs for clients to do at home are continuing, as are the zoom exercise classes. Paul says welfare checks to see if clients are doing okay are continuing, and one-on-one visits are available for those unable to go to their nearby AgeWell Centre.

The hugely successful activity packs individually created by lifestyle team members for each client to bring the centre into their living room will continue, and be delivered to them once a quarter. The packs are tailor-made for each client and jam-packed with items such as puzzles, arts and crafts and more.

Paul says, at the time of publication of *Community Chat*, bus trips to go on outings are up and running from the centres, subject to strict numbers to ensure safety. And the Men's Shed at Hawthorn is open again, with restricted numbers.

Meanwhile in Tasmania, centres have been open since mid-last year with reduced numbers and social distancing, but are now back to nearly full capacity while still ensuring client safety and bus outings are back into full swing.

## Continually improving

Uniting AgeWell undertakes a significant number of research projects, including the Smart Home Trial which explored the feasibility of a low cost off-the-shelf smart device for supporting the practical and emotional needs of older Australians.

Retired Melbourne teacher Geoff Jones volunteered for the trial and happily called out the magic words "Hey Google" followed by an instruction – which in his case mostly involved asking it to play music, tell him jokes or update him on the latest news – as he incorporated the device into his day-to-day life.

The research, a collaborative study between Uniting AgeWell, the Australian Research Council Industrial Transformation Hub for Digital Enhanced Living and Deakin University's Applied Artificial Intelligence Institute, lasted 31 weeks.

And Geoff and his Uniting AgeWell caregiver Helen Gale both took part and found the device, which they've kept, was easy to use, fun and useful.

Next up, Uniting AgeWell will look at how to further tailor smart home setups for individual customers, and how to link its service information to the device. Another area to explore is how to link the device to other smart devices – like Uniting AgeWell's video calling tablets, fall detectors or other smart sensors.



For further information on maximising your home care package to obtain equipment or to purchase the equipment privately, phone **1300 783 435**.

For details on AgeWell Centre programs, phone **9845 3114**.

# Giving back

*Dinah Whitaker is continuing to be a mover and shaker when it comes to the arts*

She was bestowed the honour of being a life time member after volunteering at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) for 30 years. She loves art and art history, and as a member of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society has lectured across the UK and Australia.

So it came as no surprise to anyone that when she moved into Uniting AgeWell Hawthorn Community a few months ago, she promptly volunteered to help start an arts appreciation group at the aged care facility. And she says:

*“I love art, and helping out with the group will be a great joy.”*

She’s also volunteered her services to helping archive the history of Lauriston Girls School she attended seven decades ago. “I’ve got time on my hands,” Dinah says “so why not help out?”

Dinah is one of the hundreds in the Uniting AgeWell family who devote their time to volunteering and helping others.

And Uniting AgeWell General Manager People and Culture Gen Toop says being a volunteer creates a sense of purpose,

provides great joy in giving back and is a social outlet and a way of making new friends.

Another person to volunteer her time is Helen Malins (featured on the front cover of this issue of *Community Chat*), who took part in the Your Muscles Matter study, supported by Uniting AgeWell.

And ironically, the research ended up saving the retired teacher’s life. Helen, who lives at home in Hawthorn, had bone density scans, followed a regimen of resistance and other exercises, and enjoyed a protein-rich diet as part of the study.

So, when she had a fall she was delighted it was only a disc in her back that was affected. “If I hadn’t been as strong as I was through taking part in the research, I would have broken my hip for sure!” she says. “Helping others helped me.”

And now Helen, who has explored the four corners of the world including sailing up the Amazon River, is looking forward to globe-trotting again once travel restrictions lift. A friend of hers is wanting her to go with her to Peru.

## Yarns of kindness

Then there are the real purls of our society who with every click of their needles bring joy and comfort to so many.

Take Enid Skinner of north-western Tasmania, who knits toddlers' jumpers for the Country Women's Association and has also made countless bonnets and booties for prem babies, as well as 60 Bananas in Pyjamas toys for charity.



**“I love knowing I am giving children comfort and joy.”**

And that's what motivates this fiercely independent 83-year-old who lives happily on a seven acre smallholding in the area, thanks to a home care package through Uniting AgeWell with carers coming three times a week.

“This has been my home for the last thirty years,” she explains. “I can't imagine living anywhere else.”

Her other passion is her collection of 4000 dolls which she has been collecting for as long as she can remember. Some are antiques, others are store-bought dolls, many are broken dolls she's picked up at the tip or from the side of the road.

“Some of these discarded dolls are missing eyes, arms and legs, but they've been loved once and I just can't bear not to rescue them,” Enid says. “Once I saw a doll on the back of a garbage truck and chased after it until the driver stopped. He gave me the doll, which was lovely!”

The dolls take up two rooms in Enid's home – they're displayed in cabinets, on shelves, riding a rocking horse and even in a makeshift little school room set up with a desk and a chalkboard.

“As luck would have it, I've got three sons and five grandsons, so no one has ever played with the dolls” she laughs. “But one of my sons plans on opening a café in NSW and putting the dolls on display there one day to be enjoyed by little girls in the future.”

Another person who knits bonnets for newborns is Gwen Lambert of Mildura. She gives the little woollen creations to the Mildura Hospital, and also makes beanies and slippers for older people. She's always giving jars of her legendary pineapple pickle and her onion jam to friends and family.

The 79-year-old, who has arthritis in her arms and hands, struggles with housework and gets help thanks to her home care package through Uniting AgeWell.

“I love making things and I get great joy in giving them to people,” says Gwen.

## Helping keep the community safe

Fundraising for good causes is another great way of giving back – just ask the residents of two Uniting AgeWell independent living unit villages in Tasmania.

Newnham Community Aldersgate Village residents Adrian and Leah organised a tea to raise money to help firefighters tackle last year's NSW fires.

And residents of Wesley Court in Launceston, led by Jo Nicholson, president of their Residents Committee, held a sausage sizzle, a garden sale and organised a gelato van to raise money to go towards buying a water storage tank for the Kelso Fire Brigade.

**i** There are many wonderful people volunteering at Uniting AgeWell, with opportunities for more to join. For more information on how you can make a difference and brighten someone's day and your own, phone 1300 783 435.

# EMERGENCY CONTACTS



## LOCAL CONTACT

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## OUT OF STATE CONTACT

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## NEXT OF KIN

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## WORK CONTACT

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## DOCTOR NAME

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## NEIGHBOUR / LANDLORD / HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police / Ambulance / Fire	<b>000</b>
COVID-19 Hotline:	<b>131 450</b>
SES	<b>132 500</b>

## LOCAL SERVICES

Gas:	
Electricity:	
Water:	

## OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	

## OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Name:	
Phone:	
Alternate phone:	



My Uniting AgeWell contact is: .....

Phone: .....

 **1300 783 435**

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