

> DoveTale

AUTUMN, 2018



News from across Uniting AgeWell communities



» CEO's message

As we celebrated Easter, I was reminded about the importance of renewal, love, compassion and hope – concepts that are vital to the work Uniting AgeWell does with older people every day.

We are constantly reviewing and updating the care and support services we provide our clients to ensure they are not only of the highest standard, but aligned to changing needs and choices. Our services must always be delivered with love and compassion. And of course we must continually inspire confidence in the quality of care and support people receive through our services.

Last year we dealt with the worst flu season on record. We learnt a lot and implemented several changes to systems and training as a result. This includes enhanced infection control management training and an expanded free flu vaccination program for staff. The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services recently asked Uniting AgeWell to share its learnings with the aged care sector, inviting us to present at the Influenza 2018 Aged Care Forum.

The community also plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of infection. I encourage members of the public who visit our sites to get their flu vaccination this year and help protect themselves, and the most vulnerable in our community.

Uniting AgeWell continues to undergo renewal and change, with several major construction projects now under way that will enable us to deliver high-quality, customer-focussed care well into the future.

In January, I was delighted to attend a sod-turning ceremony to celebrate a \$10 million extension and renovation at the Strathdevon Community in Latrobe, North West Tasmania. In addition, we are in the early planning stages of a 20-bed expansion at Newnham Community, Aldersgate Village, in Launceston.

Construction is also well under way on the new 49-apartment retirement living complex and 120-bed aged care residence in Hawthorn and our 104-bed aged care residence in Preston.

There has also been change within the Uniting AgeWell Board. In January we farewelled Rev Allan Thompson, who retired after nine years on the Board, with the last three years as Chair. During that time, we have grown both in size and professionalism, we have enhanced quality and safety, our financial performance has strengthened, and we have completed, commenced, or planned several capital works projects.



An organisation cannot achieve these things without strong governance, and Allan has been central to that. Uniting AgeWell has benefited enormously from Allan's attention to detail, energy to recruit new skill sets and thinking, desire to listen and learn, and enthusiasm to promote Uniting AgeWell as an expression of the Uniting Church. I wish Allan all the very best in his future endeavours.

Replacing Allan as Board Chair is Raelene Thompson, who joined the Board in October. Raelene brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in aged care and governance and will be a great asset to Uniting AgeWell.

We also recently welcomed three new board members: Kathy Campbell, Jan Begg and Kate Andrews.

Kate comes to us with 26 years' experience in organisational strategy, consumer insights and marketing. Kathy's board, committee and executive experience spans Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the Middle East and Canada, while Jan has particularly strong skills in IT governance, strategic positioning and organisational change.

Love, compassion and hope were in the air at the 50th anniversary celebrations for our Strathdon Community in March, which I was thrilled to be part of. Some 150 people attended the event, which celebrated five decades of fashion with a parade involving residents, staff and volunteers, and an indoor garden party. It illustrated the strong community at Strathdon and the important role the broader community, including local congregations and volunteers, have played in its life.

A strong community is integral to all Uniting AgeWell's services. Each May we acknowledge the contributions of our valuable volunteers through the National Volunteer Week. The selfless efforts of volunteers enhance the wonderful services we provide, bringing hope and confidence to thousands of clients each year. Thank you for all that you do.

Andrew Kinnersly
CEO



› Celebrating seven decades of music

Uniting AgeWell has launched a new partnership with the prestigious Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (TSO).

Now celebrating its 70th year, the TSO has released a schedule of stand-out shows, including the Uniting AgeWell-sponsored *Clair de Lune* in August.

General Manager Tasmania Jane Johnston said Uniting AgeWell was proud to partner with an organisation that delivered outstanding performances and engaged audiences year-on-year.

“Many of our clients and potential clients have attended TSO performances, and have been in awe of the highly respected and talented musicians for many years,” Jane said.

“As the TSO celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, many of our clients will reflect on their first trip to the orchestra decades ago.

“This partnership will ensure that beautiful music continues to be a part of their lives.”

The TSO performed a duo at Queenborough Rise Community, Sandy Bay, in February to launch the partnership.

Cellist Sophie Radke and flautist Katie Zagorski entertained the audience with flawless renditions, including some pieces by world-renowned 18th century composer Johann Sebastian Bach.

More than 90 residents of the aged care residence and independent living units, along with family and friends, including children, packed out the lounge for the event. Two women who attended the first TSO performance in 1948 were in the audience.

Valda Hayley, who lives in an independent living unit at Queenborough Rise, saw the first TSO concert with her future husband, Paul, at just 17 years of age. The pair, a violinist and pianist, regularly attended TSO performances over the ensuing decades.

Queenborough Rise Community resident Elizabeth “Midge” Jack was also at the first performance. Midge’s father took the 14-year-old violinist to almost every performance in the early years.

Queenborough Rise Manager Integrated Services, Kim Gabriel, said the performance was a resounding success. She thanked all of the residents, family members and friends who came to the event.

Along with sponsoring the Matinee Series concert *Clair de Lune*, on Saturday, 25 August, Uniting AgeWell will work with TSO throughout the year. 🐦



Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Managing Director Nicholas Heyward with Queenborough Rise independent living unit resident Valda Hayley, who was at the first ever TSO performance in 1948.



For information about *Clair de Lune*, visit tso.com.au/concerts/clair-de-lune/



➤ Advancing with technology

From the invention of new personalised medical technologies, to hiring dedicated staff and forming research partnerships, Uniting AgeWell is embracing technology and innovation to change the way it delivers services.

Uniting AgeWell General Manager Strategy and Business Development Fonda Voukelatos said technology would aid the organisation in becoming more efficient, by increasing staff contact time and improving relationships with clients.

“We are committed to delivering person-centred, customer-focused care and technology is helping us do that.”

Uniting AgeWell’s firm commitment to innovation is cemented in its current Strategic Plan with a key objective to achieve “strength, learning and innovation through partnership and collaboration”.

A dedicated Manager Research and Innovation, Nina Bowes, was appointed to drive research and development endeavours and forge relationships with research partners.

“We are motivated to work in partnership with universities and commercial entities around common outcomes for clients, and to develop a more environmentally sustainable organisation,” Fonda said.

Uniting AgeWell has already embarked on several major research projects that centre on technology in aged care.

In 2017, it became the lead aged care partner in a multi-million dollar research partnership with Deakin University. Known as the Digital Enhanced Living project, a team of researchers will investigate how appropriate and affordable new technologies can improve quality of life for older people living at home or in residential aged care.

Uniting AgeWell has been trialling interactive companion pets across several sites. Thanks to built-in sensor technology, the cats and dogs respond to petting and affection, like real animals. Early results indicate the pets bring comfort and joy to residents, and assist to reduce anxiety and agitation.

The organisation has also embarked on two research partnerships (detailed on page five) that will investigate wellbeing in people with dementia.

The projects could provide valuable insights for the aged care industry as it continues to learn how best to embrace technology and mental health awareness moving further into the 21st century. 



For more information on Uniting AgeWell’s research and innovation projects visit unitingagewell.org

› Part of a wonderful journey



In February I was honoured to become the new Board Chair of Uniting AgeWell. I succeeded Rev Allan Thompson, who contributed a great deal to Uniting AgeWell over nine years through his passion and expertise. I take this opportunity to thank Allan for his commitment and enthusiasm to our organisation.

I have been so impressed with the people I have met so far. The Board and Senior Executive Team have made me feel very welcome and supported, as I learn about the wonderful communities that make up Uniting AgeWell.

The care and genuine commitment of staff and volunteers has been evident wherever I've been. I want to thank all the staff and volunteers who make a difference every day, and acknowledge the staff who provide support and corporate services as they enable others to provide our excellent day-to-day services to clients.

I have also felt the genuine love and commitment that many people have made to Uniting AgeWell over many years. We have a wonderful heritage and it's important we acknowledge those who laid the foundations for this great organisation and enabled it to be what it is today.

One of the joys of my initial visits has been the wonderful gardens I have seen in our residential communities. What a difference these environments make to the clients' wellbeing. Thank you to everyone who plans and maintains these beautiful spaces.

It is my hope that we can continue to grow and develop Uniting AgeWell to meet the needs of people right across Tasmania and Victoria; that we can expand our services to ensure everyone can choose Uniting AgeWell for services in their home, or for accommodation and care.

It is a privilege and deep responsibility to assist the people who receive our services. I felt this intensely as I visited our Strath-Haven Community in Bendigo. A resident called me over to sit with her in the dining room, where she told me how fabulous it was to live there. As I looked around I could see what she meant – the dining room was abuzz with conversation, the shop and café were open for business thanks to dedicated volunteers, and the buddy for new residents was making sure people felt included and comfortable. Outside the garden was gleaming in the sunlight, and I felt myself not wanting to leave.

People are truly ageing well and living life in our communities. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this wonderful journey.

Raelene Thompson
Board Chair

› Key research into dementia

Uniting AgeWell has embarked on two research projects that could transform the mental health outcomes of older people living with dementia and their family or carers.

A two-year partnership with Swinburne University and Dementia Australia aims to address the gap in the mental health needs of older people with dementia in residential aged care.

More than 120 residents from selected Victorian sites will be approached to participate in the study, along with a family member and staff member they nominate.

The research involves some participants meeting with counsellors to reminisce and share ideas, while others assist with cognitive-behavioural and

reminiscence activities, attend training workshops, monthly support groups, or monthly meetings to plan activities.

The results may enable Uniting AgeWell to develop better social and emotional wellbeing programs, which could be adopted across the wider industry.

The organisation has also partnered with University of Melbourne to investigate the therapeutic benefits of singing groups on people with dementia and their family members or carers.

The test group, or Remini-Sing group, will meet weekly at Brighton, Noble Park, Forest Hill, Hawthorn, Bendigo, Kingsville or Hobart over the next few months to sing old favourites and new songs, and learn how to use music at home. 



➤ Strathdon Community celebrates 50 years of care

Uniting AgeWell's Strathdon Community celebrated 50 years of delivering high-quality care to seniors in March.

The aged care residence hosted an official celebration and indoor garden party, complete with a commemorative ice sculpture, Uniting AgeWell cake and a parade of fashions from the past half century.

More than 20 residents from the facility and adjoining independent living units and staff donned their best costumes and took to the catwalk to entertain the large audience.

One of the longest-residing residents, Loloma Tyson, who has lived at Strathdon Community for 20 years, cut the cake at the celebration. She did so alongside one of the longest-serving staff members, Jennifer Best, who has worked at Strathdon for 27 years.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said he was filled with pride to see everyone come together at the event.

“Congratulations to everyone involved and thank you to everyone who has contributed to making Strathdon Community such a fantastic place over the past 50 years.”

Long-term supporter Clem Dickinson spoke at the celebration. He praised the “remarkable insight” of the Matheson family who donated the land on which Strathdon was built, for “enabling a vision to become a reality, giving respect to ageing”.

Clem’s relationship with Strathdon Community began 30 years ago, when he was asked to assist with fundraising efforts, and he has remained connected ever since.

“The incredible staff are the providers of dignified care and selfless attention,” he said.

“Volunteers unobtrusively help transform the impossible by bringing hope, cheer and possibility.”

The Strathdon Community has experienced tremendous growth over the years, with support from local donors and Presbyterian and Uniting Church congregations.

Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Raelene Thompson said Strathdon Community led the way in terms of size and innovation.

“The HUR Gym that started here has been so successful that we’ve now introduced it in a couple of other sites across Melbourne,” she said.

“We’ve had the trial of the UA Buddy (smart tablet) program, which aims to connect people who perhaps can’t physically go places or their families cannot go to them.”

She said there were many other examples of times when the Strathdon Community had paved the way by successfully introducing services or programs, enabling other Uniting AgeWell sites to adopt change without concern. 🐦

➤ Army of volunteers provide care boost

Volunteers are worth \$7 billion to the Victorian economy, but to Uniting AgeWell they are priceless. We could not provide the exceptional level of care our clients enjoy every day without our loyal and devoted army of volunteers.

This National Volunteer Week, 21 to 27 May, Uniting AgeWell will celebrate some 700 volunteers, who selflessly give their time to enrich the lives of others.

Volunteers provide friendship to clients and residents, support lifestyle activities, conduct home visits, carry out transport assistance, provide administration support and even do the gardening.

Dawn Pietsch has dedicated four years to creating and maintaining gardens at Uniting AgeWell's Strathdon Community in Forest Hill.

Her compassion for people who can no longer garden for themselves, along with her love of horticulture, has motivated Dawn to turn soil for many seniors.

"I started down in the independent living units, tidying that up, and then moved to the McGarvie Garden – just a weed patch with a few natives in the dirt," she said.

Dawn got to work, planting a beautiful cottage garden with geraniums, daphnes, daisies, irises, roses, aquilegia (granny's bonnets), and seaside daisies.

Before long, Dawn was arriving to cuttings and plants left at the side gate by families and clients. When residents pass away, their families often buy roses for Dawn to plant in the McGarvie Garden in their memory.

Strathdon Lifestyle Coordinator Matt Daley said Dawn had transformed the garden to a magnificent area, which all residents and staff enjoyed.

While volunteering benefits organisations, it also benefits the individual. It is a great way to meet new people, strengthen ties to the community and broaden support networks.

Uniting AgeWell provides all volunteers with training and on-going management support, as well as coverage for Personal Accident, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance. Police checks apply for all volunteers. 🕊

A compassion for people and a love of horticulture motivated Dawn Pietsch's volunteering.



If you are interested in volunteering for Uniting AgeWell, please contact our People Services team on T: 1300 783 435.

➤ Your guide to home care

There is an abundance of support services for older people who want to continue living independently for as long as possible, or for those who are ready to move into care. Yet knowing who to talk to and where to start can be difficult.

Uniting AgeWell understands it can be a challenging and often convoluted process arranging assessments, accessing government funding and tailoring packages to suit clients' needs.

Here are some handy tips to help you navigate the aged care maze:

- The process of accessing Federal Government funding can take up to six months.
- Register through the Government's My Aged Care (MAC) online portal or by phone, which takes about 15 minutes (Uniting AgeWell can help you with this).
- The Regional Assessment Service evaluates clients who require entry-level support at home, while the Aged Care Assessment Service undertakes assessments for more complex support.
- The Assessors – usually a nurse, social worker or other health care professional – will talk to you about how you are managing at home.
- The Assessor will determine whether you are eligible for a Home Care Package (HCP), develop a care plan and send it to MAC for approval.
- MAC will send you a letter of approval and explain the level of package you are eligible to receive.
- Keep all letters from MAC somewhere safe as your chosen provider will need to see them later.
- When a package becomes available, MAC will send a letter with your package offer, which means you can access your Government-funded package.
- You will have 56 days to choose a provider and commence your care plan.

Uniting AgeWell's Client Advisors can support you at any stage during the process, from registering as a new client on MAC, right through to understanding letters MAC sends. We will keep in contact with you throughout the whole process.



Throughout the life of your package we work closely with doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, community groups, families and, most of all, you, to ensure you get the most out of your home care package.

Uniting AgeWell conducts regular information sessions with service groups, community centres and churches, and at seniors events throughout Victoria. 🐦



For information about our upcoming information sessions, call us on 1300 783 435.

Where to go

My Aged Care website: www.myagedcare.gov.au

My Aged Care phone: 1800 200 422
from 8am-8pm Mon-Fri or Sat 10am-2pm

Uniting AgeWell website: unitingagewell.org
Uniting AgeWell phone: 1300 783 435



› Supporting independence in care

The simple act of washing your own clothes or making your own breakfast can be enough to boost feelings of self worth and satisfaction in aged care residents.

That's according to Rosetta Community, Strathglen, Care Manager Tracy Harvison, who is committed to doing whatever she can to support residents who want to remain independent.

"This is their home and whatever they're capable of doing we want to allow them to do," she said.

"These are things they would do every day at home and they may feel disempowered if these things are taken away from them.

"We want to help people maintain their independence as long as they can."

Residents across the facility are invited to order breakfast from a wide selection each morning, or come down to the home-style kitchen and make it for themselves.

They can cook their own toast, butter it, serve their own cereal, pour a glass of juice or make a coffee, all with the support of Strathglen staff.

The breakfast program is hugely popular among residents, staff and families.

Regaining control of an otherwise mundane household chore has also meant the world to a handful of women.

"We noticed that a lot of the women were rinsing their underwear in the sink and hanging them over the rails in their bathrooms," Tracy said.

"They just didn't feel comfortable with strangers washing their underwear."

Keen to allow the women their privacy and independence, Tracy arranged clothes horses for several of the women's rooms and installed a washing machine for the residents to use.

One resident, Pat Clark (pictured), used to wash all of her and her husband's clothes in the hand basin of her bathroom, so she was rapt when she was given access to the washing machine.

"When it mounts up, I carry the laundry in my own washing basket, and use my own washing powder to do the clothes," she said.

"I just didn't want to be idle and I'm still quite capable of carrying the basket."

After running a household for her entire adult life, raising three children and caring for her grandchildren when they came along, it was only natural for Pat to continue to do the washing when she moved into care.

Tracy said her team would continue to foster independence in aged care and create opportunities for residents to make choices. 



Ray Brough (second from right) went to the Salvation's Army's 'Our Christmas Gift' in December, with his son-in-law Warren (left), son Andrew, daughter Gill and Noble Park Community carer Iulia.

➤ News in brief

Remember to get your flu shot

As we enter the cooler months and the risk of influenza increases, Uniting AgeWell is encouraging the community to get their flu vaccination. The community plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of infection. Uniting AgeWell urges all visitors and users of its services to get their flu vaccination this year to help protect some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Tasmanian residents support relay

Uniting AgeWell Lillian Martin Community resident Doris Thackery, 100, officially launched the 2018 Hobart Relay For Life, alongside the Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC. Lillian Martin has hosted an in-house Relay For Life for several years, enabling residents to participate in the fundraiser. Lillian Martin raised \$4,700 for the Cancer Council in its 2018 campaign.

Free information sessions

Uniting AgeWell is hosting free community information sessions across several Victorian and Tasmanian sites, to help older people understand complex and emotional topics, like mental health and legally protecting their assets. The Planning Ahead Information Sessions cover important topics, including Understanding Dementia, Powers of Attorney and Wills, and Funerals. For information about the Planning Ahead Information Sessions, visit unitingagewell.org/planning or call 1300 783 435.

Kerang cheers on Mick

The whole town cheered on as Uniting AgeWell home care client Mick Hallinan (pictured) carried the Queen's Baton on his mobility scooter through Kerang in February. The 94-year-old was selected to carry the Commonwealth Games baton while on its journey to the Gold Coast because of his outstanding contribution to the community. The Kerang Swimming and Lifesaving Club put his name forward for the honour for his many decades of service to the Club.



Photo courtesy of the Gannawarra Times.

➤ Standing ovation for Ray's wish

Ray Brough's face lit up, he smiled from ear to ear, energy and joy coursed through his veins, as his children watched beside him. His wish had been granted.

The Noble Park Community resident has always loved music. When Ray's daughter, Gill, heard about the Salvation Army's 'Our Christmas Gift' concert extravaganza, she wanted to take him.

But with Ray in a wheelchair, getting to the Arts Centre Melbourne would be difficult. That's when the Uniting AgeWell Wishing Well program stepped in to provide a carer and transport for Ray, so he and his family could experience the show live.

On December 2, Ray went to the concert with Gill, his son-in-law Warren, son Andrew, and his carer from Noble Park Community Iulia.

From his front row seat, Ray heard one of his favourite vocalists, Silvie Paladino, along with other performers, sing pitch-perfect renditions of his favourite Christmas carols.

"It was fantastic from the beginning to the end," Gill said.

"It was an amazing experience and it's something we can't do ourselves."

The granting of Ray's wish and those of other Uniting AgeWell clients, are made possible through generous donations and funds raised at the Annual Uniting AgeWell Charity Golf Day.

More than 70 wishes have been granted since the program began three years ago. The many people who have realised their dreams include Keith, who flew in a Tiger Moth; Marty, who cruised down the Yarra River with her sons; and Enid, who took a ride in a motorbike sidecar. 

› Meet the face of Uniting AgeWell's LGBTI strategy

An actress who featured in Hollywood's *Mad Max: Fury Road* and the Australian television series *Glitch*, is starring in a new and most-personal role.

Melissa Jaffer, a Uniting AgeWell independent living unit resident, has become the face of the organisation's LGBTI-inclusion strategy.

At 81 years old, Melissa, who has always been "out" in theatre circles and among family, thought it was time to come out publically.

In January, her face appeared for the first time on a banner in support of LGBTI-inclusion, at Uniting AgeWell's Midsumma Carnival stand.

It was the second year Uniting AgeWell attended Midsumma Carnival, promoting its commitment to recognising and supporting the LGBTI community.

Melissa knows what it is like to live and age as a member of the LGBTI community. The active octogenarian still works in show business, and lives independently.

It was the sudden passing of her soulmate, Sandra McKenzie, which led to her move to Uniting AgeWell. The musician and the actor were "two halves of a whole" and had been deeply connected for 40 years.

"In a same sex relationship it's a soulmate you meet and it's different – it's just you two – so when you lose someone it's like half of you is gone," she said.

It was March 2001 when Sandy died in their Coffs Harbour home, leaving Melissa alone and grieving on their large property.

Melissa moved back to Melbourne to be closer to family and felt immediately accepted by the Uniting AgeWell staff. It had not always been such an easy road.

Society has "evolved" a lot over the years and the legalisation of same-sex marriage last year is testament to that, Melissa said.



Uniting AgeWell recognises LGBTI ageing is a unique and important experience warranting a considered, consultative and systemic approach.

The organisation worked with the board, executives, staff, volunteers and clients to develop an LGBTI-inclusion strategy in 2014.

"Over the last four years we have worked to include LGBTI-inclusive practice into our residential and community services, to meet the needs of the older LGBTI community," CEO Andrew Kinnersly said.

Work on the LGBTI strategy is ongoing, and includes regular training for staff. 

Breaking new ground at Latrobe

Work has commenced on a major \$10 million extension and renovation at Uniting AgeWell's Strathdevon Community, in Latrobe, North West Tasmania.

The aged care residence will be expanded from 37 beds to 67 beds, while the existing building will receive a modern face lift using environmentally sustainable design principles.

The renovation includes a new community café, chapel, resident activity areas, gym, hair salon and a state-of-the-art 'cook fresh' kitchen.

Rooms have also been designed to meet the needs of the indigenous community, following consultation with indigenous groups.

Uniting AgeWell held an official sod-turning ceremony in January, which was attended by several dignitaries including Senator for Tasmania The Hon Anne Urquhart, Member for Braddon Roger Jaensch and Mayor of Latrobe Council Cr Peter Freshney. Uniting AgeWell retiring Board Chair Allan Thompson, incoming Board Chair Raelene Thompson, and management and staff of Uniting AgeWell also attended.

Andrew Kinnersly, Uniting AgeWell CEO, said the Strathdevon upgrade demonstrated the organisation's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality care to older people in Tasmania's North West.

"This major upgrade to the Strathdevon Community means more people will have the option to remain in their local community and maintain social connections as they move into residential aged care."

"It also builds on our expanding home and community support services in the North West, including the Transition Care Community Packages introduced last year."

"This growth in our services also represents increased employment opportunities, which is great news for the local community."

In his last official duty as Board Chair, Allan Thompson said he was excited to be breaking new



Pictured above L-R: Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly, Mayor of Latrobe Council Cr Peter Freshney, Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Allan Thompson, Vos Construction CEO Kurt Jones, Senator for Tasmania The Hon Anne Urquhart and Member for Braddon Roger Jaensch.

ground at Strathdevon and helping to shape the future for the people of Latrobe and Tasmania's North West.

The extension and renovation is due for completion in early 2019. 🐦



**How can we support you to live life your way?
Find out today, by calling our friendly team on
1300 783 435 or visit unitingagewell.org**

We appreciate your feedback and welcome any story ideas.

Contact: Communications and Social Media Advisor Caitlin Pearson at cpearson@unitingagewell.org or call T: 9276 5718.

Front Cover:

Netta Fuller, who now lives at Strathdon Community, spent many years managing the residence's cafe and fete, raising valuable funds. She was among 150 people who attended its 50-year celebration in March.



Uniting AgeWell

Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia