

COMMUNITY

Chat

ISSUE 5, SUMMER 2018-19



Living and ageing well

GETTING IT RIGHT

Welcome to another edition of Community Chat – the first for 2019. We expect it will be a year of challenges, but also one of opportunities.

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety were announced in October and aged care providers have been asked to submit information ahead of the hearings.

The Royal Commission will no doubt be a difficult time for the industry. However, there has never been a better opportunity to make positive changes to quality and safety, to funding models and to systems that could greatly benefit the community and people working in the sector.

Uniting AgeWell strives to be an Employer of Choice – a great place to work and a place that attracts and retains the best staff. We have recently undertaken an Employee Engagement Survey, seeking input from our staff about the areas we can improve as an employer, because we absolutely believe that having happy and engaged staff leads to better outcomes for our clients.

Whether you are welcoming them into your home, trusting them with your clinical care needs or visiting them at our Wellness Centres, you are placing great trust in our staff and I recognise how important that is.

I am proud of the dedicated, passionate and professional staff we have across our community services and aged care residences and am often filled with pride when I hear the stories from clients about special interactions they have had with our staff. Your feedback, both positive and negative, is always valued by Uniting AgeWell.

In this edition, you can read about a partnership we have formed with home care provider Guardian Network. This is an exciting opportunity for us to tap into the expertise of



Guardian Network and to work together as an expanded team to deliver services enabling older people to live well at home with independence, choice and peace of mind.

We also recently conducted the annual YES survey with our community and residential clients, with the results due early in 2019. I want to thank everyone who participated in the survey – the valuable feedback you have provided about your experiences, our facilities and services will help shape our future service delivery.

Andrew Kinnersly
CEO Uniting AgeWell

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Guardian Network Support Worker Tarinee Pinder with home care client Jennifer Ward.

GUARDIAN NETWORK JOINS UNITING AGEWELL

Uniting AgeWell has acquired home care services provider Guardian Network, ensuring customers have greater access to an extensive range of high quality in-home care services.

Guardian Network, which was formed in 1998, delivers home care and support services to people across Victoria and Tasmania.

Prior to the acquisition in October 2018, Uniting AgeWell was a long standing customer of Guardian Network, using their direct care workers to deliver services to its home care clients.

“Our organisations share an absolute commitment to providing quality services that support independence, choice and peace of mind,” Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said.

“Having Guardian Network as part of our organisation will strengthen our presence in aged care and enable us to provide services to a new group of clients.”

Moving forward, Guardian Network will continue to operate as it always has, with the same name, customer care and service delivery. Executive Manager Sandra Saxby will continue to lead Guardian Network, reporting to Uniting

AgeWell’s General Manager Strategy and Business Development Fonda Voukelatos.

Guardian Network customers will also deal with the same people they have come to depend on for high-quality service.

The acquisition will enable Uniting AgeWell to provide quality in-home services including personal care, domestic assistance, shopping assistance, respite services, nursing, allied health and garden maintenance services to more clients.

Andrew said he was excited by what Guardian Network and Uniting AgeWell could achieve together, as they responded to increasing demand for home care services.

Talk to our friendly staff to find out more about the benefits of the Uniting AgeWell and Guardian Network partnership across Victoria and Tasmania.



Uniting AgeWell provides 24/7 in-home care and services to customers, and can cater for clients who would like to purchase services privately. For more information about our tailored home care support, call us on T: 1300 783 435.



A CENTURY OF GIVING

After decades of tireless community work, Kerang's Olwen Henry could be forgiven for putting herself first. However, that's just not in her nature.

At 100 years old, Olwen dedicates her "spare time" to knitting blankets for patients undergoing cancer treatments at the local hospital, along with aged care residents.

"I knit all the squares and I hand them on to another woman who crochets them into blankets, then distributes them," she said.

"The cancer patients get very cold once they've had their treatment, so the hospital staff give them blankets to put across their lap and I think they take them home afterwards.

"It gives me something to do and brings comfort to somebody else."

Uniting AgeWell is fortunate to be able to support Olwen to live independently in her own home and continue taking part in her hobbies through a tailored home care package.

"We support Olwen with transport to her weekly sewing classes and purchase materials for her projects through her package," said Loddon Mallee North Home Care Services Client Advisor Michelle Whitelaw.

Olwen also receives meals, attends exercise classes, goes on monthly social trips to a café and garden club, and has funding assistance for her private gardener who has installed sprinkler systems to prevent falls while watering.

"Uniting AgeWell has done everything for me," she said.

"They've been terrific. I've thoroughly enjoyed everything they've done."

With Olwen's children living interstate, support from Uniting AgeWell is integral to her plan to continue living at home.

"I really don't know what I would do without the support," she said.

"The help they've given me is wonderful. I can stay here and friends can pop in and I have the nurses come in to check on me if I need it."



If you would like to discuss tailoring a home care package to suit your needs, or want to talk about other support options, call Uniting AgeWell on T: 1300 783 435.

How times have changed

Olwen reflects on her life growing up in country Victoria

When I was 14, I went to work at the Murrabit Packaging Company, packing oranges. I still have an orange for breakfast every morning. In town we just had a butcher and baker. My family had a horse and cart and we shopped once a week if we were lucky. We only went to Kerang once a year. My dad used to walk into Kerang along the railway line – he walked 15 or 16 miles to work.



Hawthorn Men's Group members David Segal (left), Ron Warren and Jeff Stanton.

MEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM A SUCCESS

Participants of a successful Men's Health Program at Uniting AgeWell's Hawthorn AgeWell Centre have opted to continue as a permanent social group since forming friendships during the series.

Uniting AgeWell received a grant from the Australian Department of Health's National Shed Development Programme, to enable older men in Melbourne's east to get active, connect with peers and learn more about their health.

Meeting weekly over two months, the group walked, had a discussion about a different health-related topic and a social lunch. The discussions were wide-ranging and covered topics such as weight loss, muscle retention, balance and agility, hearing protection and continence.

Social Support Team Leader Lois Healy said the men gained valuable knowledge about their health and wellbeing, and some formed close friendships during the program.

"The men involved in the program come from a range of backgrounds, including professional backgrounds, and they have really extraordinary conversations."

"It was great to watch them settle into the program, become more confident with each other and share more about their own health and personal lives as the weeks went on."

Men's Health Program participant Jeff Stanton said the concept was "a great idea". Along with meeting a couple of "very interesting" men, he found the health topics informative.

"The first talk was about healthy eating and I have changed my eating habits since that session," he said.

In October, the participants opted to embark on a five-week cooking program to put into practice some of their newly acquired nutritional knowledge. The men learnt to cook a selection of simple meals and graduated with their own book of the recipes to cook for family and friends.

All eager to continue the relationships, the men chose to establish a weekly social group. The men meet at 9.30am on Tuesdays at the Hawthorn AgeWell Centre for a walk and coffee, then an activity.

Along with regular guest speakers on health-related topics, the men will take part in client-driven activities like cooking, outings and hobbies.

Lois said more men were welcome to join the group. Attendance at the Men's Group can be funded through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme or privately.



For more information on the Men's Group or the other services available at Uniting AgeWell's Hawthorn AgeWell Centre, call T: 9815 0155.

MANAGING PAIN

Whether it is an old netball injury, a pulled muscle, a recent surgery or general wear and tear, pain can be distressing and debilitating.

The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines pain as an “unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage”.

Sometimes pain is short-lived and subsides on its own, while other times it can lead to serious and complicated problems or chronic pain.

According to Pain Australia, one in three people over the age of 65 suffer from chronic pain and one in five GP consultations involves a patient with chronic pain.

Uniting AgeWell Exercise Physiologist Kush Dogra says it’s important older people understand the difference between ‘good pain’ and ‘bad pain’, and address bad pain quickly.

“Good pain is generally your muscles responding to an activity they are not used to,” he said.

“That soreness disappears slowly, usually in a couple of days, and is a good indicator that an exercise program is effective in helping the person gain strength.”

Bad pain, however, lingers for more than three or four days and continues to get worse with time. Kush says anyone experiencing bad pain should visit their GP.

Acute pain from an injury, surgery or other trauma should heal within three months. However, it can develop into chronic pain if left untreated or poorly treated. The pain can cause changes to occur within the nervous system, which make the body more sensitive to pain.

“Central sensitisation generally follows years of exposure to pain,” Kush said. “It causes the part of the brain that receives pain stimulus to remain active, even though those injuries have healed.

“So, that part of the nervous system stays active and the person feels pain, even though there is no stimulus reaching the pain receptors.”

Kush said many clients who presented to Uniting AgeWell’s allied health and therapy specialists were suffering some form of chronic pain for many years. Often, they have exhausted other treatments and specialists and expect to see little improvement.

Kathy Bacsa (pictured) came to Uniting AgeWell in January 2018 in chronic pain, only able to lift her leg three inches off the ground. A bungled knee replacement and subsequent surgeries was the cause of Kathy’s pain.

The rock ‘n’ roll and swing dancer had attended specialists, taken prescribed medications and visited other gyms to try to



manage the pain and lack of mobility in her leg, but had little success until she found the Noble Park AgeWell Centre.

Kathy followed a tailored program set for her by trained professionals, which included weight bearing activity and group exercises. The program greatly improved her mobility and assisted with her pain management – and now she’s looking at getting back to dancing.

“The program and equipment have helped me so much; they’re just what I needed,” Kathy said.

“They strengthened me up very, very well and what has been set out for me is just right. Now I’m working towards getting back to dancing!”

Kush said Kathy was a great example of how supervised activity conducted by appropriately qualified allied health and exercise specialists could improve mobility, assist with pain management and prevent further problems.

He said people could live full and happy lives despite underlying pain conditions, with the right support and treatment plan.



“In one way we can reduce the pain, but our primary aim is to enable our clients to live well and manage the pain.”

“The most important thing is to continue going out for coffee with friends, coming to our AgeWell Centres for group exercise or supported individual programs and ensuring the pain doesn’t prevent you from enjoying life.”

Uniting AgeWell is committed to enabling older people greater access to allied health and exercise services at affordable prices. These professionals support clients to regain or maintain good physical, social and emotional health, while achieving their individual goals.

The organisation’s new ‘Wellness Model’ provides greater flexibility and choice for clients through new allied health and exercise membership options.

i For more information about the Wellness Model or the allied health and exercise services available to you, call Uniting AgeWell on T: 1300 783 435.

Relieving minor aches and pains



Kush Dogra

Get moving

Exercise is essential to healthy ageing, says Exercise Physiologist Kush Dogra.

“Older people lose muscle and bone mass as they age but exercise can slow down that process and ensure muscles remain strong enough to support their bones,” he said.

“Research has shown that if someone is suffering from chronic pain, controlled exercise under the guidance of an allied health professional, can be the best thing for them. Walking also loosens muscles, keeps joints moving well, helps maintain healthy weight and has proven mental health benefits.”

Heat vs ice

Knowing when to apply a heat pack and when to apply ice can be difficult.

Kush says ice is the most appropriate treatment for the first 24 to 48 hours after an acute injury, or if swelling is present.

After the first 24 to 48 hours, provided there is no swelling present, transition to heat pack therapy. Heat is also appropriate to use on chronic, intermittent pain, particularly back pain.

Anti-inflammatories

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories – like Nurofen, Voltaren or Aspirin – can be effective in managing pain by reducing inflammation. Kush warned older people against using anti-inflammatories without first consulting their GP because of the risk of side effects.

Anti-inflammatories should be used occasionally and in low doses to reduce the likelihood of complications.

HOME SECURITY FOR TRAVELLERS

Retirement is a special time when the burdens of employment are over and you have freedom to travel whenever you want. Whether you choose to journey to far reaching areas of the globe, enjoy visiting family and friends interstate or love hitting the open road with your caravan – travelling means leaving your home and valuables behind.

Sadly, in 2017 one home was burgled every three minutes across Australia. It means homeowners across the country have returned, some from the holiday of a lifetime, to find their home had been burgled and valuables gone.

The good news is, there are many ways homeowners can make their houses more secure to deter criminals and enable them to holiday with peace of mind.

It is ideal to have a trusted family member, friend or professional house sitter look after your home while you travel. However, if unable to find someone to stay at your home, you should take steps to secure and protect your property.

RACV Educator Mel Higgins, who recently presented on Personal and Home Safety at Uniting AgeWell's Amarco Apartments, said improving home security could involve simple routine changes or the purchase of affordable technological solutions.

"If you go away on holidays, make the home look as though there's still somebody there," he said.

"We encourage people to set timers for the lights in their living areas, so they turn on and off as normal, leaving washing on the line and ensuring the bins are emptied and taken in."

Neighbours are often willing to support older people going on extended holidays by monitoring the home for any unusual activity and helping to ensure the home looks lived in.

"Along with taking the bins in, it's a good idea to make sure one of the neighbours mows your lawn and brings in your mail," Mel said.

"If you go away for a lengthy period, junk mail will build up and there's an immediate indicator there's nobody home. So, I do recommend getting a 'No junk mail' sign."

Mel said homeowners should ensure access points to the home were clearly visible and secure before leaving for a holiday. It means cutting back bushes or shrubs in front of the windows; locking all the windows, external doors and security doors; installing motion sensor lights; and, if possible, a home alarm system.

"Nowadays you can buy a sophisticated home security system for relatively affordable prices," Mel said.

"Even the most basic alarm is a deterrent, but there are systems now that enable people to monitor their homes on their smart phone or tablet from anywhere in the world.

"Not only having the alarm installed, but having a sticker on your window that says, 'This house is protected by 24/7 security', lets anybody from the road know there is a system in the home."

Most importantly, Mel says to be cautious about posting holiday snaps online while away from home. Posting photos on social media could not only share your holiday news with friends and relatives, but alert burglars to the fact that your home is empty.

"You should really only send photos to friends and relatives via email or privately because you never know who is watching," he said.

"Even when you're not on holidays, be careful about putting anything on social media showing valuables."



Commonly stolen items

Home insurer Budget Direct ranked the most commonly stolen items during home burglaries across Australia in 2017:

- # 1 Cash
- # 2 Laptops
- # 3 Jewellery
- # 4 Cameras
- # 5 Phones
- # 6 Wallets, handbags, purses
- # 7 Identification documents
- # 8 Televisions
- # 9 Computer and video game equipment
- # 10 Watches



Both Victoria and Tasmania Police have 'Absence from residence' registers and encourage homeowners to notify local police of the dates and times they will be away from home. Leaving your contact details with police means they can make contact in case of an incident or perform checks during usual patrols, if possible.

Victorians can register their absence online or at their local police station, while Tasmanians can do so at their local station.

Increasing security around your home, calling on support from trusted friends and neighbours, and being careful what you post online are all positive steps towards minimising the risk of home burglaries. It means you can relax and enjoy that well-deserved holiday, knowing your home is better protected.

Holiday home security checklist

- Cut back shrubs around your windows and doors
- Install a 'No junk mail' sign on your letterbox
- Arrange a neighbour to collect your mail, mow your lawn and take in your rubbish bins
- Register your absence with your local police
- Put away any tools that could be used to enter your home
- Put some washing on the clothes line
- Ensure external sensor lights are working
- Conceal valuables like jewellery and electronics
- Set timers for lights
- Check all windows are locked
- Ensure alarm system is on
- Deadlock your external doors and security doors

Living among friends

Moving into independent retirement living means you live among a community that cares. When you choose to pack up and travel, you can turn the key, lock-up and leave knowing there is nothing to worry about at home.

i For information about our independent retirement living options, call Uniting AgeWell on T: 1300 783 435 and ask for the housing manager of the suburb you are interested in.

WHEN IS IT TIME TO ACCESS CARE?

Knowing how or when to tell someone they need help at home, or even more full-time care, is difficult.

It is usually a friend or relative who identifies that someone is not coping at home any more. But what are the real signs that help is needed and how should the issue be addressed?

Uniting AgeWell's Kerry Whitlock, convenor of the Planning Ahead information sessions, says a key indicator is that the person is struggling with day-to-day matters.

"If you are visiting their home, monitor whether bills are being opened and ensure they're not sitting in a pile," she said.

"Check whether meals are being eaten or whether food in the fridge is going off and monitor whether money is going missing. Just take note of whether life is being lived."

Kerry said the stove being left on, front door wide open, or the person getting lost, were all triggers for having a memory assessment with the view of accessing some support.

If the person is struggling, Kerry encouraged people to broach the subject in a "constructive, positive manner" and non-threatening way.

She said to start by asking questions like, 'How are you going?', 'How can we help you?', and 'What are your wishes?' to encourage the person and start an open conversation.

"For example, if you can see someone is unstable on their feet and their home is a bit cluttered, you could tell them the evidence shows moving mats off the floor, making clear pathways and installing handrails enabled people to live independently at home for longer," she said.



The most effective intervention is making an appointment with the person's GP or health professional and attending with them.

"Engaging with health professionals is a really good step because they can promote and foster independence and give confidence that what you're saying will actually benefit the person," Kerry said. They can also assist with registering on My Aged Care and arranging assessments.

"It's good to be able to couch your concerns before the appointment and then make it a social outing by including coffee and a chat."

Kerry said people who were not the next-of-kin but were concerned for a person's welfare, could step in to advocate for their friends or relatives.

"If someone is really worried about a person's wellbeing but doesn't have a relationship with their next-of-kin, they could contact Senior Rights Victoria or Advocacy Tasmania," she said.

For more information about accessing aged care services on behalf of a friend, family member or spouse, visit My Aged Care (myagedcare.gov.au), talk to local community groups or visit Council on the Ageing (cota.org.au).

i For information about Uniting AgeWell's in-home care, social support and respite services, allied health or residential care, or for assistance with registering on My Aged Care, call us on 1300 783 435.

IN BRIEF

Get involved in sarcopenia research

Uniting AgeWell is collaborating with Victoria University on a research project that aims to identify and treat sarcopenia – age-related loss of muscle mass and strength – through exercise training. The study will investigate sarcopenia risk by assessing physical fitness, quality of life, body composition, muscle and bone health of clients undergoing strength training at Uniting AgeWell's Forest Hill, Oakleigh, Noble Park and Hawthorn AgeWell Centres. **To express interest in participating in this study, speak to your Client Advisor or call T: 1300 783 435.**

AgeWell on TV

Uniting AgeWell has produced four episodes of Channel 31's hugely popular exercise program for older people – *Move It Or Lose It*. The topics covered relate to strong bones, balance and falls prevention, exercise around the home and Bollywood dancing, as an easy and enjoyable way to keep fit. The episodes, which will air from January, were filmed at Uniting AgeWell's Noble Park Community with staff acting as presenters and real clients participating in the exercise classes. All episodes can be viewed on YouTube under *Move It Or Lose It Australia*.



NEVER FAR FROM CYPRUS

Michael Haralambous may have left Cyprus more than four decades ago, but when the Uniting AgeWell client logs onto his UA Buddy tablet, he is transported right back to the Mediterranean.

Developed by Sydney-based tech-company, Ethan Group, the device is equipped with simple apps, large icons and valuable applications to assist older clients to remain socially connected and in control of their own care.

Michael reads and watches the Cypriot news daily and he and his wife, Ann, communicate with friends and family using the Greek keyboard installed on the UA Buddy.

"As you get older you miss your siblings more and wish you could be there for them when they are sick," Ann said.

"Now we send them a message or call them on Skype whenever we want. We haven't been back for 15 years but we feel closer to them."

When Michael uses the UA Buddy on his own, Ann has free time to complete housework and organise appointments. The pair say they "can't live without it".

Michael received the UA Buddy as part of a Uniting AgeWell trial in which home care clients were introduced to the entertainment functions of the device and given access to their service plans.



For more information about the UA Buddy, contact Uniting AgeWell Senior Manager, Research Innovation and Advocacy Nina Bowes on T: 9133 5041.

Helping older people get connected

The Australian Government is teaching older people valuable computer skills, enabling them to get socially connected in the digital age. The Be Connected program provides resources to older people to teach them valuable skills like how to talk to family living overseas, meet new friends with shared interests, shop and sell safely online, and how to use a smart phone beyond simply being a phone. **To access the Be Connected resources, go to beconnected.esafety.gov.au**

For the diary

February

Melbourne Retirement Village Expo: 17-18 February, Glen Waverley, Victoria

This free event provides retirees wonderful opportunities to meet directly with retirement village providers and ask questions, including Uniting AgeWell representatives.

Information: retirementexpo.com.au

Aussie Barbecue: 13 February, Launceston, Tasmania

Uniting AgeWell's North West Community Services is hosting an Aussie Barbecue for its home care clients at 5 Normanstone Rd, Launceston. Arrive at 11.30am, dressed in your favourite 'Aussie bush' dress-ups.

Information: RSVP to Robyn Congerton, T: 0400 130 459, rcongrton@unitingagewell.org

Lunch at Penguin: 20 February, Penguin, Tasmania

Uniting AgeWell is hosting a lunch at the Penguin Pub for its home care, transitional care and social Platypus Club clients. Arrive at 11.30am dressed as something that begins with 'P'.

Information: RSVP to Heather Beamsley, T: 6411 6500

Planning your Retirement: 22 February, Burwood, Victoria

Uniting AgeWell's Nangare independent living units is hosting a free information session and morning tea in Burwood. Find out everything there is to know about life in retirement from a StatePlus financial expert and hear from Uniting AgeWell's independent living experts.

Information: Lee Martin, T: 9845 3139, lmartin@unitingagewell.org

March

Home Care Services Official Opening: 1 March, Latrobe, Tasmania

Uniting AgeWell's Home Care Services is officially opening its new office at 8 Hamilton Street, Latrobe and inviting members of the community to come along.

Information: Fiona Onslow-Agnew, T: 6289 8800, fonslow-agnew@unitingagewell.org

Revitalife Health and Wellbeing Presentation: 21 March, Kingsville, Victoria

This Revitalife presentation will address the three cornerstones of good health: diet, exercise and sleep. It will focus on sleep because many people feel helpless about their sleeping issues. Learn about the science

behind sleep, the research and the illnesses people can prevent through sensible sleep practices.

Information: Anita Ukalovic, T: 9680 0500

Water Colour Art Class: 21 March, Swan Hill, Victoria

Use water colours and leaves from your garden to create a colourful autumn-inspired bookmark for your next great read. This class belongs to a four-part series. Price: \$40 per session or funded through Home Care Packages.

Information: Jenny Astall, T: 0417 043 454

May

Community Art Exhibition Launch: 1 May, Brighton, Victoria

Uniting AgeWell's Girrawheen Centre is hosting a Community Art Exhibition, depicting the theme 'What connects us?'. It aims to bring together Bayside services that support older people in the community and provide a welcoming space of music and creativity.

Information: Juliette Goodall, T: 0432 349 165, jgoodall@unitingagewell.org

Here to help

Uniting AgeWell offers a broad range of community services that enable older people to remain active and independent, and living in their own community as long as possible.

Choosing the right service to meet your needs is important. The Uniting AgeWell team can inform and guide you, tailoring a program of services that help you meet your goals.

Speak to our friendly team today and find out how we can support you to live and age well at home.

 **1300 783 435**

 **unitingagewell.org**