



News from across Uniting AgeWell communities



» Celebrating community & connection



Choice and control. These are the buzz words of the aged care sector following the full roll out of Consumer Directed Care in home care services by the Federal Government in February.

Giving seniors choice and control over the services they receive is not a new concept for Uniting AgeWell. For years we have been providing seniors with care and support that enables them to live and age well – when and how they want.

We have many stories about Uniting AgeWell clients remaining in control of their lives, being active and participating in their communities. Whether they are at home, in independent living accommodation or in residential aged care, we know the positive impact being in charge of their services and decision making has on their wellbeing.

Take for example Ruth and Ross Wilson from Gippsland, who are able to remain independent at home with the help of Uniting AgeWell. They have chosen to receive care that takes the pressure off Ross in the garden and Ruth in the home, so they can spend more time doing the things that are important to them.

Then there's 99-year-old Doris Thackery. This remarkable resident at our Lillian Martin Community in Tasmania decided to shave her head to raise money for cancer research. With the support of Uniting AgeWell, she completed this promise during the Relay For Life and raised thousands of dollars in the process.

The Relay For Life is also an example of how important community connection and participation is to a person's wellbeing. The entire Lillian Martin Community spent months preparing for the event.

The vibe was extremely positive and it had significant wellbeing impacts for the residents. You can watch a video of the event on our YouTube channel: bit.ly/agewell-video

In April, Uniting AgeWell will participate in the Memory Walk and Jog in Melbourne raising funds and awareness for dementia. This community event is not only an opportunity for us to support the work of Alzheimer's Australia, but it also shows our commitment to caring for those with this fatal disease.

Uniting AgeWell is constantly striving to improve the quality of our services. In February, the Uniting AgeWell Board endorsed a 5-10 year Property Plan, which will guide prioritisation for significant capital projects over the coming years. It is an exciting time for Uniting AgeWell as we continue to lead the way in aged care.

We are also improving our customer experience. In this very competitive aged care market, providing an exceptional experience for our customers is essential. We are investing in staff training and technological developments to enhance and build on our service delivery to ensure people get the services they want and expect.

Please enjoy reading about some of our great initiatives in this edition of DoveTale, including the wonderful story of Doris Thackery and the Relay For Life.

Andrew Kinnersly
CEO



99-year-old Doris Thackery before her shave for Relay For Life

› Champions give back

Ninety nine-year-old Lillian Martin resident Doris Thackery proved why she is a champ when she shaved her head to raise money for the Cancer Council.

Doris, who celebrated her 99th birthday the day after the event, offered to shave her head if the Lillian Martin Community raised more than \$2,000 for the Relay For Life marathon in Hobart.

The Mornington-based Community beat that goal, raising more than \$2,300, and Doris made good her promise.

Speaking just before the event, Doris said it all started as a joke when a male carer shaved his head for the event last year.

"I asked 'why should men get to have all the fun', and decided it's time women get to do it as well," she said.

"I'm not nervous at all, at my age I'm ready for anything and with two daughters having had cancer, I'm very committed to the cause."

This is the third year residents at the Lillian Martin Community have taken part in the Relay For Life


marathon, with family members and volunteers helping residents complete laps of the facility and grounds.

Lillian Martin Manager Integrated Services Vicki Mills said not only had the training given everyone an opportunity to exercise, it had developed comradery and brought the whole community together.

"On top of the usual restorative care with physiotherapists, residents trained by taking part in walking groups, strength training and exercising on bikes together with the chaplain, lifestyle staff and volunteers," she said.

"It was a fantastic day for everyone, with the Cancer Council donating shirts, balloons and banners and everyone celebrating the end of the relay with a BBQ lunch."

While her hair regrows, Doris is sporting a fancy blonde wig – because she thinks blondes just might have more fun!

To see a video of Doris and other residents take part in Relay For Life, visit the news section of the Uniting AgeWell website. 

➤ Golf Day raises \$50,000 for Wishing Well

Clients were the real winners at Uniting AgeWell's fourth Annual Charity Golf Day in December last year.

The hugely popular day and Uniting AgeWell's major annual fundraising event, raised \$50,000 for the inspiring Wishing Well program, helping people we support achieve their dreams.

The event saw 25 teams tee off at the spectacular Commonwealth Golf Club, one of the clubs that form the famous Melbourne Sand Belt.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said it was a fantastic day of golf and networking, with the sponsors enormously supportive of a great cause – particularly when the event had to be postponed from its original date in November due to extreme weather.

"We're incredibly appreciative of the support we've received from our sponsors and players. To have 25 teams hit the fairways at the rescheduled event is testament to their commitment to Uniting AgeWell and the Wishing Well program," he said.

"Raising \$50,000 is a fantastic outcome and means the program can continue to bring hope, joy and happiness to the lives of older people we support throughout 2017."

Forty-two companies gave their support through sponsorship, registrations and donations, with winning team and Drinks Cart sponsor, Lion Dairy and Drinks, topping the field with a score of 55.5.

Uniting AgeWell would like to thank everyone involved in the day for their support and making the day such a success. Particular thanks go to Platinum Sponsor Paywise Salary Packaging and Gold Sponsors Cura Pharmacy, Dominant and Ascot Group.

Planning is already underway for the 5th Annual Uniting AgeWell Charity Golf Day, which will again take place at the Commonwealth Golf Club on Monday 20 November 2017. Be sure to mark the date in your diary! 🏌️



Special thanks also go to

Platinum Sponsors: Paywise Salary Packaging

Gold Sponsors: Cura Pharmacy, Dominant, Ascot Group

Silver Sponsors: TENA, Blue Apache, Russell Kennedy Lawyers, Gemini Catering Equipment, Jeff Williams Building Services, Registered Electrical Contractors, PFD Food Services, SP&R Air Conditioning, Stella Renovations, Thomson Adsett, Grant Thornton, Solutions Three, CH2

Hole-in-One Sponsor ADCO, **Hospitality Sponsor** Procura

Drinks Cart Sponsor Lion Food Services





➤ Focus on rural and remote seniors

In the past five months my role as Chair of the Uniting AgeWell Board has taken me to three regional centres in Victoria and Tasmania.

I visited Latrobe in Tasmania, where our Strathdevon aged care residence is located and we support people living at home across the north west of the state including through home care packages, meals on wheels, and transition care packages for people recovering from a hospital stay.

In Swan Hill in northern Victoria I attended the official transfer of 273 Home Care Packages from Swan Hill Rural City Council to Uniting AgeWell in the Loddon Mallee region.

And most recently I visited Bairnsdale in south eastern Victoria, to officially open our Gippsland Community Services office and mark the transfer of 25 Home Care Packages from UnitingCare Gippsland to our organisation.

Uniting AgeWell is committed to supporting seniors across all parts of Victoria and Tasmania, including those in regional, rural and remote areas.

While this has been a core focus of our organisation for more than 60 years, with services in regional cities including Bendigo, Geelong and Launceston, we are always looking at how we can expand our services to older people outside metropolitan regions.

Uniting AgeWell's Home Care Packages are an important part of that service delivery. They allow people in these regions to remain living in their own communities, surrounded not only by their friends and family, but by a range of supports that enable them to live and age well in the place they love.

The Uniting AgeWell Board is keen to look for more opportunities to be of service to older Australians in non-metropolitan areas and extend the geographical reach of our services and programs.

We look forward to partnering with Uniting Church congregations and community organisations across the length and breadth of our two states as we strive to ensure all people are supported to live with choice, independence and peace of mind as they age.

Allan Thompson
Board Chair

Art for everyone



Strathdon Community guest artist It Hao Pheh

Art lovers, architecture enthusiasts, aspiring artists and clients will all find inspiration at this year's Uniting AgeWell Strathdon Community Art Exhibition from 23 – 26 March.

Celebrating its 14th year, the Exhibition in Forest Hill contributes to Melbourne's love affair with arts and culture.

Featuring multi-award winning artist Jo Reitze as guest judge and internationally renowned Pamela Irving - whose work features in some of Melbourne's most iconic public spaces - and It Hao Pheh as guest artists, the Exhibition promises to inspire and challenge our view of the world.

In addition to exhibiting his work, It Hao Pheh will be passing on his vast knowledge about art during a free demonstration on Saturday, March 25 from 2pm.

Recognised for his ability to produce a visual representation of the world with architecturally inspired, water colour artworks, It Hao says the beauty of art is its ability to tell a story and evolve over time.

"A lot of my earlier work captures the political and socio-economic times we live in," he said.

"However, since converting to Christianity, I now draw my inspiration from God's creations.

"I believe we are all given specific skills and talents and it is our responsibility to use them and share them with the world."

This year's Exhibition will also feature a special viewing session for clients with dementia.

Strathdon Community Manager Integrated Services, Sue Wood is very excited about this session.

"Studies show people with dementia experience the 'in the moment' pleasure of looking at art, rather than focusing on memory," she said. "This is a fantastic opportunity for us to share this experience with our clients."

The exhibition will kick off with an Opening Night Cocktail Party on Thursday, March 23, with canapes and drinks. Exhibition award winners will also be announced with a prize pool of \$4,900, thanks to our primary sponsors, Cura Pharmacy, Engie, Jellis Craig Mt Waverley, Ascot Group and Wilbow Group.

All artworks are available for purchase, with net proceeds going towards the Strathdon Community's seniors lifestyle program. For more information or to purchase tickets for the Opening Night Cocktail Party at just \$15 each, **visit strathdonartshow.org.au or call T: 9276 5706** 🐦



Exhibition Opening Hours
Thursday 7pm – 9pm
Friday & Saturday 10am – 5pm
Sunday 12pm – 4pm
Entry: \$8



Uniting AgeWell staff Lee Martin, Carol Fountain, Rev Judy Angwin and Sue Wood

› Taking a stand at Midsumma

Uniting AgeWell had a colourful presence at this year's Midsumma Festival, informing people from the LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex) community about our inclusive aged care services.

The organisation had a stand at the opening event of the festival, one of Australia's biggest LGBTI events.

Celebrating its milestone 30th year, the opening event to the three-week festival saw more than 100,000 people visit the lawns of Alexandra Gardens in Melbourne.

Chair of Uniting AgeWell's LGBTI Working Group, Vicky Jacques, said the Midsumma Festival was a fantastic opportunity for Uniting AgeWell to show it was a diverse and LGBTI-friendly organisation.

"It was a great day with many people visiting our stand and learning about our services," Vicky said.

"It highlighted our LGBTI-friendly and inclusive practices and approach to staff and clients."

Visitors to the Uniting AgeWell stand learnt about the broad range of services provided and the recognition Uniting AgeWell services had received from the LGBTI community through a 2016 Dorothies Award.

Almost 200 people completed a survey about Uniting AgeWell and their expectations of aged care, providing valuable insights for the organisation as it progressed its LGBTI strategy.

Vicky said connecting with the broader LGBTI community through the Midsumma Festival would bring benefits for employees and the community by building awareness and fostering inclusion.

"Uniting AgeWell continues to work towards gaining Rainbow Tick accreditation for providing safe and inclusive services for people in the LGBTI community," she said.

"We look forward to retuning to the Midsumma opening event next year, with an even bigger stand." 🌈

➤ New short-term care available at home

Seniors recovering from illness or injury will now be able to access flexible short-term care at home through Uniting AgeWell thanks to a new Federal Government program.

Uniting AgeWell Executive Manager Business Development Fonda Voukelatos said Uniting AgeWell was allocated 10 Short Term Restorative Care packages in the Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) in late February.

The packages will be delivered in Melbourne's Northern Metro region from Uniting AgeWell's Lumeah Allied Health and Therapy Services in Preston.

Fonda said the Short Term Restorative Care program was designed to improve seniors' wellbeing, help them maintain their independence and delay their need to enter long-term care.

Under the program, an eight-week care plan is designed so the person needing support can have the care provided at home, in residential aged care or a combination of the two.

Home Care client Ralph McVilly with Extended Care Assistant Noelene Reid



From January, Uniting AgeWell also began offering 19 Transition Care Community Packages (TCPs) in Northern Tasmania.

Strathdevon Manager Integrated Services Vicki Pollock said the packages provide short-term, goal-focused therapy and case management for older people who need more time to recover from a hospital stay but want to do it in their own environment.

"While it wasn't always possible for older people to return home after a hospital stay, a TCP offers numerous benefits for those who can," she said.

"For many people who prefer to be in their own home while getting back on their feet or making decisions about their future, a TCP can help."

Tasmanian resident Reginald Rigby was one of the first recipients of the TCP program, and is now recovering from a serious fall in the comfort of his own home.

"I have been spoilt rotten since accessing the program," he said. "They help with my meals, house work and garden and if I smile nicely, I even get a cup of tea!"

Meanwhile, 273 Home Care Packages (HCPs) were officially handed over to Uniting AgeWell from Swan Hill Rural City Council in mid-December. The packages significantly expand Uniting AgeWell's presence across regional and rural Victoria.

Two new regional offices have been established in Bendigo and Mildura to coordinate home care services in the Loddon Mallee. 🐦

Get in Touch

Loddon Mallee North – Mildura
240a Thirteenth St, Mildura
(03) 4026 7000

Loddon Mallee South – Bendigo
Shop 17/90 Edwards Road,
Strathdale
(03) 5454 2100

Transition Care Community Packages
Latrobe Community Services
(03) 6426 2844

Short Term Restorative Care Packages
Lumeah Allied Health and
Therapy Services
(03) 9416 8433



Student Ryan Townley-Jones chats with Manor Lakes resident Kevin Peterson

➤ Clients benefit from student placements

New residents at Uniting AgeWell's Manor Lakes Community are settling into their home and flourishing with the support of a Bachelor of Social Work student placement program.

Naomi Fraser and Ryan Townley-Jones, both completing the degree at RMIT University, commenced their placement in August last year as part of a pilot program between RMIT and Uniting AgeWell.

Manor Lakes Care Manager Kimberley Briggs said many residents loved the one-on-one interaction, especially the emotional support they received.

"The placement was initially for students to assist new residents settling into the Manor Lakes Community," she said.

"It was an opportunity for new residents who tend to isolate themselves, to receive extra social support.

"However, the students showed great initiative and were so impressive, their placement expanded to include other residents and lifestyle activities."

Naomi and Ryan now look after a case load of two to three residents at a time, as well as taking group activities – with Naomi heading up a horticultural project and Ryan the men's activities.

Ryan said the placement was an eye opener for him, bringing to light issues facing older people such as isolation and depression.

"From an advocacy perspective, I now realise how important adequate funding in aged care is," he said.

"Adequate staff and the means to engage residents through activities, makes a significant difference to the wellbeing of residents."

General Manager Victoria North West Vicky Jacques said Uniting AgeWell had also established a partnership with Swinburne University Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults, where post-graduate psychology students had been working in the organisation's Kingsville and Strath-Haven Communities.

"The extension of the program to include students from the social work field at Manor Lakes has been a most welcomed pilot initiative," she said.

"During our monthly review, RMIT, Swinburne University and Uniting AgeWell agreed the experience was really positive for both residents and students.

"Plans for more RMIT social work students to be placed at other Uniting AgeWell communities are currently in the works." 🐦



Cottage Club clients Norma Edmonds and Brenda Chapman

➤ Information to help seniors

Uniting AgeWell is helping seniors get the most out of the complex aged care system through a series of free information sessions.

From information and advice on how to be supported in your own home, understanding dementia or advance care planning, to assistance with using My Aged Care, the sessions are designed to help people make decisions wherever they are on their ageing journey.

Community Programs Coordinator Michelle Thompson said the Community Services sessions covered in-home services, social support, allied health and carer respite.

Sessions would also focus on transitioning to residential care and how to plan ahead with aged care.

To book into an information session or to find out more, contact the site numbers listed. 📞

Noble Park Community

Residential Care – March 22 – 10am – 11am

Managing Anxiety and Depression – April 11, 2pm – 4pm

Transition to Residential Care – April 28, 10am – 11am

Understanding Dementia – May 9, 2pm – 4pm

To book call Noble Park reception on 9554 0700

Manor Lakes Community, Wyndham Vale

Advance Care Planning – March 20, 2pm – 4pm

Managing Anxiety and Depression – April 24, 2pm – 4pm

Understanding Dementia – May 15, 2pm – 4pm

To book call Manor Lakes reception on 9742 7201

Uniting AgeWell Community Hub, Hobart

Australian Hearing – April 26, 10.30am – 12pm

To book call the Community Hub on 6282 1193

➤ If walls could talk



Victoria Police Sergeant Brad Forster trains 14-week-old Zev at Moorfields

Police dog training, timber recycled as home furniture for refugees, and beds donated to hospitals in Sri Lanka – Uniting AgeWell’s vacant Hawthorn site is giving back to the community in spades.

Since residents moved out of the old Broadmead and Moorfields homes about a decade ago, the site has been used in a range of ways, including for office space and storage.

But more recently, it’s become a valuable community resource.

Facility Services Project Administration Officer, Rebekah Lamb, said when the Education and Training and Infrastructure teams moved out, they offered the site to the Police Dog Squad to train their dogs specialising in areas of narcotics, explosives and general duties.

“The site is being used for a good cause as police dogs use their natural instincts to serve the community and keep citizens safe,” she said.

Victoria Police Sergeant Brad Forster said the site provided real life obstacles for the dogs, especially

for endurance and agility training, jumping over walls, climbing stairs and sniffing out hiding officers during training.

The Moorfields site was also used for the Australian and New Zealand Police Dog Trials, a forum to share information and benchmark training.

Rebekah said with the site set for demolition in the coming months to make way for a new 120-bed residential facility and 49-apartment retirement living complex, Uniting AgeWell’s values of partnership and stewardship were put into action.

“The Hawthorn Centre Men’s Shed has taken the opportunity to reuse Tasmanian Oak timber in old wardrobes and shelves and turn them into coffee tables to donate to West Welcome Wagon, an organisation that helps asylum seekers settle in our communities,” she said.

“The Wheelers Hill Lions Club will also take about 60 beds and medical equipment and donate them to hospitals in Sri Lanka.”

Construction of the new development is scheduled to begin in the next few months. 🐾



Uniting AgeWell CEO, Andrew Kinnersly, Gunaikurnai Elder Alfie Hudson and Board Chair Rev Allan Thompson

Home Care 'brilliant' for Gippsland residents

A traditional Welcome to Country by Gunaikurnai Elder, Alfie Hudson, at Uniting AgeWell's Bairnsdale Community Services office, helped mark its official opening and the symbolic transfer of 25 Level 2 Home Care Packages to the organisation from Uniting Care Gippsland.

About 40 people attended the event on February 7, including Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Rev Allan Thompson, Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly, and Uniting Care Gippsland Acting CEO Graeme Coull.

Alfie presented Uniting AgeWell with a lino print by one of his indigenous art students, which portrays the Gunaikurnai totem the Blue Wren.

Graeme handed Allan, a former Uniting Church Minister in Bairnsdale from 1971 to 1978, a Home

Care Packages "box", symbolising the wide range of tailored services provided to clients.

"This box is empty, because all home care packages are different and reflect individual choices," he said.


Paynesville resident Ruth Wilson said the home care support she and her husband Ross received from Uniting AgeWell was 'brilliant'.

"Once a week someone comes over to mow the lawn, tend to the garden and clean the floor, giving me time to look after Ross," she said.

Ruth said the package not only covered the cost of Ross' physiotherapy, but also accommodation in Melbourne during hospital visits.

"The support we receive is an asset and we're really grateful to have someone helping us and enabling us to live independently at home," she said.

The organisation's Home Care Packages in Gippsland cover the Local Government Areas of East and South Gippsland, Wellington, Latrobe, Baw Baw and Bass Coast.

For more information about home care in the Gippsland region, contact Uniting AgeWell Gippsland Community Services on 5152 9699 or visit 49 McCulloch Street, Bairnsdale. 

We appreciate your feedback and welcome any story ideas.

Contact: Communications and Social Media Advisor, John Le at JLe@unitingagewell.org or call 03 9276 5718.

Front Cover:

Client Ray Marginson exercises under the supervision of Exercise Physiologist Callum DiPierdomenico at Hawthorn Centre