

COMMUNITY

Chat

ISSUE 7, Winter 2020



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Resilience and adaptability

This past eight months have certainly challenged the Australian community on a scale we could not have imagined. First drought, then bushfires, followed by floods, and then a world-wide pandemic – COVID-19. It's been a lot to take in and respond to, and all of us have been affected in some way.

What has shone through these difficult times is just how resourceful, resilient and committed we are as individuals, families and communities to work together to care for and support each other through these challenging times.

I could not be more proud of the teams across Uniting AgeWell who have swung into action to ensure our clients – many of whom are some of the most vulnerable in our community – receive the supports they need to stay safe and well, and continue to live independently at home.

In this issue of Community Chat, you can read about some of our local heroes in Gippsland who worked tirelessly to evacuate and care for clients during the bushfires and how our teams have found creative and meaningful ways to keep people engaged and connected during COVID-19 isolation. It's amazing how quickly we have all adapted to new and different ways of doing things. And we also salute one of our oldest Australians, Chloe Duncan, who is still radiant at 109!

The reduced COVID-19 risk in Tasmania, and some parts of regional Victoria, will allow many of our centre-based programs to recommence in the weeks ahead. Sadly, in the Greater Melbourne metropolitan region there is a resurgence



of COVID-19 cases which means the recommencement of centre based-services will be further delayed.

Additional precautionary measures to further reduce the risk of infection are being introduced and our home care staff in metropolitan Melbourne are now wearing face masks when they come to visit. In COVID-19 hotspots, some non-essential services may be temporarily suspended until the situation eases, however you will be contacted directly should that apply to you and safe alternatives arranged.

You can rest assured that Uniting AgeWell always has your health, safety and wellbeing as its number one priority. If you need extra support to help you through COVID-19 or you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your local home support team or call 1300 783 435.

Please take care and remember, one of the best defences against COVID-19 is to stay at home if you can. A perfect opportunity to relax and read *Community Chat!*

Andrew Kinnersly
Chief Executive Officer
Uniting AgeWell

Uniting AgeWell's corporate office has moved. The new address is Level 6, 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne 3000. With Stage 3 Stay at Home restrictions in place and ongoing social distancing requirements, corporate office staff will continue to work from home until 30 September 2020.
Enquiries call 1300 783 435

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“They’re fabulous. They’re giving me free lessons! They helped me smarten up my garden as well,” Yvonne says.

Courtesy, Geelong Independent

Dancing out of a pandemic

An energetic octogenarian aims to dance her way out of the pandemic, when she can head back to ballet classes.

Geelong’s Yvonne Williams, 81, took up ballet earlier this year, and hopes to go back to the studio once isolation restrictions lift.

“I swapped going to the gym for adult ballet lessons,” the Belmont resident explains. “I used to dance the tango, ballroom as well as Latin-American dancing – I just love music and rhythm.”

Yvonne has also used this time and the extra support available, to spruce up her garden and learn how to join Facebook and zoom with friends and family.

She’s a client of Uniting AgeWell, and says they organised her Home Care Package to buy her a computer tablet as well as teaching her how to use it.

“They’re fabulous. They’re giving me free lessons! They helped me smarten up my garden as well,” Yvonne says.

During the pandemic, Uniting AgeWell has also been doing her grocery shopping, picking up medication from the pharmacy and organising her account payments, as well as helping with domestic duties around the house.

“I live on my own, so it’s wonderful to know they are there for me,” the published author says.

Yvonne started writing poetry in her late seventies, and one poem about cats proved to be the purrfect segue into her children’s book *The adventures of Cleo and Oscar*.

The book is based on her two cats and was published on her 80th birthday under the penname of Nanna Von – which is what her grandchildren call her.

The former opera singer and conductor of the Geelong branch of Australian Youth Choir has also been playing the organ at home during the pandemic.

Yvonne can’t speak highly enough of Uniting AgeWell Barwon Client Advisor Kaye Hollingworth, who she says has become “a very dear friend” to her.

And Kaye says the feeling is reciprocated. “My role is so much more than a job to me – the friendships that develop with clients make my days very special too.”

“It’s like that for all of us. Often when the direct care workers are finished doing whatever needs doing, they end up playing scrabble or cards with clients, or having a cuppa and a chat,” Kaye says.

Kaye’s role is to tailor a service plan and a package to suit the client’s individual needs. “Communicating with clients is key in determining exactly what they want and need.”

Designed to enable people to keep doing the things they enjoy and remain connected to their community, a Home Care Package through Uniting AgeWell is tailored to suit an individual’s needs, with a wide range of services available, from personal care, help with household chores and home maintenance, to nursing care, transport assistance and access to services in the community.

 Call 1300 783 435 for more information

The last eight months have been a case of courage under fire for Uniting AgeWell staff and clients in the Gippsland area.



Rosemary Lucas with Ross and Ros Tucker

Against all odds

They've battled extreme heat, the horror bushfires, shocking air quality, floods – and now a pandemic.

And through it all, Uniting AgeWell's super heroes – the brave direct care workers delivering services on the ground and those managing the logistical nightmares that ensued – have stoically carried on, even when they too had to evacuate their homes as fires tore through the region and bore down on Bairnsdale.

The enormity of the past months was best summed up by Uniting AgeWell's Regional Manager Home Care Melbourne, Ana Mubaslat, who quipped: "Direct care workers have stored everything in the boots of their cars. Water, toilet paper for clients, umbrellas, masks, gloves, goggles, protective suits – you name it!"

In November, the mercury rose, bringing with it extended days of unrelenting heat.

Client Liaison Officer for Bairnsdale, Cara Stuart, and Client Advisors Deb Watson and Jane Moore swung into action.

Around 25 of their home package clients were vulnerable, so they phoned up to four times a day to check if they were hydrated and keeping as cool as possible.

Then smaller bushfires broke out in northern Gippsland at the end of November and early December. Now they had to check all clients had evacuation plans in place, had packed the essentials and had somewhere safe to go.

It was challenging. There was often no phone reception. They plotted the fires on maps and kept clients in the loop.

The horror 2019 bushfires broke out at the end of the year and into 2020.

Fires tore through the northern areas and residents of Buchan, W Tree and Gelantipy were told to evacuate. Some roads were blocked, the fire kept changing direction and the smoke was impenetrable. It was frightening.

Deb, who lives in Buchan, drove to the Bairnsdale office every day with a packed suitcase in her car in case she could not get home. She later evacuated after fires lapped her fence.

The weekend before New Year, warnings sounded that a massive fire front was bearing down on Bairnsdale and that residents had to immediately evacuate.

Cara's crew and Ana and her team, including Client Advisor Nicole McKenzie and Home Care Program Manager Tina Dent, were faced with the daunting prospect of not only trying to find accommodation for clients, but tracking down 42 of whom were displaced across Gippsland and Melbourne.

“It was a nightmare,” Ana says. “We had to check whether they were okay and figure out how to continue getting home care packages to them.”

Cara and her family, who live in Metung just outside Bairnsdale, had to evacuate on three separate occasions to Melbourne and Sale.

Former CFA firefighter Rosemary Lucas is one of a team of several direct care workers in the area.

Against a backdrop of blood-orange skies, encroaching fires and dense smoke, she stoically carried on helping clients in Bairnsdale and the Sale areas.

She shrugs off any recognition for her work. “Our people need us,” Rosemary says simply. “It’s what you do.”

Her husband and both her children are firefighters, and Rosemary has a deep understanding of the impact fires can have, particularly on older people.

“I got lots of hugs from clients when I arrived at their homes with their medication and emergency supplies,” Rosemary says. “I told them there was no way I would not be there for them when they needed me most.”

The shocking air quality lingered long after the fires.

Then came the floods, with vast tracts of charred landscape underwater. But Cara says after what they had been through, no one was particularly fazed.

There was a brief lull and then COVID-19 hit.

“We couldn’t believe it,” Cara says. “It was a case of here we go again!”

Their challenge went from helping clients plan how to safely leave their homes to helping them safely isolate in their homes. With the sometimes brutal country Victorian winter an added layer of concern.

But our super heroes are made of strong stuff. And once again they’re carrying on against the odds.



*Cara's
darkest
night*

“It was after midnight on the weekend before New Year, and we had evacuated to Melbourne and were camping in the family’s backyard. My husband and my two boys were asleep. I was texting Nicole from the Oakleigh office as we were getting swamped with alerts about fires going off everywhere - including Bairnsdale and places where Uniting AgeWell staff lived.

Then there was a CFA alert on Facebook that they had run out of water and would pump from the lake at Metung and for us to expect houses to come under ember attack within the next 30 minutes.

I stared up at the sky and I thought: “It’s in the lap of the gods what happens.” At 1.10am I read that the wind had changed direction and my town was safe.

I was up at 6am planning which clients to call first.

Over this period I worked all over the place – sometimes in an office, from home, in my car, at McDonalds, at my dad’s and at my sister’s houses, in a tent and in two different motels.

Looking back, it was surreal.”

“Our direct care worker, Rosemary Lucas, is a wonderful person. She’s so caring and does such an amazing job. My husband, Ross and I can’t speak highly enough of her.”

ROS TUCKER, PAYNESVILLE

Bringing our busy centres to your living room

With clients unable to attend our AgeWell Centres during the pandemic, we've brought our hubs to your homes.

And we'll continue doing this across Melbourne, Geelong and Tasmania for as long as restrictions continue and our centres remain closed.

That's the undertaking from Uniting AgeWell Regional Manager AgeWell Centres Paul Warwick, who says individually tailored activity packs are being dropped off regularly to clients who want them – puzzles, word games, arts and crafts, whatever the person enjoys.

Many clients are benefiting from physio zoom sessions as well as exercise programs individually tailored for them by their therapist, which have been printed out and sent to them so they can keep up their fitness levels at home.

And up to 800 welfare calls are collectively made each fortnight to chat to clients and check whether they're okay.

"A positive from the pandemic is that our activity workers who only interacted with the clients at the centres, have got to know them even better," Paul says. "Because of this they can more effectively meet clients' needs and their relationships are deeper."

Creativity + Flexibility = Can Do

Paul says key to this success has been staff being flexible and having a "can do attitude".

And he's not wrong there!

Activity workers from the Box Hill and Forest Hill AgeWell Centres have drawn sketches, and produced both a play and a music recording on CDs for clients.



Program Manager for Healthy Communities, Melbourne east, Katherine Ward, says Jeremy Singham and Ilona Fajka are drawing sketches which they attach to every activity bag, which they drop off to the homes of clients who would normally attend the Forest Hill and Box Hill social support programs.

Then they notched their creativity up a decibel or two. Katherine says Jeremy and Ilona, along with fellow activity worker Kerry Haddow, recorded their own CD with them singing, playing the drums and the guitar.

"They sang familiar songs that we play in the centres, then they burned it onto a CD and popped that into the activity packages," Katherine says.

Next up, Ilona unearthed a play that had been written for the Men's Shed. The team performed and recorded the play onto CDs which also went into the activity packs.

Katherine says another special touch was when the whole team created individual wind chimes for clients, using shells, beads and a stick from the garden.

"They loved making them, and the clients love them too," she says.

Katherine says activity workers are also able to visit clients at home.



Checking in with Pam

Not only has Pam Keating really missed attending her weekly fitness and strength class at the Uniting AgeWell Hawthorn Centre during the pandemic, but her Abbotsford home was robbed and she fell and hurt her knee. However, Pam says she's on the mend and doing her exercises, thanks to the centre's exercise physiologist, who has emailed a remedial program with diagrams to help her. "Uniting AgeWell has been wonderful," she says.

Trying new things

Regional Manager Tasmania, Fiona Onslow-Agnew, got creative in reaching out to clients missing out on attending the centres in Hobart, Latrobe and Launceston.

She says activity workers have been providing specialised one-on-one care with clients, as well as setting up a house party app with clients so they can video chat to each other from their homes. Telehealth interactive physio sessions are also being held, overseen and supported by a nurse at the client's home.

Fiona and her team also used mini-vans from the Residential Aged Care fleet to take clients for drives through the countryside, to parks and to get them take-away coffee or meals while sitting in comfort.

"It was a breath of fresh air for them to see the outside world instead of the walls of their homes," Fiona explains.

Her team also delivered Easter eggs to every client, and the mums were delivered flowers for Mother's Day – over and above the activity packs of course.

At this stage, Fiona says they are hoping to soon reopen the Tasmanian AgeWell Centres with strict limits on numbers and hours and will let clients know ahead of time.



Kerry with an activity pack

Trio AgeWell – Ilona, Kerry and Jeremy



For further information about the many and varied activities on offer through our AgeWell Centres, phone **1300 783 435**.

Keeping in touch

We suddenly found ourselves in the midst of a pandemic, and it was all-systems go to implement tech-savvy solutions to keep you safe and connected during isolation. And then the magic moments started happening.

Computer tablets are proving to be the medicine in keeping you socially connected in isolation during the pandemic.

And with zoom parties, video chats and armchair virtual tours proving so popular in keeping in touch and having fun, they're here to stay and be part of your post-pandemic everyday life.

One hundred Samsung tablets and 50 smart phones were rolled out for clients across our 20 residential homes and to home care offices for staff to use with clients.

And in coming weeks, 500 Samsung tablets will be lent to the most vulnerable of clients to be used in their homes.

Uniting AgeWell's Senior Manager Research and Innovation Nina Bowes, says a technology treasure trove of ways to cope has sprung up during the pandemic.

"We had to deal with the here and now," Nina explains. "We suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a pandemic, identified a clear need, put our other research on hold, and acted fast."

Nina says the rollout to Uniting AgeWell's residential care homes occurred first because they had the strictest isolation rules.

Staff were taught how to use them, then they in turn set up video calls or zoom chats (nicknamed Zoomba-parties by the media) to enable residents to natter to friends and family.

Uniting AgeWell Lifestyle Manager Sharon Levey has been spearheading the technology revolution for the 20 residential care homes across Victoria and Tasmania.

"It was a massive learning curve for staff," Sharon says "but there was huge support in place to help and everyone coped well."

"We've done three months' work in six weeks," Sharon says, "and the technology is leading to all sorts of magic moments. Some clients even say they feel more connected to family now than ever before."

Tele-conferencing (including the use of a translation app) means a client can chat to their specialist with family members joining in the conversation. This is invaluable in keeping family members informed and included in discussions as they unfold – especially where they are scattered across the world.



Then there's the social side. And it is here that wellbeing levels are often best measured by the width of smiles and tears of joy – along with the frequent whoops and virtual high fives.

Sharon says clients are zooming, skyping and video-calling with family and friends.

With the new and old technology connected, unwell residents isolated in their rooms can zoom in via a tablet with their friends in the lounge room, and play games like celebrity heads. Along with the obligatory cuppa and a biscuit – or cheese and wine.

Then there's the fun of checking out where they grew up on Google Earth on the large TV screen and going on virtual tours around the world with Google goggles, so they can walk the streets of Paris before morning tea and row down the canals of Venice afterwards.

Sharon says a whole host of apps enable them to play crossword puzzles or stay connected on Facebook.

"It's been a massive game-changer," Sharon says. "Even when the pandemic is over, we'll continue with this technology."

She says so many clients have embraced the technical revolution.

A 95-year-old joined Facebook and started video-chatting with her family overseas. Another is following her granddaughter on TikTok (short videos on mobile phones favoured by youngsters).

Switch on to peace of mind

Uniting AgeWell has swung into action to implement UMPS, a personal monitoring technology, to help keep you safe at home, especially during the pandemic.

It includes a home smart system which uses a small device fitted onto the plug to monitor when everyday home appliances – like the kettle, bedside lamp or TV – are used.

The UMPS system learns the client's unique daily routine and the designated contact person or family member can check on their app what appliances are being switched on and off and when.

If there is a change in the pattern, for example if the bedside lamp or kettle is not turned on, then an alert will be sent to the contact person.



Another resident held a virtual birthday bash with family across the world –which he dubbed as his “best birthday yet”.

Then Sharon says there was the case of an older Tasmanian client who did not speak English and who staff communicated with via hand gestures and cue cards. The language translator app now means he's chatting away to staff, for the first time, and everyone is absolutely loving it.

Next up are home-based clients with a rollout of tablets within weeks for those who need it most.

“The idea is for our home care teams to lend them the tablets and show them how it works,” Nina says.

And first in line will be those of you who don't have the internet or computers, or who need a bit of help with technology. Or those of you who used to attend our activity centres and are now isolated while they remain closed or gradually start to reopen.

All this is easier said than done. Nina and her team have had to establish a client data base of who has what in their homes to work out who to help first.

Further down the line, Nina plans on ramping things up a bit by offering a range of apps to get those who are interested doing virtual zoom exercises, tele-chatting to the doctor or joining a social group virtually at home.

The sky, or rather the cloud - let's use computer language here! – is the limit.

Right, said Fred

Fred Don, 91, lives on his own in Geelong and was happy to have an UMPS Smart Home system installed to give his daughter peace of mind.

“It doesn't interfere with me,” Fred says. “And if it makes her happy, then it's fine by me.”

And it does make Linda Nott happy.

She also lives in Geelong, and was worried about her Dad living alone, especially during a pandemic.

Linda laughed, but was not reassured, when Fred jokingly told her: “My dear, I promise I'll phone you if I am about to die.”

“I'm glad he had it installed,” Linda says. “It stops me from worrying.”

 For further information on the Smart Home system, contact your local Uniting AgeWell Home Support team or call **1300 783 435**.

Making a meal of whatever tickles your tastebuds

After a lifetime of being bombarded by information on what you can and can't eat, now's your chance to eat pretty much whatever takes your fancy - and to enjoy your meals.

That's the advice from Uniting AgeWell's dietician Philippa Spence, who has years' of experience under her belt and a deep understanding of the real issues facing older people.

And she says at this stage of your lives – unless your doctor has told you otherwise – eat your favourite foods, have a glass of wine with dinner if you want to, and be happy.

Philippa says the biggest challenge facing older people boils down to one thing: not eating enough.

She warns malnutrition can set in through struggling to eat through problems with teeth or dentures, swallowing, medication side-effects or difficulties getting to the shops and preparing meals. And then there's the infamous easy-to-make but nutrition-poor tea and plain toast meal which she dubs as an absolute "no-no".

What's on her menu for healthy eating? Pretty much anything, as long as you're eating protein three times a day, and having lots of fibre washed down with lots of liquids to make sure your stomach works.

"Let rip, enjoy your meals, and make every mouthful count."

So, how does it all work?

Philippa says protein maintains muscle mass which increases your strength which in turn reduces your risk of falling. It also increases your energy levels and helps fight infection.

"Eat whatever protein tickles your palate," is her sage advice.

So for breakfast how about eggs, bacon, peanut butter on toast, cheese or yoghurt? Open a can of baked beans if you like. Wholegrain bread is better, but if the seeds get stuck in



your teeth, it's okay to have sourdough or high fibre white bread.

Her advice for morning and afternoon tea is pretty sweet too. "Whatever you want, as long as it does not make you too full to eat the next meal of the day."

Hello piece of cake, biscuit or chocolate bar. Just remember Philippa's golden rule: Enjoy it!

She says when it comes to lunch and dinner, don't fret about fat. It's okay to add butter or cheese to dishes. Tastebuds dull over the years, so add in flavour with herbs, spices, pepper and a sprinkle of salt. Think tasty stews, cottage pie, meat or fish with potatoes or rice.

Remember, there's plenty of fibre, and vitamins, in fruit and veggies. Once again Philippa advocates the no-fuss approach. Fresh, tinned and frozen veggies are all good, so if your can-do approach is to open a can, that's fine. Fruit juice is high in sugar and has no fibre, so it's better to eat an orange or some other fruit.

Philippa believes in going with the flow when it comes to keeping your fluids up. If you don't like water, tea and coffee will do the trick.

Her final tip: when you cook, make extra and freeze it for another day.



If you need some help with meal preparation or assistance with shopping, speak to your local Uniting AgeWell Home support team or call **1300 783 435**.



Philippa's lamb shank and barley soup

Ingredients:

- 2 lamb shanks
- 1 large brown onion, finely diced
- 2 stalks celery, finely diced
- 2 carrots, finely diced
- 1 parsnip finely diced
- 1 swede/turnip finely diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce or Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup pearl barley

Method:

- Place lamb shanks in a large pot and cover with cold water. Boil for 1 ½ hours
- Finely chop vegetables OR place in a food processor until finely chopped
- Add vegetables, bay leaf, tomato paste and soy sauce and continue to simmer for another hour
- Remove shanks and shred meat
- Add pearl barley and cook a further 30 minutes
- Return meat to pan and warm through
- Add salt and pepper to taste
- Serve with crusty bread
- Suitable to freeze

Getting through

The coronavirus has literally turned everything on its head and is challenging us in different ways.

So, what can you do to avoid feelings of frustration, anxiety and uncertainty?

“Cut yourself some slack – it’s okay not to feel okay,” is the message from Uniting AgeWell’s Health and Safety Director Kristy Rebecca.

“When we first entered the pandemic, we all felt stoic and determined to do our bit to stay safe and fight it,” Kristy says.

And then it dragged on. And on. And that’s where things are at.

“Accept that you are sick and tired of it all and want your old life back. Accept that you’re anxious, frustrated – even angry. You may even feel a sense of grief.”

“Some of you may feel neither happy nor sad – just somewhere between. This is quite normal, even without the pressures of a pandemic.”

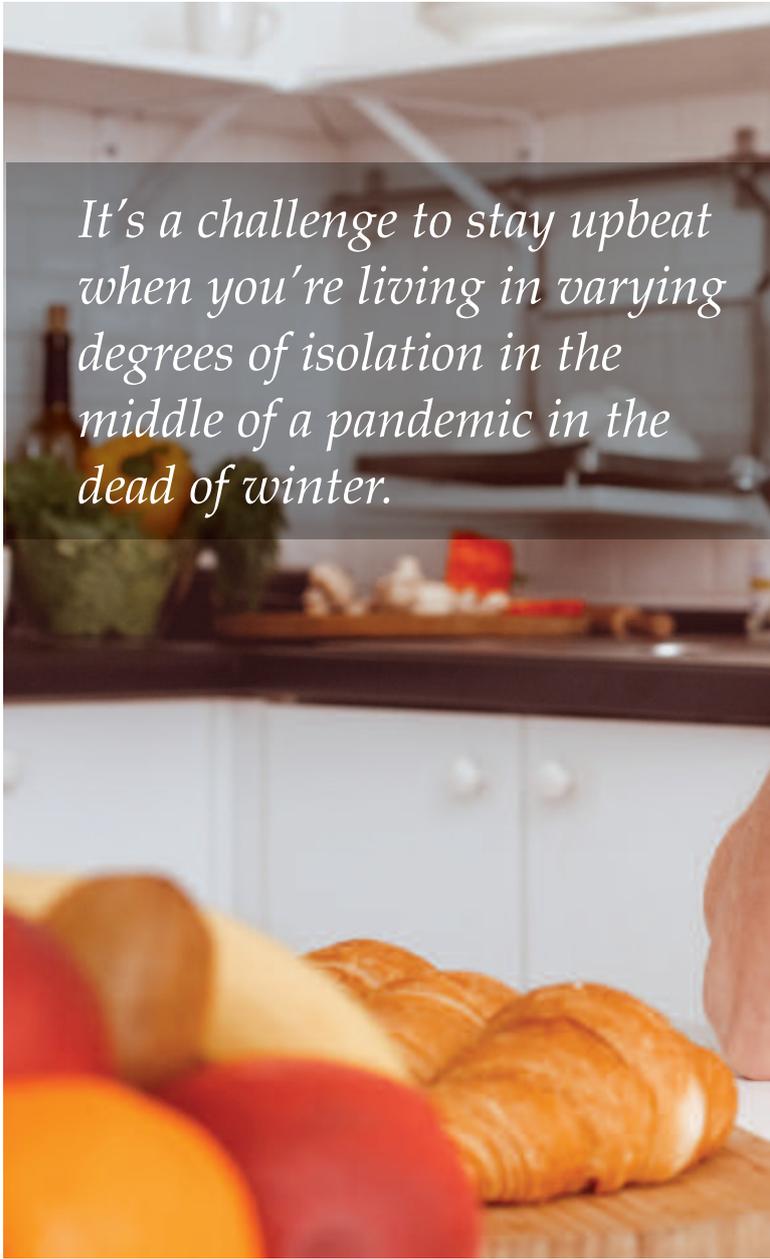
Black Dog Institute senior clinical psychologist and researcher Professor Vijaya Manicavasagar, says now more than ever, people are struggling with loneliness as restrictions prevent visits to friends, children and grandchildren, and in some cases, partners.

“When we’re anxious, we want to be close to the people that we’re attached to, people that will give us a feeling of comfort and security,” Prof Manicavasagar says.

And she says that while zoom screen time keeps us connected with friends and family, our instinct is to want to be with them in person.

Prof Manicavasagar says disconnection can drive anxiety. And she says while impromptu chats are fine, scheduling regular virtual catch-ups with friends and family can build stability and predictability in an otherwise uncertain period.

Uniting AgeWell’s Director of Mission, Rev Clare Brockett, says we all learn that nothing in life remains the same.



It’s a challenge to stay upbeat when you’re living in varying degrees of isolation in the middle of a pandemic in the dead of winter.

“In this time of pandemic, of winter, of uncertainty, it helps us to remind ourselves of what has helped us move through difficult times in the past. For some, it may be your faith, your religious belief, reading sacred books, prayer or meditation,” Clare says.

“For some, it may be remembering where you come from, the earth, land, country, and family that has shaped you. For some it may be talking about what matters most, exploring the bigger questions of life, the mystery.”

Clare suggests to remind yourself of these things, look at the photos that tell your story, ring somebody and chat about old times.

“When you cannot make the connections you need, find ways to acknowledge this hard reality. Seek another voice, or help if needs be, to let you remember what really matters to you.”



Kristy's advice

- › Stay as connected with family and friends as possible. Embrace new technology, like zooming and skype, try to get onto Facebook. Reach out to people who can help you achieve this – like your Uniting AgeWell Client Advisor.
- › Read or listen to audio books, watch a movie or TV, listen to the radio. It's pleasurable and listening to the news will also keep you in touch with the outside world so you see the bigger picture and are reminded that isolation affects us all.
- › Use this time to start a new hobby, like painting or sorting through your photo albums. It affords pleasure and makes the hours go by faster.
- › Go outside. Even if you rug up with a jacket and walk to your post box, it's good to feel the fresh air on your face. Try and sit out in the sun for a while. It will do you a power of good.
- › Human touch is important. Some of you may be yearning for a hug. Acknowledge this and look forward to the time when this will happen.

The one thing Kristy insists on is that you are in tune with your feelings and reach out for help if your mood spirals down and before it gets really low.



Helpline numbers that operate around the clock:
Lifeline – 13 11 14
Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636



How we can help you

Uniting AgeWell is pulling out all the stops to help you through the pandemic.

We can boost your existing Commonwealth-funded Home Care Package or Home Support Programme services – or we can provide short-term services to help you cope.

Importantly, if you have been affected by COVID-19 or are in self-isolation, urgent or immediate services can be put in place for up to six weeks, without the need for an assessment.

So how can we help?

- › There's personal care and domestic assistance, escorted travel to essential medical appointments, meals on wheels, nursing care and more.
- › We'll do your essential shopping or take you to the stores and to the pharmacy. And we'll unpack the items too.
- › We can assist you to stay socially connected during periods of isolation by providing you with a computer tablet and teaching you how to use it, so you'll soon be able to skype or zoom with family and friends or surf the internet.
- › Our allied health specialists can arrange for an exercise program to help you keep fit, or can arrange for a physiotherapist or occupational therapist to visit you at home.
- › We can install smart home technology to keep you safe, with a simple but clever app that plugs into frequently used household items like the kettle, fridge or TV, to learn your daily routine. So if things suddenly change, an alert will be sent to your go-to contact person.
- › We can help you fill in an emergency pet care list, including your pet's favourite food, toys, and routine. So if you can't take care of your pet, we can assist.
- › We'll help you fill in an emergency contact list – from your doctor through to your power supply company, the SES, insurance details and more. All in one handy document.

i To find out more, contact your local Uniting AgeWell Home Support team or call **1300 783 435**.

A whole lot of life

Tasmania's Chloe Duncan celebrated her 109th birthday with bubbly and cake – seemingly unfazed that it fell in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic.

But then Chloe has always taken things in her stride.

She's coped with two World Wars, two pandemics (the Spanish flu was in 1918), the Great Depression, being carried out of her bedroom window by her husband who put her in a boat and rowed her to the hospital to have their first child during the 1929 Tasmanian floods, and a whole lot in between.

The Launceston resident celebrated her May 27 birthday with a few family members and staff at her Uniting AgeWell Newnham Community, Aldersgate Village home, where she has lived for the past 18 months.

Chloe wore pearls and had her hair done to mark the milestone, which makes her arguably the oldest person in Tasmania and one of the oldest in Australia.

One of her 11 children, Joy Fitch, 88, organised the birthday bash and said her mum just loved it.

"I bought her an apricot bed jacket for the occasion. Mum loves clothes. She always used to dress like the Queen, with matching handbag and gloves."



Chloe also found herself in the public spotlight. Her birthday was featured on television on both Channel Seven and the ABC, and also ran in The Examiner.

Chloe was born in 1911 in Launceston and married Alfred Duncan in 1928. The couple had 11 children – seven boys and four girls - with Alfred passing away in 1977.

"She loved planting veggies," Joy said. "It was her passion. Even at the age of 105 she would spend hours in the garden".

Chloe has always maintained the secret to a long life is happiness.



Inventions during Chloe's earlier life

- 1913** – crossword puzzles, zips and the bra
- 1919** – pop-up toaster
- 1920's** – frozen food, hair dryers
- 1921** – plasters (Band-Aids)
- 1923** – hearing aids
- 1928** – recliner chairs, bubble gum and ice cube trays
- 1936** – electric blanket, suntan lotion
- 1938** – ballpoint pen

News as it happens



Check us out on Facebook at [UnitingAgeWell](#) or our website to see important news, announcements and events unfold as they happen. It's a great way to stay connected, and to also have your say by commenting on our posts.

Coming up

A difficult conversation

Dying to Know Day is on August 8. It's Australia's biggest conversation about death, dying and bereavement. [dyingtoknow.org](#)



Lefties rejoice!

August 13 is the 30th annual Left Handers Day, so share all your stories on our Facebook post about coping in a world designed for right handers.



Lest we forget

Vietnam Veterans' Day is on 18 August and this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.



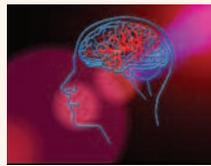
Cause to hope

Daffodil Day is August 28 and is your chance to support the work of the Cancer Council of Australia.



National Stroke Week

From August 31 to September 6, it emphasises that early detection and treatment are vital. [strokefoundation.org.au](#)



Dementia awareness

September is Dementia Awareness Month with heaps of activities to help all those affected to get the most out of life. [dementia.org.au](#)



Flower power

National Gardening Week runs from 11- 17 October, so keep an eye out for tips, events and more.



NAIDOC Week

From November 8-15, the theme is Always Was, Always Will Be and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Ensuring your wellbeing

During the COVID-19 pandemic, some older people may have chosen to suspend or reduce their home support services for fear of contracting the virus. While Uniting AgeWell is providing wellbeing checks over the phone to clients, some may need or want some extra social and emotional support.

The Commonwealth Government is working with OPAN (Older Persons Advocacy Network) to provide a complementary service of wellbeing checks, to ensure no older Australian falls through the cracks.

If you or someone you know would benefit from this additional contact, referrals (with the person's consent) can be made by Uniting AgeWell, loved ones, carers and community members to OPAN on 1800 237 981 or email covid@opan.com.au

We're 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.

If you do not wish to receive future issues of Community Chat email: mcr@unitingagewell.org or call 1300 783 435

 **1300 783 435**

 **unitingagewell.org**