

COMMUNITY

Chat

ISSUE 3, SPRING 2017



Living and ageing well

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

What does 'community' mean to you? For me, it's about a strong network of friends, the people I work with, and the groups and activities I'm part of. All of these are about human connections and being involved in our broader society.

I'm sure some of these points are relevant to everyone, no matter their age. But as we get older, it becomes harder to maintain these connections, so those we do have are even more integral to our wellbeing.

Community Service programs, like those provided by Uniting AgeWell, are a great way for seniors to continue to be part of a community in a way that is relevant to them.

It could be through joining one of our seniors' gyms to remain fit and active, or a social group to get you out and about. It might be about having some assistance in the home so you can get on with the more important things in life, or support through carer respite.

Uniting AgeWell has a strong focus on Community Services and providing care and support that meets the needs of a broad range of people. It reflects our vision to be a creative leader enabling communities to age well and individuals to live to their potential.



Now is a great time to find out how Uniting AgeWell can help you to do just that. This edition of *Community Chat* shows how we are supporting people across Victoria and Tasmania, and offers great tips and advice on ways to stay active and connected.

We are constantly reviewing the services and care we provide to our clients. Your feedback helps us ensure we continue to provide you with the services you want and need to live and age well at home, and remain part of your community.

Andrew Kinnersly
Uniting AgeWell CEO

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NAVIGATING THE AGED CARE MAZE

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, to preparing for your assessment, right through to understanding letters MAC sends. We will keep in contact with you throughout the whole process and answer all of your questions.

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 Community Referral Coordinators conduct regular information sessions with service groups, community centres and churches, and seniors events throughout Victoria.



For information about our upcoming information sessions, or to arrange one for your community service group, call us on **1300 783 435**.

Where to go

My Aged Care website: 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

SELF CARE TIPS FOR CARERS

Caregiving can be a demanding role. While the care and support of older people is really important, so is the wellbeing of the many valued carers in our community.

While it may not come naturally, it is important that carers take time to look after themselves and refresh. At the very least it will ensure that they have the best to offer the person they care for.

The following tips are designed to assist carers in looking after themselves:

1. Eat well and exercise
2. Attend to your spiritual health
3. Share your feelings
4. Try writing your feelings down
5. Have a break from your caring role
6. Schedule time for yourself
7. Ask for help
8. Use community resources
9. Seek emotional support from family and friends
10. Maintain facets of your life that support your own individuality

For those carers who do need a break, Uniting AgeWell offers a range of in-home and community respite options across Victoria and Tasmania.

For more information on Uniting AgeWell's carer respite services, contact your local respite team, or call 1300 783 435.

MEETING A DIVERSE RANGE OF NEEDS

Each week Lanh Thi Lam sets off on an adventure with Uniting AgeWell.

The 80-year-old Vietnamese grandmother catches up with friends while visiting places like Footscray Market or sharing a Vietnamese meal.

Lanh is a member of Uniting AgeWell's Vietnamese Transit Group in Noble Park, which offers culturally-appropriate outings for people from Vietnam four days a week.

Her daughter and carer, Hong Danh, says the twice-weekly outings are wonderful for her and her mother.

"If I have to do something for myself or my kids, I do it on the days mum's with the group," she says. "It's good for her as well, because she gets to interact with people her own age and keeps her away from depression. She really looks forward to the days she goes."

Providing support to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds is becoming more important as people from these communities age.

Last year Uniting AgeWell developed a Diversity Plan to identify and address barriers for people from the CALD community in accessing aged care services.

It also sought to form partnerships with key organisations and develop new programs to accommodate the needs and preferences of CALD communities.

Uniting AgeWell Community Programs Manager South East Region Ana Mubaslat says people from CALD communities want to be involved in experiences and outings that are appropriate to their backgrounds.

The Vietnamese Transit Group is one of many social support groups offered by Uniting AgeWell that are tailored to the needs of a particular group.

The Carer Respite Services team offers a Tamil Outing Group once a week in the Melbourne's south, while the Noble Park Community hosts a social group run by the Southern Migrant Refugee Centre.



The Girrawheen Centre in Brighton runs a fortnightly social group for Chinese people, and over in Kingsville they also offer a Vietnamese group.

At the Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Centre, more than 50 per cent of clients are from a CALD background. Staff are available to offer translations and programs are designed to cater to the cultural sensitivities of clients, who are mostly Greek and Italian.

“The demographic of older people in these areas is changing,” Ana said. “We have more people from these cultures and we are working to ensure we provide appropriate programs for them.”

 For more information about our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) services, call Uniting AgeWell’s Community Respite Services on 03 9089 1900.

Home support funding increased in Tasmania

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) has expanded across northern Tasmania. The program, which previously comprised only social support, now also includes both domestic assistance and flexible respite in the north, and flexible respite in the northwest.

The expanded program means older people can receive up to one hour of household cleaning assistance each week, excluding gardening. They may also have their shopping delivered to home, firewood collected (in remote areas), or their household linen washed.

Flexible respite arrangements are also available. The Commonwealth Government has included in-home or community respite to the CHSP in north and northwest Tasmania.

Eligible people may receive three to four hours of respite per week, with the possibility of overnight respite. In-home day respite can also provide daytime support services for carers in the carer’s or client’s home.

For more information about domestic and flexible respite in Tasmania, please contact a Uniting AgeWell office near you or call 1300 783 435.



BEING SAFE AT HOME

Most people aged 65 and older plan to continue living independently for as long as possible. The increasing availability of government-subsidised support packages is making it possible for people to stay at home longer.

Unfortunately, falls or other safety risks often result in people having to enter aged care communities earlier than they had planned. The good news is there are many simple things you can do to improve safety at home.

Being active, managing medications, prioritising health, improving balance, having good posture, wearing the best footwear, checking your eyesight regularly, eating well and removing hazards will all improve safety at home.

Regular physical exercise is a great way to manage health. It may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and some cancers and osteoporosis. It can also

increase muscle strength, improve recovery after a period of hospitalisation or bed rest and improve wellbeing.

Exercise may also prevent falls, which are the leading cause of injury-related deaths, hospital admissions and emergency department presentations in Victorians aged 65 and older. Exercise Progressive Resistance training to strengthen muscles, especially the lower limbs, is the most effective method for falls prevention.

When introducing exercise to your daily life, start slowly and find something you enjoy. Many people choose walking because it is the most functional movement, but Tai Chi, yoga and other forms of exercise are also effective.

Thirty minutes of activity at least five days a week is enough to generate good health outcomes. Exercise can be broken into three 10-minute sessions. The activity should make you breathe a bit faster and your heart pump a bit harder, but you should still be able to talk whilst doing the activity. Joining exercise classes with a qualified instructor will enable you to exercise safely.

Having safety on your mind at all times is increasingly important as you age. When the phone rings or someone knocks on the door, taking your time getting there could make all the difference. Avoiding climbing up ladders or on top of chairs to do things around the home is also important.

Removing hazards from around your home will reduce the risk of falls and help you stay safe at home. Hazards could include trip hazards, slip hazards, sharp corners, uneven surfaces or hazards that are difficult to see.

Walking through your home and writing down a list of any potential hazards is a great place to start. With the help of friends, family or professionals, you can remove or reduce hazards – including any clutter, dangerous furniture, cords, loose objects and spills.

The most important thing to remember is that you are not alone. There are many services and health professionals available to help older people stay safe at home. General practitioners are available to provide medication reviews and referrals to appropriate specialists, if necessary.

You may also choose to see a physiotherapist for exercises; an occupational therapist for a home safety assessment; a podiatrist for foot advice; a dietician to monitor weight; an incontinence advice specialist; or a falls prevention team at a local hospital.

 **Uniting AgeWell offers these services and can help people who need assistance accessing care, or improving safety in their home. Contact us today on 1300 783 435.**

Statistics on falls

Did you know...

- One-third of adults aged 65 or older experience a fall.
- Two million older adults seek emergency care for injuries related to falls.
- Research shows muscle strengthening and balance retraining exercise programs are effective in reducing both the risk and rate of falls.

Reducing hazards at home

Here are some quick tips for keeping safe at home:

1. Arrange furniture to provide ample space to walk.
2. Install sensor or movement-activated lights to illuminate passageways.
3. In cupboards, store lighter items up higher and heavy items lower.
4. Full length handrails on both sides of steps are preferable when stairs are higher than 50cm off the ground.
5. To measure the best bed height: if you sit at the edge of the bed, the heels of your feet should be able to touch the floor.
6. When getting out of a chair, slightly shuffle forward in the chair, put your strongest leg slightly more to the front and slightly apart, push down with your hands on the arm rests and lean slightly to the front (nose over toes rule), bring your bottom up by moving forwards and upwards.
7. Use a seat in the shower or bath for stability.
8. Sit down to dry after washing, and to dress.
9. Wear well-fitting, comfortable and slip-resistant shoes.
10. When walking, beware of uneven surfaces caused by tree roots.



GETTING BACK ON YOUR FEET, AT HOME

Mario Schiabel stands tall in his living room, pumping his fists into the air with rhythmic vigour.

Six months ago this would have been near impossible. With a history of Type I diabetes and following pancreatic surgery, the 81-year-old had become weak and unable to walk.

This left him increasingly isolated and unable to get out and about in the community as he used to, and completely reliant on his wife Nives.

His GP recommended he try a Uniting AgeWell Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) package to help him regain his strength and mobility.

Funded by the Federal Government, the packages provide people with short-term care of up to eight weeks to help them get back on their feet and improve their quality of life, so they can remain at home and regain independence or improve ability.

What makes this program different, is that services like physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other allied health services are provided in a person's own home so they don't have to visit external clinics, plus they have access to other home care services to support their independence.

Mario was assisted with a physio program, including strengthening exercises, ramps were installed in his home and a walking frame provided to assist his mobility.

Nives says Mario is now a different man, feeling more independent and confident. "Since the eight-week program Mario is moving around better and he has become stronger," Nives said.

Uniting AgeWell received Government funding in February this year to provide 10 Short-Term Restorative Care packages to people in Melbourne's north.

i To find out more about the Short-Term Restorative Care packages, contact 9416 8433.



HUR HELPS SENIORS AGE WELL

Uniting AgeWell officially launched two more state-of-the-art Helsinki University Research (HUR) Gyms in November.

Using a Smart Card programming system and air resistance, the HUR Gym equipment enables users to work to a safe, tailored program that can be followed independently, but with constant monitoring and updating by trained allied health staff.

HUR Gym was first introduced at Uniting AgeWell's Forest Hill Allied Health and Therapy Centre in 2015 and was embraced by community members, clients, general practitioners and allied health professionals. More than 350 people now use the gym each week.

HUR Gyms were launched at Uniting AgeWell's Community Hub Oakleigh and Allied Health and Therapy Centre in Noble Park and are expected to attract similar results.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly officially opened the gyms on Wednesday, November 8.

Members of the public are invited to call their local HUR Gym to arrange an appointment for a free trial with one of our trained staff.

Community Programs Manager Ana Mubaslat says remaining active as people age is an essential ingredient to maintaining physical health and mental wellbeing. The HUR gym has played an important role in helping many seniors do that.

"Working in partnership with our customers, we co-design and create innovative service options to ensure their experience of ageing is one of choice, control, independence and wellbeing," she said.

Mima Mitchell is one client who is reaping the benefits of the HUR gym. One of the first people to sign up, she now feels stronger and more agile.

"It's a restrained program where you can just do it at your own pace," she said.

"It's all geared to your body by the exercise physiologist, and it's good to have other people around to support each other."



For more information about the HUR Gyms call Oakleigh on 9568 0466, Noble Park on 9554 0700 or Forest Hill on 9845 3114.

Membership levels

There are three membership levels – silver, gold and platinum – each offering different benefits.

For approved applicants, the use of our HUR Gyms can be funded through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

For more information about the HUR Gym membership benefits and fees, or to arrange an appointment for a free trial, call us on 1300 783 435.

ONE PLACE FOR ALL YOUR SERVICES

Uniting AgeWell can manage all your aged care needs, from in-home domestic support to allied health and respite through to residential care.

Using one organisation that understands your needs ensures continuity of care; good communication between doctors, physiotherapists and care staff; and reduces paperwork.

Uniting AgeWell supports about 7,000 people each year and can look after you:

- Community Home Support Programme (CHSP) services, including allied health and therapy services, carer respite, social support and some domestic and personal assistance.
- Home Care Packages (HCP), providing care and support to people living at home, such as personal care, domestic and personal support, transport, clinical care and assistive technology.
- Home Care Packages delivered to people in retirement living. Uniting AgeWell has many independent living options across Victoria and Tasmania.
- Residential aged care providing 24/7 nursing care and support. Uniting AgeWell has 20 residential aged care communities in Victoria and Tasmania, with new sites at Hawthorn and Preston due for completion in late 2019.

If you are receiving some, or all, of your aged care services from another provider, now is a great time to consider rolling all your services into Uniting AgeWell.



To find out how you can have all your services managed by us, speak to one of our Community Referral Coordinators. They will discuss all your options and point out any obligations you may have to your current provider.

Navigating the aged care system can be very complicated and working out the differences between various aged care providers can be challenging. To make it easier for you to understand what sets Uniting AgeWell apart, here is a quick snapshot of the benefits of one of our Home Care Packages:

- Between 2.25 and 16 hours of extra care per week compared to other organisations
- Low administration costs
- Unlimited access to 24/7 service coordination
- No entry fees
- Free first visit from your Client Advisor
- Free clinical nurse assessment and plan (Level 3/4)
- Free physiotherapist health and wellness plan (Level 3/4)
- Improved financial invoicing and accuracy
- Trusted services delivered by reliable, local people

 For more information call us on 1300 783 435 and speak to one of our Community Referral Coordinators.

Billing system gets an upgrade

Uniting AgeWell is implementing a new information system to provide clients with greater transparency, choice and value for money.

Community Services clients across Victoria and Tasmania are already benefiting from the new system. Barwon and North West Melbourne regions are coming on stream in December, and Loddon Mallee early in the new year.

The new system enables Uniting AgeWell to manage client information and financials more efficiently. In time, clients will also be able to access their own information online.

Under the new system, Home Care Package clients' income and expenses are clearly outlined in their monthly statements. It is also easier to keep track of the care and support Uniting AgeWell has provided, including how much of a client's budget has been used.

Community client invoices will also be reformatted to allow payment via direct debit, BPAY and Post Bill Pay. Everyone will receive a letter explaining the change prior to it being introduced in their region.

HOME CARE HELPS MIRIAM TAKE CONTROL

When Miriam Paronavitana moved from her family home of 38 years into retirement living, she felt overwhelmed and had withdrawn from many of the social activities she had previously enjoyed.

But since taking up a Home Care Package with Uniting AgeWell, she feels in control again and is back doing the things she loves.

“When I first came to Uniting AgeWell I was feeling so lost,” says Miriam. “I had lost motivation and was not really looking after my home as I like to, or myself.

“I had also stopped driving my car, which meant I wasn’t able to get out and about anymore.”

“Now I feel more independent and confident – with my carers by my side. I tell them what I want to do and I do it, together with them.”

Miriam receives weekly support including help with cleaning and transport.

Uniting AgeWell understands how important it is for seniors to exercise control over the care they receive and have the best support available to achieve their individual goals.



Uniting AgeWell Community Services Manager Louise Harvey said all Home Care Packages were different and tailored to the individual needs of clients.

“Our packages are flexible and may include help with cleaning and gardening around the home, social engagement activities, allied health services or assistance with personal care such as showering,” she said.

“They go a long way in assisting seniors to remain at home through the provision of physical and social support measures, and are all about supporting seniors to live well as they age.”

i For more information about home care, or for assistance with accessing My Aged Care, contact the Uniting AgeWell team on 1300 783 435.

In brief

UA TV commercial receives award

Uniting AgeWell’s television commercial featuring our home care services has won a Silver Award at this year’s Australian Institute of Professional Photography Awards. Watch the commercial on our YouTube channel.

Carer Respite Services has moved

Uniting AgeWell Carer Respite Services, servicing southern, eastern, and western metro Melbourne has moved to the Oakleigh Community Hub, 68-72 Atherton Road, Oakleigh VIC 3122. For more information or to discuss your respite needs, call our respite services team on (03) 9089 1900.

Update for Home Care Package clients

Uniting AgeWell now offers two support levels – the Premium Package and the Everyday Essentials Package – which allow clients to choose the level of involvement they want in coordinating their services. Call our Client Advisors on 1300 783 435 for more information.

Inaugural LGBTI Week

Uniting AgeWell celebrated its inaugural Celebrating LGBTI Week in August 2017. The week was designed to demonstrate our commitment to the LGBTI community and to help educate staff and residents about issues faced by this group.

For the diary

November

Community Services Information Showcase –
21 November, Mount Waverley
Contact: Community Referral Coordinator Rebecca
Sieber, 9845 3135, or Phil Thewlis, 9680 0414.

Hawthorn Centre Christmas Fete – 25 November,
Hawthorn
Contact: Uniting AgeWell Hawthorn Centre, 9815 0155.

Carers Australia Victoria dementia information series –
multiple dates, Footscray
Contact: Carers Australia Victoria, 1800 242 636 or
education@carersvictoria.org.au

Amarco Apartments Open Days – multiple dates,
Kingsville
Contact: Amarco Sales and Marketing Coordinator
Anita Ukalovic, 9680 0500 or
AUkalovic@unitingagewell.org



December

Christmas Bake Stall, 9 December, Kingsville
Contact: Amarco Sales and Marketing Coordinator
Anita Ukalovic, 9680 0500 or
AUkalovic@unitingagewell.org

Colebrook trip – 10 December, Colebrook, Tasmania
Contact: David Johnston at the Cottage Club,
6282 1193.

Christmas Luncheon – 13 December, South Arm,
Tasmania
Contact: Cottage Club, 6282 1150 or Community Hub,
6282 1193.

Amarco Apartments Open Days – multiple dates,
Kingsville
Contact: Amarco Sales and Marketing Coordinator
Anita Ukalovic, 9680 0500 or
AUkalovic@unitingagewell.org

February

Hobart Cup – February 11, Glenorchy, Tasmania
Contact: David Johnston at the Cottage Club,
6282 1193.

Noble Park HUR Gym Come-and-Try Day – 14 February,
Noble Park
Contact: Uniting AgeWell Allied Health and Therapy
Centre Noble Park, 9554 0700.

My Aged Care Information Session – 21 February,
Moonah, Tasmania
Contact: The Community Hub, 6282 1193.

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.