

COMMUNITY

Chat

ISSUE 4, WINTER 2018



Living and ageing well

INVESTING TO KEEP YOU ACTIVE

Being an aged care provider means more than caring for people in residential facilities, or providing help at home. It's about supporting older people to remain independent and well for as long as possible.

Uniting AgeWell's allied health and therapy services and state-of-the-art gyms for older people are designed to keep our clients active, connected to their community and peers and ensure they are safe while exercising.

Over the past 12 months, we have invested more than \$300,000 into our seniors gyms at Noble Park and Oakleigh to help keep people active using air-resistance machines and smart-card technology. Exercising at these gyms has the potential to reduce falls risks, improve overall health and wellbeing and delay the need for residential care.

Our Research and Development Team has been working on a really exciting project. Over the next few months we will start rolling out new health and wellness hubs that will raise the standard of senior fitness. I look forward to sharing updates about this in future editions of *Community Chat*.

Over the past six months we have seen phenomenal growth in the number of home care packages we deliver. With a 20 per cent increase in home care clients since December 2017, we now deliver support services to older people right across Victoria and Tasmania.



Through our packages we're able to support more people like Barbara Byford to continue living an active and independent life. Barbara's story is featured in this edition of *Community Chat*.

We're really encouraged that more and more people are choosing Uniting AgeWell for their home care packages.

We are fast-becoming a one-stop shop for all of your service needs. Whether it is help at home, social or carer support, day respite, or allied health and therapy services you need, we can help you.

We will continue to invest in our Community Services and wellness initiatives to ensure older Australians can live and age well.

Andrew Kinnersly
CEO Uniting AgeWell

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BUDGET COMMITMENTS FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS



The Federal Budget 2018 was released in May amid a flurry of media stories about the winners and losers. But what does the Federal Budget mean for older Australians? Below, Uniting AgeWell outlines some of the key announcements for older people.

Pensioners

The Pension Work Bonus has been extended to allow pensioners to earn an extra \$50 a fortnight without reducing their pensions.

The Pension Loan Scheme has been expanded to allow the use of home equity to boost retirement income up to \$17,787 a year for a full-rate pensioner.

Living at home

Twenty million dollars has been committed to support isolated older Australians.

The new \$19.3 million Skills and Training Incentive program will assist older workers who want to upskill to remain in employment.

A \$1.6 billion investment over the next four years will increase the number of home care packages available to older Australians living at home by 14,000.

Living in residential aged care

More than \$80 million will be invested in psychological services for residential aged care.

A \$32.8 million commitment will improve palliative care for people living in residential aged care.

All older Australians

To protect older Australians from elder abuse, the new independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has been introduced. It will fund the establishment of specialist elder abuse units in legal services.

Playing catch-up with home care

While the release of additional home care packages is positive, it will not meet the huge demand for home care services. Based on the latest government reports, over 100,000 people are waiting for home care packages.

FREE INFORMATION SESSIONS

Uniting AgeWell is hosting free community information sessions across Victoria and Tasmania to help older people understand complex and emotional topics, like mental health and legally protecting their assets.

At the free **Planning Ahead Information Sessions**, attendees will hear from external presenters, local community partners and Uniting AgeWell experts.

The remaining sessions for 2018 include Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care in August, Grief and Loss in September and Your Wellbeing, Your Plan in October.

Information sessions are being held at:

Victoria:

- Noble Park Community
- Manor Lakes Community
- Strathdon Community, Forest Hill

Tasmania:

- Mornington Community, Lillian Martin
- Queenborough Rise Community, Sandy Bay
- Alternating between Kings Meadows Community and Newnham Community, Launceston
- Alternating between Hobart Community Hub and Rosetta Community, Berriedale



For more information, visit unitingagewell.org/planning or call T: 1300 783 435.



PREVENT WINTER BLUES

During the winter months, the temperature drops, the rain sets in, the days get shorter and it becomes difficult to spend time outdoors. The risk of 'winter blues' or 'seasonal depression' and isolation can be particularly concerning for older people.

Uniting AgeWell Community Programs Manager Ana Mubaslat says there are many things older people can do to feel connected during the winter months.

"It's really important to continue participating in your community and spending time with friends and family as much as you can during the cooler months," she said.

"You might need to change the way you do things in winter, but you should still make time to be social.

"You might invite your family to your house for a cup of tea instead of going out, take a taxi instead of walking to local community events, or use technology like a smart tablet or your phone to connect remotely with friends when leaving the house is too difficult."

On those days when leaving the house is too hard, Ana says older people should do something they enjoy indoors.

"There is always something you can do inside at home to ensure you don't feel isolated," she said.

"It could be anything that brings you joy or stimulates your brain – a crossword, a puzzle, reading a book, baking, knitting, scrapbooking or making model planes."

Uniting AgeWell can assist older people by organising social outings or connecting people with social groups, through its Social Support and Carer Respite programs.

"We have a variety of programs and groups – including Men's Sheds, gardening groups and dementia-specific respite options – that people can get involved with to reduce isolation during the winter months," Ana said.

"Our teams can also connect people with interest groups run by their local councils or other organisations, through their Commonwealth Home Support Programme funding."



For information about Uniting AgeWell's Social Support and Community Respite Services, call us on T: 1300 783 435.

Mental health tips

There are many things older people can do at home to improve their mental health and wellbeing:

- Ensure you eat nutritious meals, avoid excess alcohol and get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly for your physical and mental health.
- Get involved in spiritual or religious practices, including meditation, prayer, or practices such as Tai Chi.
- Join an interest group or club, which meets regularly, to build social connections.
- Try volunteering to meet new people, strengthen community ties and broaden support networks.

If you are struggling to feel happy, cope with everyday life, find meaning or feel connected to others, talk to your GP, social worker or call Beyond Blue on T: 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline Australia on T: 13 11 14.



CARING FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

As an expression of the Uniting Church, Uniting AgeWell recognises that older people's spiritual wellbeing is just as important as their physical health.

Uniting AgeWell is committed to creating caring communities where every older person feels welcome and is supported in the ways that matter to them. Professional chaplaincy services and practical and prayerful links with congregations of the Uniting Church assist the organisation in achieving that commitment.

Our chaplaincy program allows us to support residents and family members during difficult times, including the loss of loved ones.

"Our chaplains provide a place for residents and clients to talk about absolutely anything, whether it is something that is bothering them or something that is bringing them great joy," Director of Mission John Broughton (pictured with Uniting AgeWell client Thelma Barnes) said.

"It means people have a place where they know what they say is being held within a sacred space, so that it's safe for both the teller and the listener."

Uniting AgeWell home care package and community services clients can also benefit from Uniting AgeWell's commitment to pastoral care, whether they follow a religion or not.

"When you become a Uniting AgeWell client, you connect with a large network of Uniting Church congregations across Victoria and Tasmania," John said.

"If anyone would like to connect with their local congregation, minister or pastoral care team, I would be happy to facilitate that process."

Churches across the network operate interest groups, social clubs and outings where older people can connect with peers. The groups are often free of charge and provide a great avenue to boost older people's spiritual wellbeing.



If you would like to connect with a Uniting AgeWell chaplain or your local Uniting Church congregation, contact John Broughton on 1300 783 435 or email jbroughton@unitingagewell.org

SCAMMERS TARGET OVER 65s

Australians aged 65 and over were more likely to fall victim to scammers than any other age group in 2017.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Targeting Scams 2017 – released in May – revealed people aged 65 and over accounted for 26 per cent of reported scams last year. More than 25,000 people in that age group reported being scammed, losing a combined \$17.55 million.

The ACCC says scammers may prey on older people because they are perceived to be unfamiliar with the internet and computers, more emotionally vulnerable or have more accumulated wealth than other age groups.

Dating and romance, phishing (where people try to obtain your personal information) and investment scams are most commonly reported by people aged 65 and over.

Dating or romance

These scams often take place through online dating websites, social media or email. The scammer expresses strong emotions in a relatively short period of time and goes to great lengths to gain the victim's interest and trust. Once they have gained the victim's trust, they ask for money for a personal emergency like an ill family member or a mugging in the street. They may also ask the victim to pay for flights so they can visit, but never meet them.

Phishing

A scammer poses as a legitimate business such as a bank, telephone or internet service provider. They may email the victim to alert them to 'unauthorised or suspicious activity on your account'. They will ask the victim to confirm their credit card or bank details so the 'bank' can investigate. The scammer may already have the victim's credit card number and ask for confirmation of the security code printed on the card. Phishing messages are designed to look genuine, often using the branding and logo of the organisation they are pretending to represent.

Investments

A person claiming to be a stock broker or portfolio manager calls to offer financial or investment advice. The scammer offers the victim a low-risk investment that promises fast and high returns, or encourages the victim to invest in overseas companies. The investments offered in these types of cold calls are usually share, mortgage or real estate high-return schemes, options trading or foreign currency trading.



Centrelink

A person claiming to be from Centrelink calls regarding supposed debts that must be repaid to prevent the victim's pension being cut off. The scammer may demand the debt be repaid via unusual means like iTunes gift cards.

Remote access

A person claiming to be a staff member from a large telecommunications or computer company, such as Telstra, the NBN or Microsoft, makes contact. They tell the victim their computer has been sending error messages, it has a virus or has been hacked. They will request remote access to the computer to 'find out what the problem is'. They will then try to persuade the victim to buy unnecessary software or a service to 'fix' the computer, or ask for personal details and bank or credit card details. The person uses the remote access to install a virus or gain access to the victim's passwords and personal details.

Scammers adopt various personas and stories in an effort to steal people's money or identity and they go to great lengths to fool people. Through these means, countless victims have lost time, money, and confidence.

i If you think you have been scammed, it's important to report it immediately to your bank, and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Scamwatch at scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam or by calling **T: 1300 55 81 81**.



A convincing story

An older woman in NSW recently became a victim of a remote access scam. Sue Pollard received several calls over a six-day period from a person claiming to be from Telstra, telling her there was an issue with her computer.

The persistence, professional manner of the caller and the background noise of a call centre, led Sue to believe it was a legitimate request. The woman allowed the caller to remotely access her computer and was then transferred to the 'IT department' who would 'fix the problem'. The 'IT department' told Sue Telstra would gift her \$400 because of the inconvenience and she provided the details of her bank account.

The caller then claimed he deposited too much into her bank account and Sue had to pay back Telstra. After realising she had been scammed, Sue drove straight to her bank to report the incident and they blocked all transactions to her account.

Top tips to avoid falling victim to scammers

Scammers continually change their methods for stealing people's money and personal details, making it difficult for the public to detect and avoid being scammed. Following these tips can reduce the likelihood of you becoming a victim:

- 1 Keep up to date on the most common scam types via scamwatch.gov.au
- 2 Do an online search of a company or product name with relevant words like "scam" if you are contacted unexpectedly.
- 3 If you receive an unexpected bill, call your provider to check its legitimacy.
- 4 Your bank will never call or email and ask for your full pin, credit card number or any online banking passwords. If you are asked to provide that information, hang up or leave the email, find the phone number of the organisation elsewhere and let them know about the call.
- 5 Put a lock on your mailbox and shred your bills and important documents before throwing them away.
- 6 Never send money, credit card details, online account details or copies of personal documents to anyone you haven't met in person or don't trust.
- 7 If a message or email from a friend seems unusual or out of character for them, contact your friend directly to check whether it was really them that sent it.
- 8 Use a firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware software to keep your computer protected.
- 9 Choose unique passwords and update them regularly.
- 10 Never click links or open email attachments from unverified senders – they may contain viruses.
- 11 Remember, if something sounds too good to be true – it probably is.

A HELPING HAND FOR BARBARA

Uniting AgeWell client Barbara Byford knows a helping hand is just a phone call away. The retiree lives in a Uniting AgeWell independent living unit and has received home care through the organisation for more than five years.

During that time, Barbara has received wide-ranging support, from meal delivery and domestic assistance to medical aids and equipment, and technology.

"I started with just a little bit of help and it's gradually increased," she said.

"If I need something for my health benefit and my wellbeing I only have to ask and they are always obliging."

Barbara is an avid cook, who enjoys making jam, muffins and other goodies for friends and family. But accessing her cooking utensils was a challenge until Uniting AgeWell stepped in.

"I have a very narrow cupboard that goes right along the length of the kitchen cabinet so I couldn't get down there and didn't know what was at the end of it," she said.

"I asked if it was possible to extend the kitchen bench and install a set of drawers so I could store my baking things and get to what I needed."

A few weeks later, following an Occupational Therapy assessment, Barbara's new kitchen drawers were installed.

Having a good quality mattress and suitable chair is really important for a good night's sleep, pain management, and reducing the risk of falls. Through Barbara's home care package, Uniting AgeWell was able to provide her a new mattress, contour pillow and lift-up recliner chair.

Barbara said the Uniting AgeWell team always went above and beyond to assist in making her life easier. The team even calls her on occasion with ideas about how she can use un-allocated funds to ensure she is getting the most out of her package.



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**.

Uniting AgeWell operates independent retirement living units at the following locations:

- **Victoria:** Kingsville, Camberwell, Belmont, Hawthorn (under construction), Burwood, Forest Hill, Bentleigh, White Hills and Mount Waverley.
- **Tasmania:** Newnham, Mornington, George Town, Perth, Kingston, Montrose, New Town, Sorell, Sandy Bay, Latrobe, Berriedale and South Launceston.

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.



DEMENTIA CARERS RECEIVE SUPPORT

A new Bendigo support group promises to reduce stress levels and allow carers of people with dementia to forge strong connections with locals in similar positions.

Uniting AgeWell's You're Not Alone carer support group – officially launched in July – is the first of its kind for the Loddon Mallee.

Loddon Mallee South Program Coordinator Kerry Egan said the initiative would fulfil a great need in the community.

“Carer burden or stress is often the reason for hospitalisation or premature admission to residential care, therefore extra support for carers is paramount,” Kerry said.

“This group provides carers with the supports, practical strategies and networks they need to maintain their emotional health and wellbeing while continuing their care roles.”

The You're Not Alone group meets monthly for two hours at a time, allowing carers to share their stories, hear from guest speakers, and receive information about services available to them and the person with dementia.

Uniting AgeWell would like to thank the State Trustees Australia Foundation for providing a \$10,000 grant to establish the support group.

i For more information about the You're Not Alone carer support group, contact Uniting AgeWell's Loddon Mallee South Community Services – Bendigo on T: 5454 2100.

News in brief

Free flu vaccine for over 65s

Two new influenza vaccines have been made available specifically for people aged over 65 and they are free under the National Immunisation Program.

Last year was Australia's worst flu season in recorded history and more than 90 per cent of the reported 1,100 flu deaths were people aged 65 and over. To respond to this, Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt announced in February two new vaccines – one that has four times the amount of flu antigen than the standard dose, and another that includes a substance that improves the immune response in combination with the flu strains. To get your free flu vaccine, contact your GP.

Exercise to improve brain health

A new set of guidelines have been released for Australians aged 60 and over, who have noticed changes in their memory and cognitive abilities.

The University of Melbourne has outlined how much and what type of physical activity should be undertaken to improve brain health. The guidelines call for older Australians, in consultation with their doctor, to engage in 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 90 minutes of vigorous activity every week, progressive resistance training twice a week and activities that help improve and maintain balance. Uniting AgeWell's Allied Health and Therapy Services can assist you in developing a personalised exercise plan. Find out more by calling T: 1300 783 435.

Look out for our elders

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, on 15 June, was a timely reminder to look out for older family members and neighbours. In Australia last year, almost 60 per cent of elder abuse victims were aged 80 and over, and women made up 68 per cent of elder abuse victims. In the clear majority (95 per cent) of cases, the perpetrators were family members, usually a son or daughter.

We can all help older people live in safety without fear of being hurt, exploited, or neglected. If you, or someone you know, is being abused, contact Senior Rights Victoria on T: 1300 368 821 or Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline on T: 1800 441 169.



CONNECTING THROUGH MUSIC

Every Tuesday afternoon the corridors of Uniting AgeWell's Strathdon Community Services come alive with music.

The evocative songs from years past, the array of instruments beating in time, the smiles as participants make eye contact mid-line and the dissipating anxiety – this is the Music Therapy Group.

Comprising older people living in the community, who may or may not have dementia, the group is an opportunity for participants to get together in a fun and supportive environment.

Uniting AgeWell Music Therapist Winifred Beevers says the group provides meaningful, adult interactions between the group members.

"I play music they know well and like on the piano and I use it in a way that makes it accessible to the group, so I may slow the song down or change the pitch to suit them," she said.

During the Music Therapy Group the participants, who may sometimes struggle to communicate with other people, are supported and encouraged to connect with peers in simple ways.

"I use music to encourage interactions between the people," Winifred said.

"For some people it may be a smile and we'll have a musical interaction, but you also see people laughing, talking, lifting their heads, straightening their backs and taking an interest in what's happening around them.

"The beauty of the group is that people who don't speak much can communicate clearly through music."

Long-term volunteer Annie Waites provides an extra level of support to clients during the Music Therapy Group.

"I usually like to sit next to somebody who might be having a bit of trouble and help them shake their tambourine or maracas," she said.

"Some of them love to sing and point at me and I love to sing and point back to them, so we have a lovely interaction. We just have fun."

i To access Uniting AgeWell's music therapy services, talk to your Client Advisor or call us on T: 1300 783 435.

Uniting AgeWell has partnered with the University of Melbourne for a study into the effects of therapeutic singing groups on people with dementia and their family carers.

During the 20-week study, people with a dementia diagnosis and their carer or family member are taking part in a singing group. The results of the study will be made available to the public later this year.

CHECK BEFORE YOU GET MOVING

Physical activity appropriate to your condition should be incorporated into your week for good health and wellbeing. Experts suggest adults aim to be active for at least 30 minutes on most, preferably all, days of the week.

If you have been without physical activity for some time or want to introduce something new to your routine, it may be sensible to see a professional first.

The below Adult Pre-exercise Screening Tool – developed by Exercise and Sports Science Australia – is a checklist anyone can complete at home. It helps older people determine whether they can start exercising on their own, or whether they need to see a professional first.



Check List

- 1. Has your doctor ever told you that you have a heart condition or have you ever suffered a stroke?
- 2. Do you ever experience unexplained pains in your chest at rest or during physical activity/exercise?
- 3. Do you ever feel faint or have spells or dizziness during physical activity/exercise that causes you to lose balance?
- 4. Have you had an asthma attack requiring immediate medical attention at any time over the past 12 months?
- 5. If you have diabetes (type I or type II) have you had trouble controlling your blood glucose in the past three months?
- 6. Do you have diagnosed muscle, bone or joint problems that you have been told could be made worse by participating in physical activity/exercise?
- 7. Do you have any other medical conditions that may make it dangerous to participate in physical activity/exercise?

If you did not tick any of the seven questions and you have no other health concerns, you may undertake light to moderate intensity physical activity/exercise on your own.

If you ticked any of the seven questions, you should seek guidance from your GP or an allied health professional prior to undertaking physical activity/exercise.

Uniting AgeWell's allied health professionals can help you introduce physical activity/exercise to your life. Our staff will ask you a series of questions about your health and lifestyle, then help you set goals, prepare an exercise plan and support you on your journey.

i If you would like more information about Uniting AgeWell's Allied Health and Therapy Services, call us on T: 1300 783 435.

For the diary

August

Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care Information Session: 14 August, Noble Park, Victoria

Uniting AgeWell wants your wishes to be respected, even if you are unable to speak. During this session, hear from our Palliative Care Specialist, a local palliative service and Advanced Care Planning specialists.

Information: 1300 783 435 or unitingagewell.org/planning

September

Dementia Awareness Month: September, Australia-wide

Dementia Awareness Month is an initiative designed to encourage all Australians to become more dementia aware, to get a better understanding of what it's like to live with dementia and to create communities where people with dementia are supported and can enjoy a better quality of life. Events will be held across the country during September.

Information: dementia.org.au/dementia-awareness-month

Grief and Loss Information Session: 20 September, Mornington, Tasmania

Uniting AgeWell knows everyone experiences grief differently and it is something that takes time to work through. Understanding the process and having the support and ability to talk about your loss is important. Come along to learn how to access support groups or professional help, to look after yourself or help a person who is experiencing grief and loss.

Information: 1300 783 435 or unitingagewell.org/planning

October

Loddon Mallee North Wellness Retreat: 5 – 7 October, Dandenong Ranges, Victoria

Uniting AgeWell is running a wellness retreat, including twin share at the lovely Country Place, day spa treatments at Balance Mountain and all meals. Price: \$620 per person

Information: Jenny Astall, 4026 7000 or jastall@unitingagewell.org

Victorian Seniors Festival: 7 – 14 October, Victoria-wide

A huge range of free and low-cost events and activities will be held across the state for the 2018 Victorian Seniors Festival.

Information: seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festivalsandawards

Seniors Week: 15 – 21 October, Tasmania-wide

Council on the Ageing's Seniors Week is a celebration of older people, aimed at enhancing community connections and inter-generational relationships. The theme for Seniors Week is Food Glorious Food.

Information: cotatas.org.au/2018/07/sw2018/

National Carers Week: 15 – 21 October, Australia-wide

Events and activities being run across Victoria and Tasmania to celebrate National Carers Week, aimed at raising awareness about the diversity of carers and caring roles in your local community.

Information: carersweek.com.au

November

RACV Personal and Home Safety Presentation: 16 November, Kingsville, Victoria

RACV will present at Uniting AgeWell's Amarco Apartments from 10.30am – 11.30am to provide information and advice regarding personal safety, vehicle and home security, home emergencies and falls in the home.

Information: Anita Ukalovic, 9680 0500 or Aukalovic@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**