

# CommunityChat

ISSUE 2, Autumn 2017

News from Uniting AgeWell Community Services



*A different approach to ageing*

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# GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

**2017 is shaping up to be a very exciting year for Uniting AgeWell.**

Last year saw tremendous growth in our organisation, particularly in Community Services, with the transition of almost 300 home care packages to Uniting AgeWell in Loddon Mallee and Gippsland.

We also celebrated the opening of our first Community Hub in Hobart, which is proving to be a wonderful resource for seniors where they can drop in and receive advice and assistance from our friendly staff on aged care services and help with registering for My Aged Care.

And early this year we began providing Transition Care Community Packages in northern Tasmania, an area we intend on growing as we assist more people to get back on their feet and regain independence at home as they recover from illness or surgery after a hospital stay.

This year the momentum in Community Services will continue, with a focus on health and wellbeing. We are looking into how we can broaden the reach of our innovative HUR gym program, following a successful trial at Strathdon Allied Health and Therapy Services in Melbourne's east.

The Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Services gym has some HUR equipment and recently received a refreshing makeover, and we are now investigating how we can provide similar opportunities to clients across the organisation with the health and wellbeing benefits of the HUR gym.



Beyond Community Services, construction will begin on two exciting new state-of-the-art developments at Hawthorn and Preston, which will become leading residential care sites for Uniting AgeWell and set the example moving forward.

We are also keen to develop further partnerships with universities and technology groups around innovation and research in aged care.

Becoming a more dynamic and innovative organisation means we can provide essential and outstanding services to you, our clients, ensuring you can continue to live and age well.

Andrew Kinnersly  
Uniting AgeWell CEO





# GREATER CHOICE FOR REGIONAL SENIORS

**Uniting AgeWell has significantly expanded its Community Services across regional Victoria, taking on almost 300 new Home Care Packages in the state's east and west.**

In mid-December, Uniting AgeWell took over 273 Home Care Packages (HCP) from Swan Hill Rural City Council.

The transfer of the packages will ensure ongoing support for seniors in the Loddon Mallee, with access to Uniting AgeWell's wide range of services.

Two new regional offices have been established to coordinate the HCPs – in Bendigo and Mildura.

Council Mayor Les McPhee said seniors were in a great place and he was confident Uniting AgeWell would serve the region very well.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said the organisation was proudly committed to providing high quality, tailored home care to Loddon Mallee seniors, maintaining a local focus and making a difference to the lives of older people.

“Ensuring Loddon Mallee seniors receive the support and care they want to continue living independently and ageing well at home, with ready access to the services they need to do that, is a key motivator for Uniting AgeWell,” he said.

“We will have a strong local presence with staff and offices located in Swan Hill, Mildura, Kerang, Echuca, Serpentine and Bendigo and direct care arrangements with existing service partners across the region.”

The Loddon Mallee Home Care Package program covers the Local Government Areas of Swan Hill, Mildura, Gannawarra, Loddon, Central Goldfields,

Mount Alexander, Buloke, Macedon, Greater Bendigo and Campaspe.

Meanwhile, the transfer of 25 Level 2 Home Care Packages (HCPs) from UnitingCare Gippsland was officially acknowledged at an event in Bairnsdale in February.

The packages were transferred to Uniting AgeWell in September last year and complement the Level 3 and 4 packages it already offers in the region.

Uniting AgeWell Board Chair, Reverend Allan Thompson, a former Uniting Church Minister in Bairnsdale from 1971 to 1978, said East Gippsland was a lovely area filled with warm and friendly residents.

“For most people ageing well includes a desire to remain in their own home. Our Home Care Packages can go a long way in assisting Gippsland seniors to remain at home through the provision of physical and social support measures,” he said.

## Get in touch

### Gippsland – Bairnsdale

49 McCulloch Street, Bairnsdale 3875  
(03) 5152 9699

### Loddon Mallee North – Mildura

240a Thirteenth Street, Mildura 3500  
(03) 4026 7000

### Loddon Mallee South – Bendigo

Shop 17/90 Edwards Road, Strathdale 3550  
(03) 5454 2100

*Above: Mayor Les McPhee (R) hands over a secure password USB containing clients' confidential details to Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Rev Allan Thompson and CEO Andrew Kinnersly*

# RUTH PRAISES QUALITY OF HOME CARE

**Ruth Wilson cannot speak highly enough of the home care support she and her husband Ross receive from Uniting AgeWell in Gippsland Victoria.**

Since the transition of 25 Level 2 Home Care Packages (HCPs) from UnitingCare Gippsland to Uniting AgeWell in September last year, Ruth, the primary carer for her husband, said the support they received continued to be a big help.

“I have no other way of describing the service and transition other than ‘brilliant’,” she said.

“Once a week someone comes over to mow the lawn, tend to the garden and clean the floor, giving me time to look after Ross who has Parkinson’s disease.

Ruth, pictured with Ross and Client Advisor Deborah Watson, said the support they received was an asset.

“The package not only covers the cost of Ross’ physiotherapy, but also accommodation in Melbourne during hospital visits,” she said.



“I’m really grateful to have someone around to help us, allowing us to live independently at home.”

HCPs in Gippsland cover the Local Government Areas of East and South Gippsland, Wellington, Latrobe, Baw Baw and Bass Coast.

*i For more information about home care in the Gippsland region, contact Uniting AgeWell Gippsland Community Services on 5152 9699.*

# USHERING IN CHANGES TO HOME CARE

**Consumer Directed Care (CDC) is all about greater choice and control for clients, says Uniting AgeWell Project Manager Service Development Cate Keane.**

From February 27, government funding for Home Care Packages (HCP) will no longer be allocated to organisations but to individuals, giving people more choice and flexibility in choosing the services they receive while remaining in their own home.

Cate said this person-centred approach allowed the person receiving the package to better determine what care and support they received, and by whom.

She said Uniting AgeWell welcomed the reforms and believed they would support and empower older people to access the care they deserved.

She said CDC would not affect the level of care and service clients received, but instead offer more options with existing levels of home care packages.

“CDC gives people complete control over the types of care and services they wish to access,” she said.

“Clients can also develop their own service plans, while gaining ongoing support from our teams to make sure their needs are being met.”

*i If you want to know more about CDC and how it can benefit you, contact your Client Advisor directly or call the Uniting AgeWell team on 1300 783 435.*





# REG KNOWS THE BENEFITS OF HOME

**Eighty nine-year-old Reginald Rigby has been recovering from a serious fall in the comfort of his own home thanks to a new Uniting AgeWell care program.**

After being treated in hospital for a broken shoulder, Reg was offered the choice of recovering in respite care or in an aged care facility.

Neither sounded appealing for the Tasmanian, who wanted to keep an eye on the small garden he had tended diligently for many years.

Instead, Reg became one of Uniting AgeWell's first Transition Care Package (TCP) clients, offered by its Latrobe Community Services, just 35km east of his hometown Penguin.

Uniting AgeWell was selected by the Tasmanian Health Service as the preferred provider of 19 Transition Care Community Packages in December. The packages provide short-term, goal-focused therapy and case management for older people who need more time to recover from a hospital stay but want to do it in their own environment.

Strathdevon Manager Integrated Services, Vicki Pollock, said while it was not always possible for older people to return home after a hospital stay, a TCP could offer numerous benefits for those who could.

"Sometimes it's necessary to enter a respite facility to aid recovery or to move into residential care," she said.

"However, we know many people prefer to be in their own home while getting back on their feet or making complex and important decisions about their future. This is where a TCP can help."

TCPs gives seniors the opportunity to be supported by Uniting AgeWell staff to recover at home over 12 weeks, which can be extended by another six weeks.

Reg, pictured with EN Robyn Congerton, said he had been spoiled rotten since accessing the program.

"When I wake up in the morning there is someone to help get me in the shower, get dressed or go back to bed if I want," he said.

"They help with my meals, house work, and garden and if I smile nicely, I even get a cup of tea!

"Maintaining a sense of independence and being able to stay at home are the biggest advantages of the program."

*i To find out more about Transition Care Community Packages, contact Latrobe Community Services, on 6426 2844.*

## NEW HOME FOR PRESTON COMMUNITY PROGRAM

**Lumeah Allied Health and Therapy Services has moved to new premises in East Preston as work begins on a new 104-bed residential development on the old Lumeah site.**

Community Programs Coordinator, Teresa Roberts, said the new location was just a few minutes drive away and clients had settled in very well.

She said the larger space provided opportunities to run new programs, including falls and prevention and balance groups and a social morning coffee club.

*i Lumeah Allied Health and Therapy Services now operates from 11 Highview Road, East Preston. For more information, please contact 9416 8433.*

# Recipe

## Chicken Stir Fry

### INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

- > 300g of rice noodles
- > 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- > 200g skinless chicken (breast or thigh fillet)
- > 1/2 an onion
- > A handful of bean sprouts
- > A handful of snow peas
- > 1 medium size carrot
- > 1 small broccoli
- > 1 stick of celery
- > 1/4 capsicum
- > 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- > 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- > 1/2 cup reduced salt chicken stock

### METHOD

1. Cook noodles in a saucepan on medium heat until tender. Drain and set aside.
2. Chop onion, carrot, celery, capsicum and broccoli.
3. Cut chicken into small bite-sized pieces.
4. In a frying pan, heat 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil over high heat, add chicken and cook through. Remove cooked chicken and set aside.
5. Add garlic, carrot and onion to pan and fry for approximately 2 minutes. Add rest of chopped vegetables and soy sauce and fry for an additional few minutes.
6. Add noodles, chicken and chicken stocks to pan once vegetables are cooked.
7. Heat everything through and serve.



# COOKING WELL, AGEING WELL

**Uniting AgeWell Dietitian and Registered Nurse, Stephanie Xie, says cooking and preparing meals is always more fun when you do it with friends.**

“When clients cook together in our social support activities, not only are they making healthier choices and enhancing their knowledge of food, they’re eating better and developing new friendships,” she said.

“It not only makes food more enjoyable, but also empowers clients to develop new skills and confidence to prepare nutritious meals in their own homes.”

Stephanie said many community programs incorporated cooking activities into weekly programs, working with clients to decide what dishes to create.

“We explore food from different cultures that clients normally wouldn’t make,” she said.

“Our aim is to increase clients’ knowledge of healthy eating and food preparation, while encouraging social interaction.”

Uniting AgeWell Southern Tasmania Community Services Coordinator, Lee Marsh, said weekend Cottage Club outings incorporated a stop at local farmers’ markets so clients could purchase fresh produce.



“We recognise the power of healthy cooking and encourage clients to buy fresh fruit and vegetables and cook more for themselves, rather than rely on packaged food and Meals on Wheels,” she said.

“It’s part of our Living Longer, Eating Healthier philosophy.”

Stephanie said a nutritious and easy-to-make meal clients could prepare at home was Chicken Stir Fry.

“This is a simple and nutritious meal anyone can make, covering various food groups including meat and vegetables, and carbs,” she said.

Try making your own chicken stir fry with Stephanie’s fabulous recipe on the opposite page.

***i** For more information about cooking activities, contact your nearest Uniting AgeWell Community Program.*

**Above:** Vi Knight and Ila Hutchins purchase fresh vegetables during their outing.

# REHAB GROUP KEEPS DES MOVING

**Des Pickering credits Uniting AgeWell's cardiopulmonary rehabilitation group with keeping him out of hospital.**

Diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and with only 30 per cent lung capacity, Des was referred by specialists to Uniting AgeWell Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Services for rehabilitation.

"That was four years ago and apart from regular checkups, I haven't been back to hospital since," the 78-year-old said.

Every Wednesday Des attends the rehabilitation group, where physiotherapist Maria Fernandes provides him with an individualised program, aimed at improving his strength and maintaining his heart and lung function.

Maria said clients with various heart and lung-related issues attended the rehabilitation group.

"We use a variety of exercise equipment including HUR (Helsinki University Research) equipment that uses air resistance and individualised smart card technology, to help clients maintain and regain fitness levels," she said.

"Everyone has a tailor-made program that can change week to week depending on their ability.



"We constantly monitor clients' heart beat and oxygen levels, making sure everything is back to normal before they leave."

Des said the best thing about Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Services was the staff.

"The easiest thing is not to come, but the staff and the environment they create is what gets me here every week," he said.

"Apart from being experts in what they do and making sure everyone is safe, they treat all clients like adults.

"They're also a terrific source of information. I may enquire about a particular service one week, the next week I come in and they have a pack of brochures ready for me.

*i For more information on the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation group or Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Services, please call 9568 0466.*

## GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

Uniting AgeWell welcomes and encourages any feedback you may have. Your feedback will be treated with the strictest confidence and used to improve the way we provide our services.

Uniting AgeWell feedback forms and the Australian Government Aged Care Complaints Commissioner

brochure, 'I have a concern', can be obtained from all our community programs staff and/or through the Department of Health.

If you prefer to give verbal feedback, please speak directly with one of our friendly community programs staff.





# MEET DAY RESPITE COORDINATOR RASIJA FAJIC

## How long have you been at Uniting AgeWell?

I was a former primary school teacher in Bosnia and Herzegovina before moving to Australia and studying aged care. It was during my placement at Kalkee Nangatta in 2007 that I got offered a position as a Personal Care Assistant/Lifestyle Assistant. From there I did further studies in Social Science and in 2015 I took on my current role as Kalkee Community Club Day Respite Coordinator.

## What do you enjoy about working at Uniting AgeWell?

I have always loved working with people and providing good customer service. I appreciate the opportunity to explore new things and provide a positive outcome for clients.

## How does day respite assist clients?

Respite and community programs help people remain at home for as long as possible. They keep them more socially engaged and increase their general wellbeing.

## What does day respite involve?

We have a full five-day program with centre-based activities such as arts and crafts, games, music, singing and exercise groups. Two days a week we have bus outings including coastal drives and visits to libraries, museums, gardens for sightseeing and picnics. Every Monday we also have a group outing for our Early Onset Dementia Group, a group for younger people with dementia.

## How do people access day respite?

There are a number of ways people can get involved. People can talk to their GPs or contact us directly.

We can help clients and their families apply through My Aged Care and organise assessments.

*For more information about Kalkee Community Services, please contact 5243 1746. For information about Carer and Respite Support with Uniting AgeWell visit [unitingagewell.org](http://unitingagewell.org)*

## CLOSING THE GAP IN THE GREAT DIGITAL DIVIDE

**At 82 years old, Adrienne Lancaster can send emails, use Skype and shop at speciality online stores for the latest fashions and gifts from her digital tablet.**

Adrienne is one of many clients from the Strathdevon Community at Latrobe, Northern Tasmania, who takes part in a program between Uniting AgeWell and Nundah Community Centre in Brisbane, that uses technology and social media to counter isolation and connect with families and friends living interstate and overseas.

“The program has given me regular contact and conversations with people, as well as the freedom to shop and browse things I would usually have difficulty in accessing in person,” she said.



Many Uniting AgeWell Community Programs provide hands-on workshops where clients can bring their own devices and learn how to use them.

*For more information about The Platypus Club, please call Peter Cullen on 6343 3933. For technology workshops run by other Uniting AgeWell Community Programs call 1300 783 435.*

# A GREEN THUMBS UP FROM GUS



## **Green-fingered Gus Augustin is blossoming in his local community garden because of his Home Care Package.**

Following a stroke that left him with aphasia, a language disorder that impairs both the expression and understanding of language including the ability to read and write, Gus moved into Uniting AgeWell Strathdon Community's Independent Living Units in 2012.

Aged only 59 at the time, Gus was the youngest person to live in the Strathdon Community and struggled with the transition.

Knowing his love for gardening, Uniting AgeWell organised a small plot of land in the nearby Nunawading Community Garden for him to tend in his spare time with other like-minded people.

Gus's son, Jacques Augustin, said Uniting AgeWell did an amazing job enabling his father to remain independent and connected with the things he loved.

"Dad is independent enough to live by himself but can also access extra help from Uniting AgeWell when he requires," he said.

"His home care staff organise taxis for him to attend appointments and social activities as he requests.

Client Advisor Diana Cerini said Gus had a wide network of friends and attended Uniting AgeWell's stroke group and Helsinki University Research (HUR) Gym at the Strathdon Community.

"Despite having aphasia he is an excellent communicator, always smiling and communicating through facial expressions," she said.

"Amazingly, he can still sing, even singing a solo piece in his native French during Stroke a Chord choir's annual performance in 2015."

*i* For more information about how a Home Care Package can help you maintain your independence and wellbeing, contact Uniting AgeWell on 1300 783 435.



# FALLS PREVENTION CLASS GAINS POPULARITY

Joy Bryan knows falling is not a natural part of the ageing process and can be avoided if the proper steps are taken.

The 82 year-old from Launceston is one of many seniors who are taking control and reducing their chances of falling by attending a falls prevention exercise group at Uniting AgeWell Sunnybrae Club.

Designed to be adapted to meet individual needs, the Falls Prevention Program is led by a physiotherapist and focuses on six specific exercises that aim to improve strength and maintain balance in older people.

Joy said the exercises were very practical and could be performed anywhere at home, using chairs, benchtops and other household items.

“Each week I attend the Sunnybrae Club and we do heel to toe exercises using handrails to increase my balance,” she said.

“I’ve been able to adapt some exercises at home by holding onto the bar in the bathroom.”

Aldersgate Day Respite Coordinator Margaret Bowkett said most falls could be prevented and seniors had the power to reduce their risks.

“Exercising, managing medications, having vision checked and making the home environment safer



are all steps people can take to prevent a fall,” she said.

The initial Falls Prevention Program ran over seven weeks and featured various allied health professionals giving advice on the importance of nutrition, medication, hazards around the home and proper footwear. The program has since become an ongoing part of Sunnybrae Club’s Saturday morning sessions.

Another participant, Val Lehner, said she regularly practised the exercises at home.

“I feel they have strengthened my legs and given me more confidence.”

***i** For information about the program, contact Margaret Bowkett on 6343 3933. For other Fall Prevention Programs at Uniting AgeWell, please call 1300 783 435.*

**Above:** Joy Bryan (fourth from end) and Val Lehner (second from end) take part in the Falls Prevention program.

## Get the most out of aged care

**Free information sessions with morning tea**

**Tuesday 7 March**  
Noble Park Community

**Friday 17 March**  
Strathdon Community

**10am – 12pm**

Find out how you can be supported to continue living independently at home at our free information sessions with morning tea.

The sessions will cover Government changes to aged care services and funding, services we offer and help with accessing My Aged Care.

You will have the opportunity to find out more about:

- › In-home services, including domestic and personal care
- › Social support
- › Allied health and therapy services
- › Carer respite

**Bookings T: 9554 0712**



**Front Cover:** Des Pickering maintains his strength and fitness under the guidance of Physiotherapist Maria Fernandes at Oakleigh Allied Health and Therapy Services

**Below:** Mima Mitchell uses the innovative Helsinki University Research (HUR) gym at the Strathdon Allied Health and Therapy Centre.

## 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.

Whether you need a little assistance around the home or more complex care and support, Uniting AgeWell's community services can make a difference.

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](https://unitingagewell.org)**