

# » DoveTale

SPRING, 2019



*News from across Uniting AgeWell communities*





## ➤ CEO's message

Uniting AgeWell had an important opportunity to take part in the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in July. We were invited to participate in a panel of providers delivering respite care in the Loddon Mallee region of Victoria, at the Commission's hearing held in Mildura.

The focus of the hearing was on the needs of family, informal and unpaid carers for older Australians, including support services for carers and respite care. Our General Manager Strategy & Business Development, Fonda Voukelatos, represented Uniting AgeWell on the panel and spoke positively and proudly about the community services and supports we provide. I would like to thank Fonda and our Royal Commission support team for the enormous amount of time and effort they spent preparing our submission.

Mildura is a high growth area for Uniting AgeWell. In just one week the team enabled 17 new clients to commence Home Care Packages, bringing the number of people they are supporting in the north of the state to 235. This speaks volumes about the community trust the team has built since it was established in December 2016.

Uniting AgeWell is undergoing much growth across all its services. In August we were delighted to have the Federal Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator Richard Colbeck, officially open our new \$10 million, 30-bed wing at Latrobe Community, Strathdevon. Senator Colbeck congratulated Uniting AgeWell on its commitment to providing high quality services to seniors in Tasmania's north-west.

In November we will open our state-of-the-art, 104-bed aged care residence in Preston. We will introduce a new model of care at Preston, which emphasises customer choice and control.

A community Open Day will be held on November 9, and everyone is welcome to see this wonderful new facility for themselves.

We are always looking at innovative ways to improve the lives of seniors. Uniting AgeWell is involved in a multi-million dollar research project headed by Deakin University - the Transformation Hub for Digital Enhanced Living. As the lead aged care organisation of the project, it is a wonderful opportunity for us to be at the forefront of the future of aged care services. The Hub was officially launched in August by the Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan at our Strathdon Community in Forest Hill, which was also attended by Deakin MP and Housing Minister Michael Sukkar, and Deakin University Vice-Chancellor Iain Martin.

Already, Uniting AgeWell is being recognised for our strong approach to providing high quality services. We had our first unannounced accreditation audit by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission in July, at our Aldersgate Village, Newnham Community in Launceston. I am pleased to say we received extremely positive feedback, particularly in relation to the embedding of the new Aged Care Quality and Safety single standards. I am very proud of the work that is being done across the organisation to ensure we meet the new standards.

Finally, every October we highlight the contributions of older people during our Celebration of Ageing Well events. Coinciding with Seniors Weeks in Victoria and Tasmania, it is an opportunity for us to celebrate what it means to live and age well, and the many amazing people we support every day. As I travel around our services I continue to be inspired by the people who built this nation into what it is today.

**Andrew Kinnersly**  
CEO



## > Federal focus on innovation

**There was intense interest from the Federal Government in Uniting AgeWell in August, and all for good reason.**

The organisation welcomed not one, but three Federal Ministers to its sites to be part of official launches of new services or innovations.

In early August, the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator Richard Colbeck, officially opened the new \$10 million, 30-bed wing at Latrobe Community, Strathdevon.

It was his first visit to an aged care residence since being appointed Minister and he congratulated the organisation for providing greater options for seniors in north-west Tasmania to age well in their local community.

Senator Colbeck unveiled a plaque for the new Henley Wing and toured the new facilities, including the generous lounges, dining rooms and community café.

The event was also attended by Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly, Acting Board Chair Simon Brewin, local Braddon MP Gavin Pearce and Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, Rev Denise Liersch, who blessed the new wing.

Andrew said the feedback Uniting AgeWell had received from the community about the quality of the facilities had been very positive.

“This increase in bed numbers and provision of contemporary facilities means we can support more people from across the region to remain in their local community and maintain social connections with the important people in their lives,” he said.

At Strathdon Community in Forest Hill, Education Minister Dan Tehan officially launched a \$4.8 million research project investigating how new technologies can assist older people living at home or in residential aged care.

Uniting AgeWell is the lead aged care industry partner involved in the Australian Research Council (ARC) Industrial Transformation Research Hub for Digital Enhanced Living, led by Deakin University.

Uniting AgeWell will support the Hub with several research projects, the first of which will investigate the use of a Digital Living Assistant for older people living at home. The aim is for the virtual assistant to remind people about important moments in time, such as when to take pills or keep a doctor’s appointment.

Uniting AgeWell is now recruiting participants for the project, and results are due mid-next year.

The event was also attended by Deakin MP and Housing Minister, Michael Sukkar, and Deakin University Vice-Chancellor Iain Martin.

CEO Andrew Kinnersly said the organisation’s involvement reflected its commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of people as they aged through innovative approaches.

“This project will have a real impact on the way we deliver aged care. Innovative, intelligent care solutions will have huge benefits for the wellbeing of older people, both at home and in residential aged care,” he said. 🌿



## ➤ Board Chair message

**With the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety now well underway, the future of the industry is very much in the spotlight.**

As a leading not-for-profit provider, we see this as a great opportunity to improve aged care services for everyone and help the industry thrive and meet the growing demands of an ageing population.

To help Uniting AgeWell create a road map for service growth, the Board and Senior Executive Team held a planning day with professional aged care advisor Ansell Strategic in June.

Over the coming months, Ansell will support the Board and Executive to consider who we are as an organisation, what we look like today and how we can achieve our vision for the future.

Our Customer Charter puts the customer at the heart of everything we do, so we will be considering how we can ensure the highest standard of care and continue to meet community expectations in the years ahead.

It marks an exciting time for Uniting AgeWell when we can look at opportunities for the future sustainability across all of our services, review potential growth areas and consider how we can use emerging technologies to deliver care and services.

Ansell Strategic will present a final report to the Board and Executive towards the end of the year.

Simon Brewin  
Acting Board Chair

## ➤ Providing spiritual guidance to workers

**Uniting AgeWell has helped pioneer a new training resource to support the incorporation of spirituality into end-of-life care across a range of sectors.**

The Spirituality of Dying Workshop was developed in partnership with Meaningful Ageing Australia and unveiled to the community in May.

“We recognise that delivering spiritual care is not confined to Chaplains,” said Uniting AgeWell Director of Mission John Broughton.

“All staff and volunteers involved in end-of-life care contribute to that experience being as enriching as

it can be for both the person being cared for and their support network.”

The 60-minute introductory workshop supports employers in the health, aged care and community services sectors to train staff and volunteers on the importance of spirituality for human living and dying.

It also provides information about making meaningful connections with people who are coming to the end of their life, along with their families and care team. 

# › Nurses join the home care team

**Uniting AgeWell has closed the care loop in the Loddon Mallee region by hiring registered nurses to support its home care team.**

Three registered nurses stationed at Mildura, Swan Hill and Bendigo visit clients from as far north as Mildura and south as Romsey to undertake clinical assessments, assist with wound care and provide referrals to allied health services.

Loddon Mallee South Community Programs Manager Kaylene DeWacht said the nurses enabled Uniting AgeWell to provide a better continuum of care and ensure the organisation was meeting clients' clinical needs.

"Having the nurses within our team means our clinical staff and Client Advisors, who administer our clients' packages, work very closely on a day-to-day basis," she said.

**"It means important messages about our clients' clinical care needs are delivered in a timely fashion and we can ensure a more robust team approach."**

Loddon Mallee South Registered Nurse Paula Richards spends up to two hours with each client during a clinical assessment and takes time to learn about the person's life.

"During those assessments we might find a client's needs have changed since their last assessment and many clients share information they haven't previously told Uniting AgeWell," said Paula, who comes from an aged care and mental health background.

"I am able to work with their Client Advisors to arrange extra supports, talk to clients' GPs or make appropriate referrals, all of which enhances what we deliver to our clients."

Having a nurse on the team has proved valuable on many occasions, including when one client had a fall and refused to go to the doctor.

"I did a full assessment of the client, including a blood pressure check, and I was able to pass that information onto their GP, who referred them onto the district nurses," she said.



"Until the doctor knows what's happening they can't refer to the district nurse but through our process, that person got the care they needed."

Kaylene said Loddon Mallee clients could contact their Client Advisor if they wished to see a Uniting AgeWell nurse. If the visit falls outside of an initial consultation or annual check, the Client Advisor will check whether the funds are available on a client's package. 🐦



For more information about Uniting AgeWell's tailored home care services in the Loddon Mallee or across Victoria and Tasmania, call T: 1300 783 435.

# › Specially made snuggles

**Snuggling into something warm, soft and familiar can bring immense comfort to people and animals alike during difficult times**

A group of residents from Latrobe Community, Strathdevon is delivering that comfort to homeless animals at RSPCA Devonport through hand-knitted woollen blankets.

Lifestyle Coordinator Linda Bowen said the initiative enabled residents to remain connected to their community after moving into aged care, while fulfilling a local need.

“I spoke to the RSPCA and the staff told me they needed blankets so I talked to some of the residents about knitting squares,” she said.

“They all enjoy animals and having that purpose and something to focus on was really important.”

Animal-lover Kaylene Dawkins was inspired to get involved in the group despite never having a great passion for knitting in the past.

“I’ve never been much of a knitter. I started a jumper in grade six but my mum had to finish it for me,” she said.

“I knitted a few scarves over the years but when Linda told me about the RSPCA I thought I’d have another go.

**“I enjoyed making friends in the group and I hope to keep knitting.”**

A group of about six women got together weekly to make blankets for the animals, and were often seen clicking away with their needles between meetings. Before long, the group had finished 12 blankets and now have several more under way.



RSPCA Devonport Team Leader Shane Saunders, who collected the first batch of blankets in July, said the blankets would be distributed across the centre. Staff and volunteers will give the blankets to ferrets, puppies and other small animals but they will be most useful in the cattery.

“For the homeless cats that come into the shelter, these blankets will be the first bit of comfort they’ve had in a while,” he said.

“We give them a nice warm bed and their scent transfers onto that blanket. That blanket and familiar scent then goes with them when they get rehomed so they don’t get stressed in their new home.”

RSPCA Devonport sent the residents certificates of appreciation for their efforts and began sending through photos of their blankets in use at the shelter. 🐾



## › Countdown to Preston unveiling

**Uniting AgeWell is just weeks away from opening the doors of its new state-of-the-art aged care residence in Preston.**

Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kinnersly said the organisation's \$28.91 million investment into the new development demonstrated its commitment to ensuring high-quality aged care was accessible to the community into the future.

"As an organisation, we are committed to providing modern, sustainable and welcoming facilities that meet the needs of the growing older demographic and this development is a key part of that plan," he said.

**"Our aim with Preston and our new residence at Hawthorn, which will open in early 2020, was to create buildings, gardens and communal spaces that create a sense of community and general wellbeing."**

The Preston development has been erected on the site of the former Lumeah aged care residence, which was demolished in December 2017. The new 104-bed residence, opening in November, is designed to give seniors the best of care with services and lifestyle programs that are tailored to the individual needs and interests of residents.

Project Manager Ian Blair said the future of aged care was in providing tailored care and support to seniors where they had choice, control and importantly, peace of mind.

"These residences will offer a model of care that puts the focus on the individual, with more personal

attention and services when and where people need them," he said.

The rooms at Preston are spacious with an ensuite and flat screen TV, and four hotel-style rooms with kitchenettes and bed-sits to enable families to stay overnight when needed.

Generous communal areas include large and small lounge rooms, multi-purpose community rooms, sensory gardens, private social rooms, an on-site café with al fresco dining, and an in-house hairdressing salon.

A concierge service will welcome and support residents, helping them to identify individual goals and build a package of tailored services enabling them to continue doing the things they enjoy.

Highly trained staff, including registered nurses on duty at all times, will work with residents to understand their needs and ensure they get the right care and support.

Ian said as part of providing residents with greater control, Preston's model would provide flexible meal times, and if they wanted to participate in day-to-day household activities such as washing clothes or cooking, they could.

There will also be a lifestyle and activities program seven days a week, specialist dementia care, and a focus on restorative care through allied health services.

"This is all part of bringing to life Uniting AgeWell's customer promise and charter, which aims to ensure all clients can live well with choice and peace of mind," Ian said. 



To find out more about the new development, visit [unitingagewell.org/our-services/residential-care/preston-community](https://unitingagewell.org/our-services/residential-care/preston-community)

## › In brief

### Aged Care Quality Standards

The new Aged Care Quality Standards came into effect on 1 July, bringing the needs of customers into even greater focus. The Australian Government's eight new standards apply to both residential and community aged care services and focus on quality outcomes for consumers, rather than provider processes. Uniting AgeWell spent 18 months preparing for the new standards, adopting a coordinated and collaborative approach to reviewing and updating its systems and procedures, along with educating and training staff. **For more information about the new Aged Care Quality Standards, visit [agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/standards/resources](http://agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/standards/resources)**

### GP education sessions

Uniting AgeWell is supporting the professional development of GPs by hosting information sessions on antimicrobial stewardship and psychotropic medication. Specialist Infectious Diseases Physician Dr Andrew Mahoney and Consultant Geriatrician and Physician Dr Stephen Loi presented at the sessions, held at Bendigo, Kingsville and Strathdon in July and August. Both topics are areas of interest for aged care providers, with antimicrobial stewardship being introduced in the new Aged Care Quality Standards and the administration of psychotropic medication being explored extensively by the ongoing Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

### Foodie heaven at Strathdon

Passionate foodie and Strathdon Community resident Ralph Naylor became a chef in his 70s, so he knows a thing or two about good cooking. He was in his element at the Forest Hill residence in June, where he helped judge cake decorating competitions and chef cook-offs, along with taking a front-row seat at staff cooking demonstrations. The initiative is all part of Residential Services Manager Khalil Sukkar's efforts to boost staff engagement, and support residents and staff to build stronger relationships. He has adopted several initiatives, including a Cultural Food Market, Diversity Fashion Parade and cooking demonstrations. Forty residents submitted cupcakes for the cake decorating competition and residents, staff and visitors voted Ralph's the winner.



## › Providing tools for better visits

**More than 50 family members of Uniting AgeWell residents with dementia are better equipped to engage their loved ones after attending specialist information sessions.**

In an effort to better support families, Uniting AgeWell recently hosted Dementia Australia's 'A Better Visit' sessions at Kingsville and Strathdon Communities.

Facilitators explored useful communication techniques and provided advice on how to manage challenging behaviours and engage people with dementia.

Lifestyle Manager Sharon Levey said the feedback from attendees was "extremely positive".

"The overall consensus was that after the session, family members felt they had some tools and techniques to assist them with engaging their loved ones during visits," she said.

A family member who attended the Kingsville Community session praised Uniting AgeWell for hosting the event in which they "learnt a lot of practical hints and tips".

Uniting AgeWell has been working with Dementia Australia to deliver additional training to staff in various roles – direct care, finance, leisure and lifestyle, marketing and chaplaincy.

Sharon said the organisation would continue working with Dementia Australia to educate and support staff, families and clients. 🕊

# › Bringing music to the people



**The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra kicked off two months of musical delights at Uniting AgeWell, with a special pop-up performance at Hobart's Queenborough Rise Community in August.**

Two-time Grammy Award nominee, saxophonist Amy Dickson, thrilled residents, family members and staff at a special performance at the aged care residence ahead of a recital with the TSO.

Also the winner of the Breakthrough Artist of the Year at the 2013 Classic Brit Awards, Amy showed the attentive audience how compelling and beautiful the saxophone is.

The performance was part of Uniting AgeWell's ongoing sponsorship of the TSO.

In October, Strathdon Community in Forest Hill will host a pop-up performance as part of Uniting AgeWell's partnership with the Melbourne Recital Centre.

The Flinders Quartet is one of Australia's most loved chamber music ensembles, described as "a quartet for the 21st century".

More than 100 people are expected to attend the performance by the award-winning quartet, showcasing why they are in demand across Australia and the world.

Music therapy also plays an important role in Uniting AgeWell's dementia services. Aside from specialist music therapy groups at its day centres, the Music For David program supports people with dementia and their carers through music at home.

The program operates thanks to generous funds raised through regular concerts organised by dedicated supporter David Ross-Smith and friends.

› DoveTale

In September, a special performance of vocal quartets by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, Gounod and others will fill the North Balwyn Uniting Church, with all proceeds going to the Music For David program.

Titled Lux Aeterna – eternal light – the concert is a celebration of the beauty of some of the finest music for voice ever written.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said the organisation was very proud of its associations with such esteemed musicians and companies.

**"Music is particularly important in aged care. Its therapeutic benefits are well known, particularly for people with dementia, and it can spark memories and reduce anxiety," he said.**

"We are pleased to support our clients to have the opportunity to see world-leading artists perform, and ensure music remains an important part of their lives.

"We are also very grateful for the outstanding dedication of David Ross-Smith to the important work of the Music For David program." 🐦



For more information about Lux Aeterna or to book tickets, visit [unitingagewell.org/events](http://unitingagewell.org/events)



## ➤ Green thumb residents on TV

**Uniting AgeWell residents have featured in a segment for long-running, landmark ABC program *Gardening Australia*.**

The residents from Sorell Community, Ningana, in Hobart were filmed taking part in their regular DIGnity program at Okines Community Garden – a supported community garden initiative aimed at reducing isolation and improving health and wellbeing.

*Gardening Australia* filmed the residents working in the garden, sharing lunch and basket weaving alongside other community members, volunteers and DIGnity staff.

Chrissi Charles from *Gardening Australia* said the team heard about the DIGnity program when filming an unrelated segment and thought it would appeal to its audience.

“We liked the way DIGnity used an already existing community garden setting – rather than a separate garden site – but extended it to include marginalised groups within the community,” she said.

“It’s also the first time we have done a story about gardening involving people with dementia.”

During the warmer months, a group of six to 10 Ningana residents attend the DIGnity program each fortnight.

“They have the opportunity to plant and maintain the garden, feed the chooks, assist with the wood-fired oven or go for a walk through the beautiful garden,” Lifestyle Coordinator Kylie Cooper said.

“They also cook lunch using fresh herbs and vegetables grown in the garden and eat it together. Often a volunteer will bring in nice bread and they will make pizza out of it or serve it with soup.”

Kylie said the program boosted residents’ motor skills, wellbeing and mobility. Most importantly, however, Kylie said it enabled them to contribute to the community in a meaningful way.

While participating in the DIGnity program, residents have the opportunity to connect with its occupational therapist, mental health counsellor, fibre artist (art using natural or synthetic fibres), social researcher, garden coordinators and volunteers.

**The *Gardening Australia* episode will air later this year. Uniting AgeWell will share the link on its website: [unitingagewell.org](http://unitingagewell.org)** 

## › Sharing experiences between young and old



### Several intergenerational initiatives are bringing rewards across the ages at two Uniting AgeWell sites in Tasmania

Residents from Strathaven and Strathglen Communities in Hobart have formed close connections with students from local primary and high schools, as well as a Scouts group, through regular visits, skills sharing and entertainment activities.

Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator Lina Sierra said the residents thoroughly enjoyed connecting with the younger generation and always looked forward to their visits.

**“It’s always a really positive experience for both the children and the residents and we often witness special interactions,” she said.**

Once-shy primary school students from St Virgil’s have been working with the leisure and lifestyle team and are now confident calling bingo and spending one-on-one time with residents.

Cubs from the Howrah Scouts teach residents to tie knots as part of its community service program.

Students from nearby Claremont College have been interviewing residents to create My Life Story books as mementos for the residents. Residents are also visiting the school to taste meals prepared by hospitality students and participate in table games run by aged care students.

But the most touching and poignant moments have been created by the Rosetta Primary School’s Sing Out Loud intergenerational choir. The program sees students and residents performing together at school concerts and in the residence on special occasions.

“It is so wonderful to see how both groups become so relaxed and comfortable around each other over the visits, particularly those students who may not be so familiar with the aged,” said teacher Lindy Devereux.

“One student, Chelsea, struck up a lovely friendship with her buddy, Margaret. Margaret was unable to attend the final concert but sent a Christmas gift for Chelsea, who then made a special trip to Rosetta with her father to visit Margaret. It was a happy and emotional visit.”

Resident Evelyn Spencer says the visits from young people are welcome.

“The children are bright, young children and they are very interested in talking to us, finding out about our lives and also spending time with us,” Evelyn said.

Intergenerational programs are held across Uniting AgeWell’s residences and community services. They encourage a sense of belonging, boost confidence and build community connections for all involved, while encouraging reminiscence among older people. 🕊

# ➤ Do your bit to make wishes come true



**Uniting AgeWell's Annual Charity Golf Day will return to the magnificent Commonwealth Golf Club on 25 November for another spectacular day of golf and networking at one of Melbourne's premier golf courses.**

The Golf Day raises important funds for the Wishing Well program, enabling Uniting AgeWell to fulfil the wishes of clients across Victoria and Tasmania.

This could be as simple as attending a footy match to watch a beloved team, or hosting old friends for a dinner party. It could also be as extravagant as taking a helicopter flight to a remote lunch destination, a ride in a race car for the first time or a once-in-a-lifetime train trip across the state.

Each wish brings great joy, hope and happiness. Last year's Golf Day raised \$50,000 towards the

Wishing Well program, enabling dozens of Uniting AgeWell clients to realise their dreams.

This year, we're expanding our Wishing Well program to cater for groups of clients who want to share these great experiences together. This might be a bus trip to the city or the coast, a night out together at a show, or a trip on a steam train through the countryside.

We are fortunate to have two valued supporters on board as Platinum Sponsors once again – Paywise Salary Packaging and BlueAPACHE.

The Charity Golf Day is always great fun, and a wonderful opportunity to network with business partners, customers and like-minded people. 🕊



*To find out more or to register a team, visit the Uniting AgeWell website for full details.*



*How can we support you to live well with choice and peace of mind? Find out today, by calling our friendly team on 1300 783 435 or visit [unitingagewell.org](http://unitingagewell.org)*

*We appreciate your feedback and welcome any story ideas.*

*Contact: Communications and Social Media Advisor Jane Kenrick at [JKenrick@unitingagewell.org](mailto:JKenrick@unitingagewell.org) or call T: 9133 5018.*



**Uniting AgeWell**

*Front Cover:  
Latrobe Community, Strathdevon resident Margaret Ford and staff member Kaitlyn Smith.*

*Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia*