

# ➤ DoveTale

WINTER, 2019



*News from across Uniting AgeWell communities*





## ➤ CEO's message

**I was recently reminded what a wonderful community we have at Uniting AgeWell when I attended an event celebrating Diversity Week.**

Our Strathdon Community in Forest Hill held a Cultural Food Market where staff from different cultures brought home-cooked food and served it to residents, staff, families and community visitors from purpose-built market stands. Hundreds of people attended the event, sampling cultural delicacies at tables set out on synthetic grass surrounded by picket fences to create a village green.

The involvement of all people at Strathdon that day was extremely heart-warming. To me, this is what community is about – a diverse range of people coming together to support and celebrate each other in a place of welcome and inclusion.

Providing such inclusive and customer-centred experiences is exactly what the new Aged Care Quality Standards are about. The new Standards, which come into effect on 1 July, ensure the focus of aged care compliance is the customer, and not the processes of the provider. The Standards also affirm the first point in Uniting AgeWell's Customer Promise, Customer Charter - the customer is always at the heart of everything we do.

With our focus already on the customer, I am confident we are well-prepared for the introduction of the new Standards. We will continue providing ongoing support and education to our staff, as well as refining our processes, to ensure the highest standard of care for our residents and clients each and every day. If you want to find out more about the Standards, visit the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission website: [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au) Uniting AgeWell is also taking an exciting step in

the ongoing development and strength of the organisation. It will change its status from an unincorporated association to an incorporated entity, Uniting AgeWell Limited, on 1 July 2019.

While incorporation will simplify our company structure and enable greater autonomy, our service delivery, staffing, non-profit status, Uniting Church affiliation and values will remain unchanged. An article in this edition of DoveTale explains the benefits of incorporation in more detail.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is well under way with hearings to date held in Adelaide and Sydney. While the Commission has heard some distressing cases of failures to provide adequate care, it has provided a platform to discuss important issues faced by older people, their families, the aged care workforce, providers and regulators.

The Commission is keen to hear from the Australian community about their experiences of and ideas about aged care. In addition to formal submissions and hearings, the Commission is conducting community forums, roundtable meetings with experts, and site visits during the course of its inquiry.

We were delighted to have the opportunity to host Commissioner Richard Tracey AM RFD QC and Commission staff at our Strathdon Community in Forest Hill for a tour and discussion with staff and clients on 5 March. Over three hours, we were able to showcase Uniting AgeWell's residential and community services, our approach to care, service delivery and innovation, and highlight the opportunities and challenges we face.

The care of our clients and residents is our number one priority, so as we head into the winter months I encourage everyone to get the influenza vaccination. This year's flu season is expected to be bad, and having the flu vaccination annually will protect yourself, your family and the wider community.

We all have a role to play in preventing the spread of flu. I cannot stress enough, if you are unwell, please stay home, rest up and visit our residences when you are well.

**Andrew Kinnersly**  
CEO



## › Doris makes permanent pledge

**Uniting AgeWell resident Doris Thackery has won over the hearts and minds of people across the country through her daring fundraising efforts.**

The long-time Cancer Council supporter previously gained national attention for shaving her head at age 99 and officially opening last year's Relay For Life event in Hobart.

But, the Mornington Community, Lillian Martin resident wanted to step things up a notch this year and she dreamed up her biggest publicity stunt to date.

Doris got her first tattoo – at 101 years old.

She had the pink ribbon for breast cancer etched into her shoulder as a permanent pledge to support people with cancer.

"I can't do a lot because I've got to be wheeled about, so I do all of these little silly things," she said.

**"I'd like to thank everybody for their support, especially the Lillian Martin Community because they have been wonderful."**

Renowned tattoo artist Todd Crocker said tattooing Doris was a "once-in-a-career opportunity" and he was privileged and humbled by the experience.

The following Monday Doris took things even further, shaving her head for the cause. She was hoping her stunts would attract media attention

and encourage the community to donate to Lillian Martin's Relay For Life fundraising team.

And they did.

Hobart's WIN and 7 News, along with *The Mercury*, came to Titan Tattoo and Body Piercing to film Doris 'get inked', while morning radio shows on Triple M and 7HO radio invited her into the studio as a live guest and national television program *Sunrise* covered her efforts.

The residence smashed its fundraising target by more than double, raising \$7,009 for the Relay For Life.

Residential Services Manager Vicki Mills said her team was happy to support Doris to achieve her goals – big and small.

"Doris is an inspiration to everyone here at Lillian Martin and we are all so proud of her," she said.

The cause is very close to Doris' heart. Her own daughter passed away from breast cancer in March 2019, on the eve of the 2019 Hobart Relay For Life.

Doris said it was "more important than ever" that she attend the Hobart event, joining the Lillian Martin team in memory of her daughter.

**It's not too late to donate to Relay For Life. Visit [fundraising.cancer.org.au](https://fundraising.cancer.org.au) and search for the Lillian Martin team.** 



## ➤ Building a strong network

**We know that demand for aged care services is growing. And that demand will continue to increase as more of our baby boomers generation hit retirement age.**

One of the biggest challenges facing the aged care sector at the moment is responding to that increasing demand. It is vital that providers are adequately resourced and have appropriate infrastructure and staffing to ensure the highest standard of care for older Australians into the future.

Ensuring Uniting AgeWell is strong, smart and sustainable is a key priority for the Uniting AgeWell Board. We strive for the highest level of care in all our services and I am proud of the work we have been doing to secure the future of this great organisation.

We were encouraged in March when the Australian Government approved Uniting AgeWell for 98 additional residential care beds in Tasmania and 30 in Victoria. That announcement, along with our new developments at Hawthorn and Preston, will enable us to significantly increase the number of people we care for.

I recently visited Latrobe in north-west Tasmania and toured the renovated and extended Latrobe Community, Strathdevon. The staff and residents are very excited about the state-of-the-art changes to their home, including the new community café and beautiful landscaped gardens. We will strive to achieve that standard in all our future developments.

I also attended the opening of our new Community Services office at Magnolia House, Latrobe, where our staff connect older people with the information and services they need to live well in their own homes.

In addition, we received 18 more Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) packages as part of a \$58 million funding boost by the Australian Government. The packages, which bring our total to 28, will be delivered across the northern and eastern metropolitan Melbourne regions. They support people living at home to get back on their feet through services such as strengthening exercises, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, along with home and furniture modifications.

Expanding our services will enable more people to access high quality care and support in their home or community, in our centres or in residential care. I am proud to be part of an organisation that is able to improve accessibility to aged care, and create employment opportunities, both during construction and in the long-term.

Uniting AgeWell will continue to invest in services to build an even stronger organisation. Despite the current challenges the sector faces, we're excited about the future of aged care and supporting people as they age for a long time to come.

**Raelene Thompson**  
Board Chair

# › Entering a new era of care at Latrobe



Seniors in north-west Tasmania gained access to state-of-the-art aged care when Latrobe Community, Strathdevon, opened the doors to its \$10 million extension and renovation in May.

The new-look residence was developed using environmentally sustainable design principles and includes a new 30-bed residential wing, community areas and landscaped gardens.

Residential Services Manager Suezanne Horder said the striking building had been “the talk of Devonport”.

“We’ve received really positive feedback from the community and people have told us the building is very impressive,” she said.

**“The colour of the gardens is really beautiful and vivid and, once inside, everyone comments on how spacious it feels.”**

Uniting AgeWell aimed to create a modern and vibrant community for its residents, with a new community café, chapel, gym, hair salon, a state-of-the-art ‘cook fresh’ kitchen, multipurpose room with cinema-like capabilities and activity areas for residents to spend time with family and friends.

Suezanne said the organisation incorporated several communal lounge areas for residents and staff to use as they wished.

“There are expansive open areas where we could come together as a whole residence or large group, as well as discrete and private nooks where people can have a small group or one-on-one gathering,” she said.



The new residential wing includes 30 premium rooms, each with its own ensuite and some with outdoor patios or balconies, and several rooms designed to meet the needs of the indigenous community.

Residents at Latrobe Community, Strathdevon can join in the dynamic and engaging lifestyle and activities program, roam the sensory garden or spend time in the privacy of their own room.

Resident Bette Davey (pictured) chooses to contribute to the community just like she did while living at home. At 92, she still has the energy to keep active and enjoys pitching in to help the staff.

“We have five budgerigars and I look after them,” she said.

“I get up early in the morning to feed them and wheel the cage to a nice position for the day, then put them away at night.

“I also go down to the laundry every morning and fold the serviettes for the residents to use in the dining room. And of course, my gardening – I love working in the garden here and all the residents and families enjoy the beautiful garden.”

**Uniting AgeWell held a community Open Day in May ahead of the first residents moving in. For more information about Latrobe Community, Strathdevon, call T: 6426 2844. 🐦**

# Selfless volunteers priceless to aged care

**Volunteers are worth more than \$25 billion to the Victorian economy every year, but to Uniting AgeWell they are priceless.**

As part of National Volunteer Week in May, Uniting AgeWell held celebrations across its sites for its more than 700 volunteers who selflessly give their time to enrich the lives of others.

This includes 2018 Volunteer of the Year Victoria, Lou Bonnici, who has become an invaluable support to the Kingsville Community team over the past four years.

Volunteering three days a week, Lou provides friendship and support to the residents, along with helping the on-site hairdresser, setting up activities and attending outings with the lifestyle team.

"There are times when I'll do a one-on-one and go for a walk with a resident who likes to walk," she said.

"I might take a group outside to sit in the sun, go to the coffee shop, run the Bingo or, if we've got a concert on, I bring residents from their rooms into the lounge.

"There are times when I'll just pop in and say hello to residents because some of them don't get a lot of visitors.

Lou, who stars in a video celebrating Uniting AgeWell's volunteers, said her unpaid work was more rewarding than any paid job she ever had.

**For Mervyn Stanton, the 2018 Volunteer of the Year Tasmania, volunteering has given him "extra life".**

The 91-year-old's volunteering journey began shortly after his beloved wife, Margaret, moved into Queenborough Rise Community. He brought pot plants in from home and set them up outside her window, gaining the admiration of residents, family members and staff who visited the area.

He has since transformed gardens at Queenborough Rise, and Rosetta Communities Strathaven and Strathglenn, along with establishing a gardening club for residents at Queenborough Rise.

Merv also facilitates lifestyle activities for residents, including the crossword group, resident quiz, and bingo, assists with the weekly bus trips and participates in the weekly church service.



"The staff at Queenborough Rise are a marvellous bunch to work with and the residents over the years have become friends and family to me," he said.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly said Uniting AgeWell could not provide the high level of care its clients enjoyed every day without its loyal and devoted army of volunteers.

"Our volunteers each make a valuable contribution to Uniting AgeWell and we are extremely grateful to them for doing so," he said. 🙏



For information about becoming a Uniting AgeWell volunteer, contact 03 9251 5219 for Victoria or email [volunteers@unitingagewell.org](mailto:volunteers@unitingagewell.org). To watch the video, visit Uniting AgeWell's YouTube channel.

# > An exciting change is coming

**Uniting AgeWell will become an incorporated entity, Uniting AgeWell Limited, on 1 July, 2019.**

Incorporation marks an exciting development in the organisation's history, creating a simplified, less confusing company structure and enabling greater autonomy.

Historically, Uniting AgeWell has operated through two state-based divisions of the Uniting Church – The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trusts (Victoria)/(Tasmania) and two business entities Uniting AgeWell Victoria and Uniting AgeWell Tasmania, which can be confusing and inefficient.


While it remains wholly owned by the Uniting Church in Australia, the new company, Uniting AgeWell Limited, will become the legal entity providing all aged care services and the single employer, replacing the two state-based entities.

"It is very common for non-profit organisations across the world to be incorporated entities so this will bring Uniting AgeWell in line with current practices," Uniting AgeWell's Chief Financial Officer Graeme Barnes said.

"This is a natural progression for an organisation like Uniting AgeWell and reflects its business maturity, financial strength and robust governance processes.



"The important thing for our valued clients, staff and volunteers is the day-to-day operations of our organisation will not change; Uniting AgeWell will maintain its current procedures, client service levels, Resident and Services Agreements, staffing, management and systems and will continue as a registered charity.

"Our customers will remain at the heart of everything we do and we will continue to grow and strengthen the quality of care we provide." 



*For further queries relating to this change, please contact your site manager, client advisor or email our friendly staff at [askUA@unitingagewell.org](mailto:askUA@unitingagewell.org)*



## Help us to **STOP FLU!**

**Don't get complacent.**

We all have a role to play in preventing the spread of influenza



Get this year's flu vaccination



Cover your face to sneeze or cough



Wash your hands thoroughly



Stay at home if you feel unwell

*For more information about influenza and the Commonwealth Government's National Immunisation Program, call the **National Immunisation Hotline: 1800 671 811.***

## ➤ In brief

### World-first medication service

Uniting AgeWell has introduced a new program aimed at reducing medication-related harm and improving clients' quality of life. The new world-first model of care by Ward Medication Management, called 'Thrive', provides clients with regular medication monitoring, tailoring and review by using DNA analysis. **To register your interest in the program, talk to your Client Advisor or call T: 1300 783 435.**

### How are you tracking?

The Australian Government has launched a new website to provide people aged 45 and older with a clear picture of how their wellbeing is tracking and how to prepare for the future. Life Checks asks users questions about four key areas that research has shown are integral to our wellbeing: health, work, finance and social life. The website then provides users with a free advice plan, giving suggestions on making positive steps towards better health and greater security. **For more information, visit [lifechecks.gov.au](http://lifechecks.gov.au)**

### Connecting through food

Residences across Uniting AgeWell celebrated the diverse backgrounds of the residents, staff and volunteers that make up their communities on Harmony Day. The Hotel Services Team catered for events at each residence, making orange-iced cupcakes – because orange is the colour of Harmony Day – and cultural treats representing the backgrounds of people at their sites.

### Ethical fund manager rebrands

The Uniting Church in Australia's fund management organisation has changed its name to stand out as an ethical choice in an increasingly competitive market. UCA Funds Management became 'U Ethical' and launched a new website. U Ethical CEO Mathew Browning assured the community that the organisation's values and approach to ethical investing would remain the same. **For more information about U Ethical, call T: 1800 996 888.**

## ➤ Vision a reality 20 years on



**The Box Hill Community recently acknowledged the tireless efforts of volunteers who fundraised to establish the aged care residence 20 years ago.**

On 28 March – two decades to the day since the residence opened – residents, families and supporters joined City of Whitehorse Mayor Bill Bennett to celebrate a long history of high quality care.

Uniting AgeWell CFO Graeme Barnes said the local Uniting Church worked hard to raise funds to establish the residence at a time when there was little Government financial support for aged care.


**“The people who established this site had a lot of vision.”**

“They believed residents wanted to live in a place where they knew the community, they knew their friends and their networks. Looking at our current community, 86 per cent of our residents lived within 3km of this building,” Graeme said.

The land was originally built as a joint venture between the City of Whitehorse and the Uniting Church. Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Raelene Thompson said she hoped the organisation was “honouring those people in the work we’re doing today”.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge that this building came out of a really innovative approach to what a residential aged care home could look like,” she said.

“There was international engagement and the people who were part of the design paid attention to what was innovative and cutting-edge design. It still feels contemporary today.”

Box Hill Community marked the occasion with an afternoon tea, while more celebrations are planned for October, during the Celebration of Ageing Well. 





## Free to dream

**Planes, trains and automobiles. The Wishing Well program has had a busy few months supporting Uniting AgeWell's clients to realise their dreams on all kinds of transport.**

Craig Johnston, from Newnham Community, Aldersgate Village in Launceston, loved life in the fast lane and wished to ride in a racing car. The Wishing Well program arranged for him to hit the Symmons Plains Race Track in February for some laps in a hotted up sports car.

Craig (pictured) grinned from ear to ear after Andrew Reader from Performance Auto and Brakes took him for a spin, giving Extended Care Worker Darren Hammersley a thumbs up after his ride.

At Sorell Community, Ningana, near Hobart, Ron Smith had a lifelong interest in trains and, until this year, had never been to Tasmania's west coast.

The former railway worker dreamt of travelling west to experience the West Coast Wilderness Railway – a historic steam train and popular tourist attraction that ascends steep mountains and journeys deep into the Tasmanian wilderness.

When the Wishing Well program heard of Ron's aspiration, the team got to work – booking a three-day adventure for him and a friend, supported by Uniting AgeWell carer Dion Mead.

The trio rode the West Coast Wilderness Railway, the Rack and Gorge Tour, visited the Wall in the Wilderness at Derwent Bridge and went sightseeing around Queenstown.

Ron said it was "very lovely – the whole lot of it". He said he enjoyed every part of the journey and the company was "terrific".

**"There are not sufficient words to describe what a wonderful three days we have had."**

At Kings Meadows Community, Aldersgate, Dulcie Reeve had been wishing to fly in a helicopter for her 90th birthday. The Wishing Well program made it happen.

On the morning of Dulcie's birthday, she was picked up by limousine, thanks to Rosevears Hotel, and taken to her chopper in style. With her daughter and granddaughter by her side, Dulcie got to experience life in the air, followed by a special lunch with her family.

The above activities are among more than 100 wishes granted since the Wishing Well program began four years ago.

The program is made possible through corporate sponsorships and participating teams at Uniting AgeWell's Annual Charity Golf Day, as well as donors who contribute to the Wishing Well appeal. 🙏



For more information about the Wishing Well, or to donate, contact our Wish Coordinator on T: 9133 5012 or [wishingwell@unitingagewell.org](mailto:wishingwell@unitingagewell.org)



## ➤ Keeping safe and social

**Ensuring her mother's needs are met and that she is safe at home are vitally important to Janice Bulbul.**

Janice's mother, Marjorie, who has been diagnosed with dementia, has lived in her home for over 50 years and is able to remain living independently with some support from Uniting AgeWell.

While a member of the family is always with Marjorie overnight, spending long days alone at home were unsettling Janice and her sister Cathy.

"We're all at work during the day so she had all this time alone," she said.

"She is a very social person and as you get old you lose some of your friends and it makes it a bit harder to get out and about. Mum wanted to be with other people."

While her family was at work, Marjorie would often go looking for something to do. It left Janice and Cathy worried about where their mum was and whether she was safe.

Uniting AgeWell's services were a game-changer for Janice and her mum.

Marjorie now receives assistance with personal care at home and joins the social activities at the Mingara Day Centre in Forest Hill three days a week.

"I think the social contact with other Uniting AgeWell clients is the most valuable thing," Janice said.

"She will have a coffee with like-minded friends, they might do a few word games, play bingo or have a music group and she enjoys that.

**"The staff also encourage mum's independence and enable her to make a contribution by making her own coffee or lunch."**

One day a week, Marjorie goes on a small group outing with other women. They do a different activity each week – including going to a shopping centre, visiting local botanic gardens, seeing a movie or going on a scenic drive – and the activities are driven by the group members.

"Mum loves to get up in the morning now and the activities give her purpose," Janice said. 🕊



To find out about more about how Uniting AgeWell supports people at home and in the community, contact T: 1300 783 435 or visit [unitingagewell.org](http://unitingagewell.org)

# ➤ Pinpointing age-related muscle loss

**The loss of muscle mass and strength is often an unfortunate side effect of ageing. Sarcopenia, as it is scientifically called, can seriously impact health, wellbeing and quality of life.**

The potentially life-threatening condition affects mobility, increases the risk of falls and fractures and often affects independence.

But Uniting AgeWell and Victoria University are working together to try to change that through the 'Your Muscles Matter' study, which recruited participants in March.

Sarcopenia was formally recognised as a disease in the United States in 2016 and there is an expectation that Australia will soon follow. That recognition will bring increased awareness, diagnosis and a market for treatments for people living with the condition.

Uniting AgeWell and Victoria University aim to be at the forefront of Australia's research. The university's team is investigating whether – along with other health benefits – the incidence of sarcopenia reduces as participants gain muscle mass, strength and function.

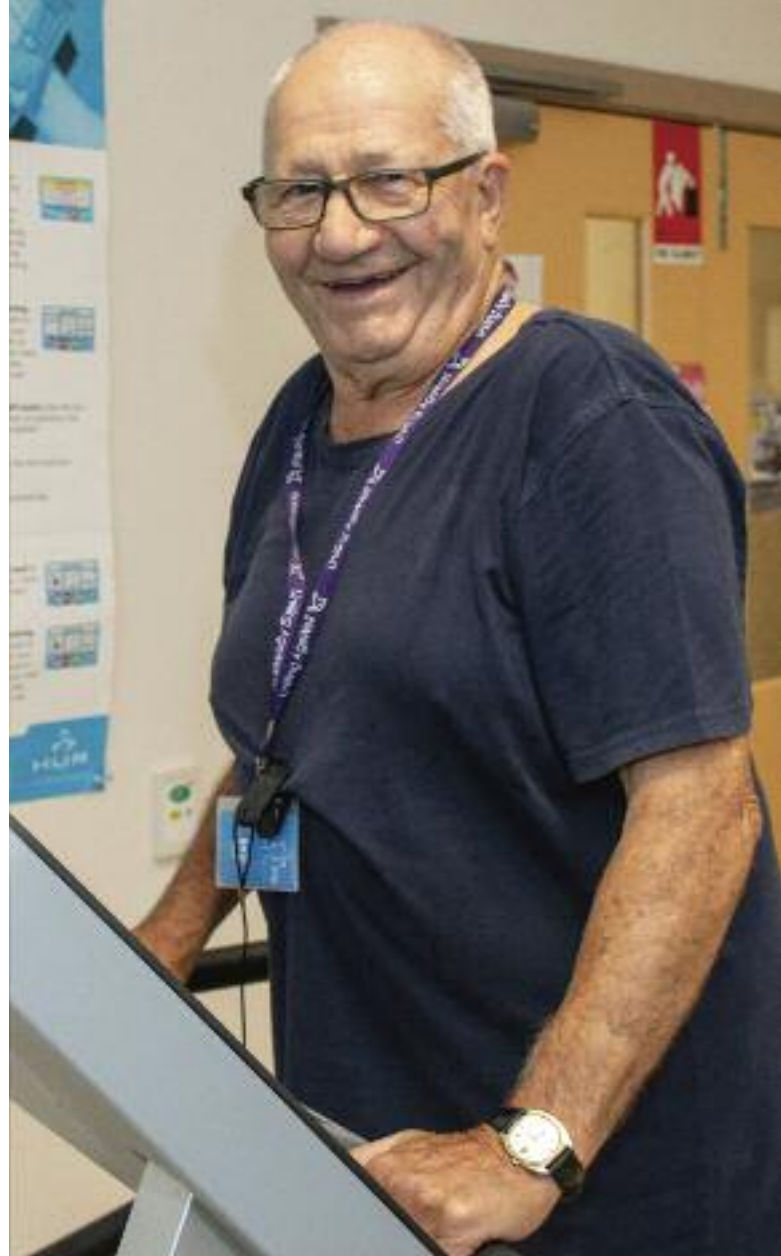
Regional Manager AgeWell Centres Melbourne, Amanda Mehegan, said researchers would test increasing evidence that demonstrated therapeutic interventions, particularly resistance training, improved health and quality of life outcomes for those with or at risk of sarcopenia.

More than 100 Uniting AgeWell clients from the Forest Hill, Hawthorn, Noble Park and Oakleigh AgeWell Centres have volunteered to be involved in the study.

"We had an amazing response from our very engaged clients," she said.

"We have kicked off the study with clinical body density scans and are working through physical assessments for all participants. Our clients have especially loved gaining insight into their bone and muscle health from the body density scans. This has been a real motivator for them."

Noble Park AgeWell Centre client Bernie Lellyett, who is participating in the study, formally exercises two or three times a week and leads an active lifestyle.



The 81-year-old (pictured) feels relatively fit and strong but wanted to participate in the study to help gather valuable information to help his peers.

**"I think it's beneficial for everyone if these types of studies are done because we get information that might help us in the long run."**

Over the next several months, the participants will work through their individual exercise programs under the supervision of Uniting AgeWell exercise physiologists and physiotherapists.

Researchers will evaluate the participants' food intake, quality of life, sarcopenia risk and physical ability – strength, balance and other functions – throughout the study.

**Uniting AgeWell will share the results of the study when they become available.** 🐦



## > A harmonious partnership

Melbourne Recital Centre CEO Euan Murdoch (left) pictured at the partnership launch with Uniting AgeWell Board Chair Raelene Thompson and CEO Andrew Kinnersly.

**Uniting AgeWell and acclaimed music destination Melbourne Recital Centre (MRC) officially launched their 2019 partnership at an event in April.**

Uniting AgeWell is the Melbourne Recital Centre's official Aged Care Partner and sponsor of the International Chamber Ensemble series.

A number of guests, including Uniting AgeWell clients, were invited to the partnership launch at the Centre on Tuesday, 9 April, followed by a Uniting AgeWell-sponsored performance of *Trio Wanderer*.

CEO Andrew Kinnersly said Uniting AgeWell was proud to partner with the world-renowned organisation that entertained almost 200,000 attendees last year.

"Music is a really important part of our clients' lives, as well as being a valuable tool used in our care delivery," he said.

"Music harnesses joy and evokes powerful emotions in listeners and can encourage social interaction and reminiscence, which improves the quality of life of older people.

"This partnership will ensure beautiful music continues to be part of their lives while informing the Centre's audiences how Uniting AgeWell can support seniors to remain vibrant members of the community as they age."

Melbourne Recital Centre CEO Euan Murdoch said he was delighted to partner with Uniting AgeWell.

"Music is life affirming, and the centre's music enhances wellbeing for people at all life stages," he said.

"We're delighted to be partnering with Uniting AgeWell and look forward to welcoming its clients and staff to a diverse range of concerts this year."

As part of the partnership, a pop-up concert will be held at Uniting AgeWell's Strathdon Community in Forest Hill, coinciding with the Celebration of Ageing Well in October. 🐦



The Melbourne Recital Centre is offering a special membership deal for Uniting AgeWell clients and supporters. Mention this article when purchasing an annual membership during the month of June, and receive a second year free. For more information, contact the Centre on T: 9699 3333.



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 Caitlin Pearson at [cpearson@unitingagewell.org](mailto:cpearson@unitingagewell.org) or call T: 9133 5018.



Uniting AgeWell

Front Cover:

James Learmonth and Gabrielle Kingshott enjoying a sunny day in one of Kingsville Community's landscaped courtyards.

Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia