

mecwacare

WINTER 2021

# matters



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*Caring for Victorians since 1959*



# Staying safe in an *unpredictable* world

Every day we hear distressing details about how the global COVID-19 crisis is devastating countries, reminding us that it is still very much an ongoing threat in Australia too.

“COVID normal” is a fortunate position for us to be in compared to countries such as India. Poverty and a lack of medical resources is fuelling the spread of the virus at staggering rates.

I have heard many upsetting stories from our staff and volunteers about the terrible situations facing their loved ones overseas. Our thoughts are with them and anyone who is cut off from their families and friends due to travel restrictions.

It is a stark reminder that we must maintain and strengthen our infection prevention practices here.

While the COVID-19 vaccine is not compulsory, it is heartening to see growing public support. The Commonwealth Government’s rollout

of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines allows us to make a choice about protecting ourselves and our loved ones.

This message is not hard to sell. Our staff, volunteers and contractors have responded overwhelmingly. We appreciate that the more people who are vaccinated, the safer you, our residents and clients, care homes and community centres will be.

Most importantly, the steady progress of vaccination across *mecwacare*’s aged care homes is bringing peace of mind. There are scheduling challenges with integrating this year’s flu vaccine into the overall vaccination program. However, this is just the flip side of an increasingly positive situation.

Despite the occasional serious COVID-19 threat, such as the one that caused Perth’s abrupt lockdown, Victoria’s snap five-day lockdown earlier this year and more recently, the Sydney and Melbourne scares, *mecwacare*’s business is continuing to pick up pace in 2021.

It has been a strong period for building projects. We are transforming our newly acquired aged care home, Squires Place

in Altona North, to the quality expected of *mecwacare*, arranging a special event to mark the start of on-site work at the new Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert and building a new home care office on the Mornington Peninsula.

We honoured the heroic and dedicated efforts of many of our staff behind our COVID-19 response. Our supporters’ generosity continued with the donation of heated throw blankets for our community housing residents. They loved the gift and their joyous reaction was typical of the wonderful results we see from sharing people’s care and kindness.

This newsletter also highlights the amazing Flora Looker, who turned 106 in April, and how we are seeing more centenarians, with 57 of our aged care residents and home care clients turning 100 or older this year.

I hope you and your families stay safe and well.

**Michele Lewis**  
Chief Executive

*Pictured on the cover:*  
Piroska enjoying her new heated throw rug.  
See story, page 6

# A place to call home



In March, we were delighted to take ownership of a major western suburbs aged care home in Altona North and welcome residents and staff to the *mecwacare* family.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONTEMPORARY HOME OR ANY OF MECWACARE’S AGED CARE HOMES, PLEASE CONTACT OUR FRIENDLY ADMISSIONS TEAM ON 8573 4812.

*mecwacare* Squires Place is our 14th care home and complements other residences in the west, *mecwacare* John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing and *mecwacare* Vincent House in Westmeadows.

As part of the integration into *mecwacare*, the two-storey home is undergoing a significant renovation into a modern and comfortable 60-bed residence, with a café, library, hair and beauty salon, cinema, spacious lounge and dining rooms.

We have reduced the number of beds to 30 while we undertake this major upgrade and extension, which includes converting 45 rooms with shared

bathrooms into 60 rooms with individual bathrooms.

These works, which are due to be completed by December 2021, will enhance the home’s comfort, design, functionality and accessibility, and give residents the quality home they deserve.

Squires Place is a warm and inviting residence, set amongst landscaped gardens, and is a short drive from the beach and all that scenic Port Phillip Bay has to offer.

Squires Place (formerly Florence Aged Care) has been named after long-serving *mecwacare* Board Member and Treasurer Colin Squires.

## Who we are

*mecwacare* is a not-for-profit, non-denominational charitable organisation that has been supporting Victorians for more than 60 years. We are a values-based, care-driven organisation that provides residential, community and in-home nursing, care and support services for the elderly and people living with a disability.

*mecwacare* was founded by a small group of volunteers concerned about the elderly and vulnerable in their local area and formally became the Malvern Elderly Citizens Welfare Association (MECWA) in 1959. In 2007, MECWA changed its name to *mecwacare* to better represent the organisation’s focus as it grew into a major provider of aged care and disability services across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

## Looking for RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE?

We have over 60 years' experience in providing care and support to the elderly. If you are looking for residential aged care that feels like home and provides quality, safe and genuine care, then *mecwacare* is perfect for your next stage in life.

### Our residential aged care locations:

- Altona North
- Caulfield North
- Glen Iris
- Hamlyn Heights (Geelong)
- Hoppers Crossing
- Malvern
- Mornington
- Mont Albert
- Prahran
- Richmond
- Safety Beach
- Shoreham
- Traralgon
- Westmeadows

**BOOK A TOUR TODAY**

8573 4812



# The *changing* picture of ageing at mecwacare



*How often do you meet a wonderful mature lady who can proudly show you a photo of herself as a three-year-old in 1918?*

*Enter, the exceptional Flora Looker.*



*Flora Looker, aged 106 in 2021 and three in 1918*

Flora Looker turned the grand age of 106 on April 15. A beloved resident at mecwacare's Rositano House in Richmond, Flora is just one of our residents who has attained the magical three-figure milestone.

This year across mecwacare's 14 aged care homes, 18 residents will celebrate their 100th and 100-plus birthdays.

And while that is an impressive figure, another 39 of our clients still living in their own homes will celebrate their century birthdays or higher this year.

Global data confirms what we are seeing in our homes and among our clients – a steady increase in longevity, marked by rising rates of people living to 100.

These statistics add up to a fascinating picture of how people are ageing, both within aged care facilities and in their own homes.

Better medical care and health awareness, along with a commitment to assist people to live in their own home for as long as possible, are credited with driving the increase.

And there are personality indicators, too.

**THIS YEAR  
18 RESIDENTS  
CELEBRATE THEIR  
100+ BIRTHDAYS IN OUR  
AGED CARE HOMES**



Flora's story confirms insights coming through about our centenarians, especially their personalities and resilience.

Tragic family losses – her husband and both sons died at an early age – resulted in Flora becoming fiercely independent.

She brought this independence with her when she moved into the then Sir Eric Pearce House in 2009. She is known for becoming very engaged in conversation, with strong opinions, and for giving wise worldly advice.

Until a couple of years ago, Flora would regularly walk down to Bridge Road to do her shopping, visit the bank and post office. She had her regular shops and friendships where she would drop in for a chat.

# Sunny side of the street



*Steven Lambert and Alan Bullas inspecting one of the new hybrid vehicles*

Solar panels will be installed at three mecwacare sites this year and our vehicle fleet is heading to hybrid as part of an expanding sustainability program.

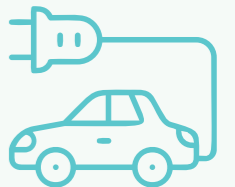
Work is underway to install solar panels at our corporate office in Malvern Road and two aged care homes, mecwacare Jubilee House in Caulfield North and mecwacare John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing.

This is the first stage of a five-year program that aims to complete solar installations across our residential services portfolio. mecwacare currently has solar panels at mecwacare Annie's Court in Shoreham, mecwacare Calwell Manor in Safety Beach and the East Malvern Opportunity Shop.

Two energy services companies with aged care experience have been appointed to undertake the work. They will install voltage optimisation technology that will boost savings and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

mecwacare's three community housing complexes in Beaumaris, Glen Iris and Sandringham are also being assessed for solar installations.

## Green Initiatives



- Nineteen hybrid vehicles will be added to our fleet this financial year as the first stage of implementing a full hybrid vehicle fleet by 2023-24.

We have selected the Toyota Corolla Hybrid Ascent Sport and the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid GX. Hybrids perform like a petrol vehicle, but save energy and provide a calmer, more responsive driving experience.

- Efficient lighting through LED upgrades is also reducing running costs while boosting efficiency.

LED lighting has so far been installed at:

- Annie's Court, Shoreham
- Calwell Manor, Safety Beach
- Elstoft House, Geelong
- Malvern Centre, Malvern
- Park Hill, Mornington
- House, Pakenham

- Printing and waste management have been identified as other areas for use of more efficient and environmental technologies.



# Rugging up for winter

Jeff and his new heated throw rug

Delivering heated throw blankets to residents in our community housing brought joy, gratitude and smiles.

This was care and kindness in action.

Our distribution team was barely back in the office before the messages of thanks started arriving via email.

"I am overwhelmed by such generosity, thank you so much," said one long-time resident.

Another resident couldn't believe the coincidence and her good fortune.

"I had my 80th birthday on Sunday and I had put out some strong hints to family members that a heated throw would be appreciated," she wrote.

"To my disappointment these hints fell on deaf ears, so imagine my joy and amazement when I discovered a heated throw from mecwacare, on my doorstep on Monday morning!"

These soft and warm blankets were made possible by a very generous donation from the Durrabool Fund, whose benefactors had received one of the blankets as a gift themselves.

They loved it so much, they wanted mecwacare's community housing residents to have one, too.

mecwacare's role in "brokering" the gift is another important facet of our work supporting Victoria's frail and vulnerable citizens.

Not only are the blankets an example of community caring in action, they provide a warm and cosy winter "retreat" and help keep the cost of electricity down – an important contribution to energy efficiency and a saving for our community housing residents.

Glen Iris resident Piroska was delighted when she received her blanket. She said she was incredibly grateful for the gift and looking forward to keeping warm on the coldest days and nights.

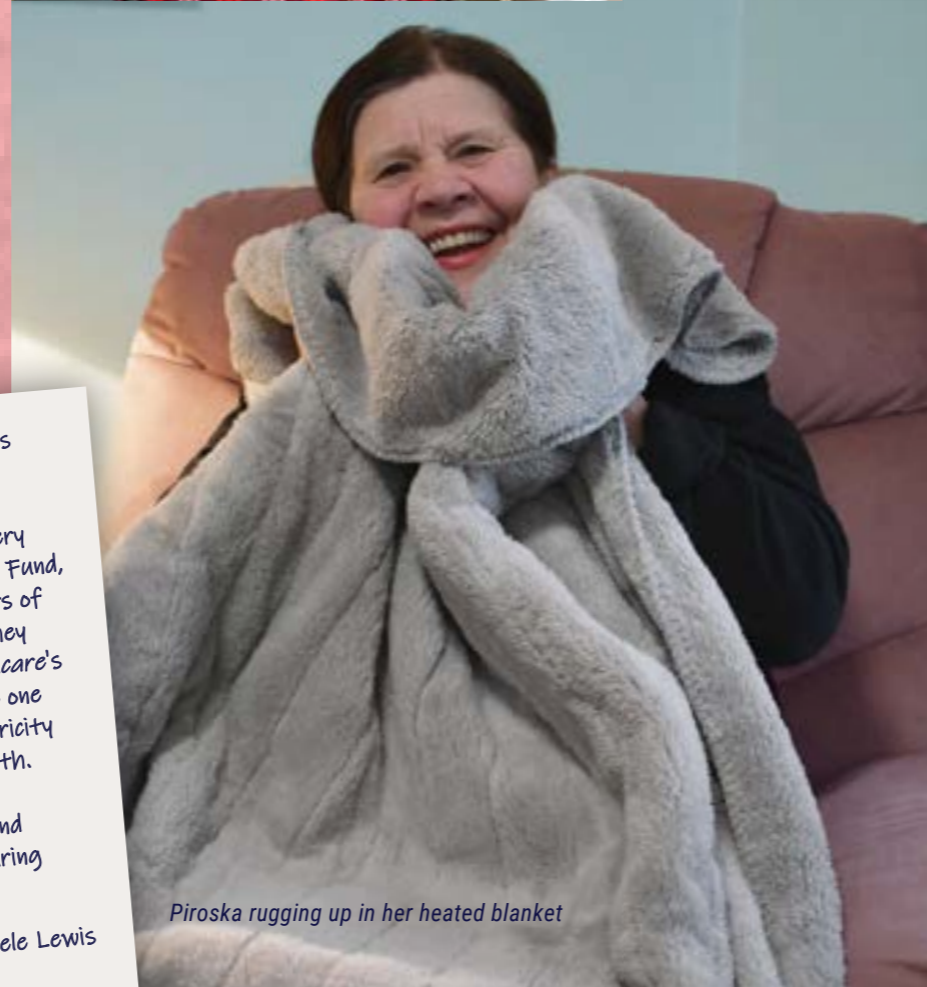
Each blanket was delivered with a note from Chief Executive Michele Lewis, which residents also appreciated.

I am delighted to provide you with this gift of a heated throw blanket.

This blanket was purchased with a very generous donation from the Durrabool Fund, whose benefactors were the recipients of one of these blankets themselves. They loved it so much, they wanted mecwacare's community housing residents to have one too – and help keep the cost of electricity down while providing essential warmth.

I hope you enjoy your new blanket and that it keeps you warm and cosy during Melbourne's chilly winter months.

Michele Lewis



Piroska rugging up in her heated blanket



Barbara Watts and Chris Barnett delivering the heated throw blankets

## Secure and affordable housing



mecwacare's community housing program provides residents with their very own home in one of three prime locations across Melbourne. It is designed to provide comfort and independence for people who are over 65, or living with a disability, and who meet the Department of Health's eligibility criteria for a concessional rent allowance.

Our community housing complexes in Glen Iris, Sandringham and Beaumaris provide a private space and shared garden, which fosters social opportunities. We hope that by providing quality, affordable housing for people experiencing difficulties or at risk of homelessness, this burden will be eased.

mecwacare's units are disability and ageing-friendly, allowing residents to live independently for many years. mecwacare offers care and support services into the home, including Home Care Packages, clinical assessments, medication and wound management, as well as support with personal care, such as showering, dressing and grooming.

There are plans to expand our community housing portfolio as we work to provide more options for people who are financially and/or socially disadvantaged. Our units provide a safe and secure home close to shops and public transport.



If you would like to know more about our community housing program, please call **8573 4970** or email [housing@mecwacare.org.au](mailto:housing@mecwacare.org.au)



# Creativity turns a corner

Natasha's Crafty Corner is a colourful little column that is making a big, bright difference to readers of a newsletter, published by participants at mecwacare's Fisher Street Disability Day Centre.



Natasha (front), Rachel and Mark

And Rachel and Mark are cooking up quite a following of their own as Fisher Street gets back into full swing after the disruptions of COVID-19 last year.

Natasha is one of the newsletter's popular new columnists, sharing hints and "how-to" tips – and even getting fan mail from appreciative readers.

Her latest craft project is an easy-to-make fan that requires only paper plates, acrylic paint, craft sticks, glue and a black permanent marker.

With clear instructions, Natasha and her fellow participants are able to create an eye-catching fan that is easy to use and effective.

Turn the page and another new columnist is offering a mouth-watering project – chocolate-dipped strawberries. Mark's Sweet Corner is another well-read instructional column.

The introduction of columnists has become a staple of the newsletter after the content challenges of COVID-19; lockdown restrictions upended the activity-based program for which Fisher Street is renowned and which was a newsletter feature.

With that program and all the news temporarily on hold, the centre faced a challenge to fill the pages while trying to keep the newsletter interesting to centre participants.

During a brainstorm with staff, Rachel mentioned her passion for food and how much she enjoyed the cooking and lifestyle programs at Fisher Street.

She suggested including a recipe and staff seized the opportunity. Rachel's Recipe Corner was born and a new era started for participant contributions to the newsletter.

*"What started as a once-off addition to the newsletter soon became a much-loved column that has evolved into three different subjects,"* said Kevin Kreiner, Regional Manager of Community Services.

*"When we resumed services and more participants started to return to the centre, we created a program plan for the newsletter project, where participants brainstorm ideas to create a monthly issue filled with valuable information, updates and activities."*



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MECWACARE'S DISABILITY SERVICES, PLEASE CALL 9572 9000



# In the swing of success



Golf Day winners: Bidfood Victoria



Golf Day runners up: Sheen Malvern

mecwacare's 20th Charity Golf Day at one of Victoria's top sandbelt courses in March was one of our most successful events, with 108 players teeing off in near-perfect conditions.

Players rose to the occasion, bringing their best games to the fairways of the internationally-recognised Yarra Yarra Golf Club in Bentleigh East.

This challenging, picturesque course saw a tight contest in the four-person ambrose competition followed by lunch in the heritage clubhouse.

One of our new sponsors – Bidfood Victoria – carded 56 to just pip the perennial top-performing team from Sheen Malvern, who carded 57<sup>1/8</sup>.

It was a fantastic day despite having to be rescheduled due to the snap five-day lockdown in February.

mecwacare's signature fundraising event was made possible by the support of our amazing sponsors and community partners, including the Community Bank Malvern East, Medsafe and United Physiotherapy Group.

On top of the invaluable sponsorships, a generously supported raffle raised funds for our new campaign **Standing Strong**. mecwacare is installing purpose-built strength training equipment, designed specifically for elderly people, in every one of our 14 aged care homes and community centres – at a cost of \$18,100 each.

## Our Sponsors

- SILVER SPONSORS**
- Community Bank East Malvern
  - MedSafe
  - United Physiotherapy
  - Bidfood Victoria

- BRONZE SPONSORS**
- Accru Melbourne
  - Fisher Lane Mobility
  - Gary Peer & Associates
  - LeasePlus
  - Sheen Malvern
  - Amicum
  - Norden Conversion
  - Essential Fire Safety Services
  - Medirect
  - PTA Architecture
  - Spectrol
  - Moores



# Celebrating our pandemic heroes



mecwacare's annual awards honoured the heroic and dedicated work of the many people behind our response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. They worked tirelessly throughout 2020 to keep our residents and clients safe.

We had a record number of nominations (81) and a record number of categories, which was necessary to recognise so many deserving people who delivered exceptional care and supported their colleagues in one of mecwacare's most challenging years.

Chief Executive Michele Lewis presented 26 awards that recognised individuals and teams who live the mecwacare values of Caring, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical. Our values unite us. They underpin everything we do across the many services we provide.

Ms Lewis said she was incredibly proud of how everybody responded to the challenges. She said the awards recognised very deserving people and the exceptional work performed by so many at the height of the crisis.

A recurring theme was the incredible efforts of staff in our residential services and other areas who stepped up to work at the John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing – the only mecwacare home to have an outbreak.



If you would like to know more about working for mecwacare, visit the Careers section on our website at [mecwacare.org.au](https://mecwacare.org.au)

## mecwacare 2021 Employee, Volunteer and Contractor Awards winners

### Chief Executive Leadership Award (Residential Services)

Loretta Radge, *General Manager, Residential Services*

### Chief Executive Leadership Award (Home and Community Services)

Linda Smart, *Executive General Manager, Home and Community Services*

### Chief Executive Leadership Award (Corporate Services)

Susan Camilleri, *General Manager, People and Culture*

### Employee of the Year (Residential Services)

Annette McLean, *Regional Support Manager*

### Employee of the Year (Home and Community Services)

Kevin Kreiner, *Regional Manager, Community Services*

### Employee of the Year (Corporate Services)

Luke Angliss, *Gardening Services*

### Clinician of the Year (Residential Services)

Mohammed Oukal, *Facility Manager, Malvern Centre (now at Annie's Court and Calwell Manor)*

### Clinician of the Year (Home and Community Services)

Caroline McLelland, *Assessment Officer, South East Region*

### Carer of the Year (Residential Services)

Saffron Wileman, *Personal Care Assistant, Elstoft House*

### Carer of the Year (Home and Community Services)

Ashlee Roberts, *Direct Care Worker, North West Metro*

### Learning and Development Award

Paramjit (Pally) Singh, *Facility Manager, Rositano House (now at John Atchison Centre)*

### Support Service Award (Residential Services)

Eleanor Hills, *Personal Care Assistant/Laundry Assistant, John Atchison Centre*

### Support Service Award (Home and Community Services)

Seung (Steve) Tac Yahng, *Direct Care Worker, South East Metro*

### Support Service Award (Corporate Services)

Jessica Lemoine, *Quality Advisor*

### Administrator of the Year/Support Service Award (Residential Services)

Kylie Peacock, *Park Hill*

### Administrator of the Year Award (Home and Community Services)

Miranda Kellett, *Administration Officer, South West Region*

### Administrator of the Year Award (Corporate Services)

Peter Griffin, *General Manager, Information Technology*

### Encouragement Award (Residential Services)

Amanjot Brar, *Clinical Care Coordinator, Noel Miller Centre*

### Encouragement Award (Home Nursing Care Services)

Dumida Niyamgoda, *Direct Care Worker, Barwon Region*

### Encouragement Award (Corporate Services)

Daniela Campana-Leesa, *Human Resources Administrator*

### Encouragement Award (Community Services)

Christine Gardner, *Meals Service Coordinator, City of Melbourne*

### Contractor of the Year

Michael Evans, *Ripley Plumbing*

### Volunteer of the Year

Marjorie Waite, *Op Shop, East Malvern*

### Volunteer of the Year

Noel and Julie Farmilio, *Meals on Wheels (Leongatha) Gippsland Region*

### Long-term Contribution Award

Lucy Chapman, *Facility Manager, Simon Price Centre*

### Chief Executive Special Award (Teams)

Home Care Nursing Team – Clare Chalmers, Dee Greenwood and June Davis

## I would like to support mecwacare

Please complete and return this donation slip to support mecwacare's life-changing work.

Please find enclosed my tax deductible gift of:

\$25  \$50  \$250  \$500  My choice \$

Where would you like your donation to go?

- Elderly people  
 People living with a disability  
 People experiencing financial hardship  
 Area of greatest need

### CONTACT DETAILS

Title  Mr  Miss  Mrs  Ms  Mx  Other:

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

Date of Birth (optional) / /

I would like to receive information about remembering mecwacare in my Will.

I would like to know more about volunteering at mecwacare.

I DO NOT want to receive further correspondence from mecwacare.

### PAYMENT DETAILS

I am paying by:  Cheque

Visa  Mastercard  AMEX AMEX ID / /

Card No. / /

Expiry Date / CVV

Cardholder Name

Signature

Fill out the donation form and mail your cheque or credit card information to: mecwacare, 1287 Malvern Road, Malvern VIC 3144

Call us with your payment details (freecall) 1800 163 292 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. We accept AMEX, Visa and Mastercard.



# mecwacare

## Service Network

### CORPORATE SERVICES

**A** 1287 Malvern Road  
Malvern VIC 3144  
**P** 03 8573 4888  
**P** 1800 163 292 (freecall)  
**E** enquiries@mecwacare.org.au  
**w** mecwacare.org.au

### RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

**P** 03 8573 4812  
**E** admissions@mecwacare.org.au

**mecwacare Annie's Court**  
Shoreham

**mecwacare Calwell Manor**  
Safety Beach

**mecwacare Elstoft House**  
Hamlyn Heights (Geelong)

**mecwacare John Atchison Centre**  
Hoppers Crossing

**mecwacare Jubilee House**  
Caulfield North

**mecwacare Malvern Centre**  
Malvern

**mecwacare Noel Miller Centre**  
Glen Iris

**mecwacare O'Mara House**  
Traralgon

**mecwacare Park Hill**  
Mornington

**mecwacare Rositano House**  
Richmond

**mecwacare Simon Price Centre**  
Mont Albert

**mecwacare Squires Place**  
Altona North

**mecwacare Trescowthick Centre**  
Prahran

**mecwacare Vincent House**  
Westmeadows

### RETIREMENT LIVING

**P** 03 8573 4970  
**E** housing@mecwacare.org.au

Hoppers Crossing  
Malvern

### HOME CARE SERVICES

**P** 03 8573 4980  
**E** intake@mecwacare.org.au

**North West Metro** Keilor East

**South East Metro** Malvern

**South East Region** Pakenham

**South West Region** Ballarat

**Barwon Region** Geelong

**Gippsland Region** Inverloch

### HOME CARE PACKAGES (statewide)

**P** 03 8573 4812  
**E** homecarepackages@  
mecwacare.org.au

### COMMUNITY SERVICES

**P** 03 8573 4980  
**E** community@mecwacare.org.au

**Bass Coast** Cowes (Phillip Island)

**Barry Fenton Centre  
and Podiatry Service**  
Malvern East

**Rivendell House** Pakenham

### DISABILITY SERVICES

**P** 03 9572 9000  
**E** community@mecwacare.org.au

**Fisher Street Centre**  
Malvern East

### COMMUNITY HOUSING

**P** 03 8573 4970  
**E** housing@mecwacare.org.au

Beaumaris  
Glen Iris  
Sandringham

### OPPORTUNITY SHOPS

**P** 03 9571 4221 (donations)  
**E** enquiries@mecwacare.org.au

Hawthorn  
Malvern  
Malvern East  
Windsor



LUXURY APARTMENT LIVING - YOUR PERFECT RETIREMENT OPTION



## Make the move to Robin Syme Malvern

Enjoy a welcoming community of like-minded people, offering you a safe and secure environment where you can live life to the fullest.

A new boutique retirement village in Malvern, offering all you need and love within easy reach. You will find a limited edition of 31 luxurious two and three-bedroom residences that have been crafted to perfection, purely with your needs in mind.



LUXURY APARTMENT LIVING - YOUR PERFECT RETIREMENT OPTION



## Robin Syme

Malvern

RESIDENCES BY

mecwacare

## Inspect now

OPEN FOR INSPECTION  
WED AND FRI 11AM-NOON  
OR BY APPOINTMENT

Contact Pauline 9831 9876

robinsymemalvern.com.au  
1259 Malvern Road, Malvern