

matters care

SPRING 2020

IN THIS EDITION

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1959 - 2019

Caring for Victorians since 1959

Hope blooms for a Better Tomorrow



When COVID-19 cases started to reach into the hundreds daily and outbreaks were being reported in Victorian aged care centres, it was clear that we had entered a new and challenging period of this pandemic.

Our proactive strategy, which has included a suite of robust infection prevention and control measures since the pandemic began, has always had one thing at its core – to keep our residents and clients safe. This included asking staff to work for one employer rather than multiple employers in an effort to minimise the risk of coronavirus entering sites, centres and homes.

mecwacare provides advanced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), more than what was initially recommended by health authorities. This means staff are able to work across mecwacare facilities because they practise the same level of diligence with PPE. This is to keep our residents, clients and staff as protected as possible.

As we know, this virus is cunning and unfortunately an outbreak did occur at the mecwacare John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing — the suburb where cases were most prominent. When the outbreak began, we zoned infected residents to one section of the building to limit the spread and commenced testing every 48-72 hours for staff and residents. Working with the relevant authorities, who were supportive of mecwacare's management of the outbreak, we did everything we could to keep our beloved residents safe and supported.

mecwacare also had a staff member at the mecwacare Trescowthick Centre test positive for coronavirus. The staff member wore the correct PPE and followed strict protocol when providing care and support services. Thankfully, no residents were infected and there was no outbreak.

In the midst of lockdown and ongoing challenges, we were touched by the hope projected by our staff, volunteers and the wider community.

While our community centres closed, the staff at the mecwacare Barry Fenton Centre brushed up on their sewing skills to make face masks as part of their care packages for our most vulnerable clients. They have created masks from fabric stock at the centre in a range of bright colours and designs. Our clients were thrilled when their personalised masks started to arrive on their doorstep.

We signed up our 500th volunteer and continue to be inspired by their selfless work ethic, eagerness to assist in any way possible and their acceptance of new opportunities. While our op shops were required to close during lockdown in line with restrictions, our drivers continue to deliver meals and goods to clients to keep the essential services running.

Bunnings Hoppers Crossing generously donated a potted succulent to every resident at the mecwacare John Atchison Centre, and Haigh's Chocolates donated 250 individually wrapped chocolate hearts to lift the spirits of residents for Father's Day.

I would like to encourage readers to check out our social media pages to read about all the good things that are happening at the organisation, including the activities at our residential aged care facilities. We consistently have heart-warming stories coming through from staff and volunteers caring for our residents and clients, and these stories bring a smile to our faces each day. We hope they can also bring a smile to yours too.

Michele Lewis
Chief Executive

Tower of strength during pandemic

Janette Eastaugh has been a Direct Care Worker with mecwacare for more than five years, but never did she think that “lockdowns” would feature in her role.

Janette works in mecwacare’s City of Melbourne region and some of her clients live in the public housing towers that were isolated due to the coronavirus in July.

Nine towers, located in Flemington and North Melbourne, and home to about 3,000 residents in 1,345 units, were suddenly placed into lockdown after it was revealed some tenants had contracted the virus. Despite the challenging situation, it was business as usual for Janette.

Initially, the lockdown meant Janette could not enter the towers to provide food or cleaning services to her clients. Permission was required from the Department of Health and Human Services, and eventually she was able to continue providing much-needed support.

“I felt safe in full PPE and never hesitated to provide support,” Janette said. “But clients in the towers were concerned about being isolated and fearful about how long this would last.”

While the focus on tasks and the assistance provided to clients did not change, the use of PPE and other mandatory precautions each day required discipline and additional care when entering all homes, not just those in the towers.

Janette’s biggest challenge has been to alleviate the concerns of her clients, as they are fearful of the virus getting inside their homes. However, through the use of advanced PPE, mecwacare’s COVID-19 management strategy and Janette’s reassuring approach, clients know their health is in good hands.

“ I felt safe in full PPE and never hesitated to provide support.”



A lifetime of volunteer service

Volunteers have been the lifeblood of mecwacare for more than 60 years. Without the support and generous gift of time from our 510 volunteers, we would not be where we are today.

Glenys Crozier has been a familiar face at mecwacare O'Mara House in Traralgon for 40 years, washing and setting residents' hair every week. Originally part of the local auxiliary, Glenys and the ladies organised activities for residents, such as bus trips, lunches at popular locations, fetes, bingo, afternoon teas and other hobbies the residents loved. Sadly, the auxiliary folded four years ago but that did not stop Glenys.

Glenys continues to give back to her local community, visiting O'Mara House every Tuesday to wash and style residents' hair. When asked why she still volunteers, Glenys said that over the years she had become good friends with the residents and she really enjoys spending one-on-one time with them, something she intends to do for as long as possible.

mecwacare is always looking for volunteers to support our programs and activities, including our four op shops in Malvern, Malvern East, Windsor and Hawthorn, 13 residential facilities across Melbourne and regional Victoria, and community centres.

For more information on how you can make a positive contribution to your local community, contact our Volunteer Coordinator on 03 8573 4808, or email volunteers@mecwacare.org.au.



Pictured: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH MECWACARE?

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CHALKING UP A MAJOR MILESTONE

mecwacare's 500th volunteer has signed up to provide transport services in Pakenham.

While the milestone was exciting for us, having been founded by a group of volunteers back in 1959, Graeme Eddy was equally thrilled to come on board and donate his time.

Graeme was made redundant a few months ago due to the impact of COVID-19. Believing everyone needs a reason to get up in the morning, Graeme started the hunt for a role that would keep him active. Fit and healthy for his age, he felt he had something to give to the elderly.

Whether it was a regular conversation or a personal task they needed assistance with, Graeme put his hand up to help.

Graeme was in a major accident 10 years ago, which made him realise that everyone needs a hand at some point in life. With a few "war wounds" that are manageable, Graeme is community-minded and loves refereeing basketball and riding his motorbike with his partner.

He is looking forward to transporting clients to and from appointments as soon as the coronavirus risk has passed.

We are delighted to welcome Graeme to the team at mecwacare.

Every volunteer has a story. If you would like to share your story, please email fundraising@mecwacare.org.au.



Pictured: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Home is where the heart is

This year has seen many challenges in the provision of services, but mecwacare's home care expansion has been a major achievement in our growth agenda to reach more people in need than ever before.

A new home care office was established in the Geelong suburb of Hamlyn Heights last month to service the Geelong region. We also relocated our Nillumbik and City of Melbourne service teams to mecwacare's Keilor office so all home-based care services that support clients across the Northern and Western metro regions are facilitated from a single site.

mecwacare has also taken over management of the delivery of meals in Nillumbik from Nillumbik Shire Council. Our Gippsland Region Office, based in Inverloch, commenced services in Bass Coast and we increased services in our Malvern office with the introduction of the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People.

RESI CARE ARTICLE / ADVERTISEMENT

Artist in residence

– June Alderslade

June Alderslade, 95, has been a resident at mecwacare Park Hill in Mornington since April 2015. She started drawing and painting at the age of 10 and has continued her passion throughout her life without any formal art tuition.

In her younger years, June worked as a mechanical tracer where she professionally sketched mechanical parts by hand. It was in this role that she learnt the technique of realism drawing. June believes her days as a tracer taught her how to draw to scale and "just get it right", no matter how long it took.

June has always loved drawing and painting. She spends time every day at the home creating new pieces, firstly using a mapping pen and then a fine point pen for the detail. When June's children grew up, she continued to paint using watercolour. Initially, she was drawn to painting flowers, still life and portraits. Since moving into Park Hill, she has been painting animals – and the quality of her work has blown everyone away.

June paints and draws most days, and her first collaborative public display was as part of the home's "Expressions Exhibition" at the Oak Hill Gallery in Mornington. June is looking forward to finishing her latest painting of an emu and would like to be part of more exhibitions at the gallery. She is very modest about her work, but happy to share them for the enjoyment of others.

June's daughter Merren said that when she was a child there was always a painting "on the go" on the dining room table. June would copy a greeting card or photograph and then trace and enlarge the image onto watercolour paper.

Each day she would do a bit more and sometimes months would go by before she completed it. But no matter how long it took, there was always one guarantee – the piece would look exactly like the original.





REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



mecwacare is committed to reducing our carbon footprint by implementing a range of environmental solutions across the organisation.

One of the key initiatives has been a focus on solar power, with two of our residential aged care centres (mecwacare Annie's Court in Shoreham and mecwacare Calwell Manor in Safety Beach) and our opportunity shop in East Malvern now fitted with solar panels, and an additional residential centre (mecwacare Elstoft House in Geelong) using solar hot water.

Plans are underway to install solar power at all mecwacare sites and facilities.

mecwacare was recently awarded a grant from the Australian Government's Communities Environment Program for a revegetation and ecosystem enhancement project at our Elm Road community housing units in Glen Iris, which is located alongside Gardiner's Creek Reserve.

This project will provide a more natural habitat for local wildlife and reduce the threat of habitat degradation, while providing our residents with beautiful scenery and a lovely spot for a walk.

All our sites across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria use toilet paper from Who Gives a Crap, a local company that makes eco-friendly toilet paper out of 100% recycled materials and 100% bamboo.

The organisation recently donated about \$6 million (50 per cent of its yearly profit) to fund various water, sanitation and hygiene projects, such as building toilets, advancing disability inclusion and providing soap and handwashing stations in third world countries.

Linking with such an organisation not only enhances and preserves the environment, but also assists in providing hygiene and sanitation solutions around the world. It is something we are very proud to support.

mecwacare will continue to seek other environmentally sustainable options.

Your life, your legacy

As the community continues to age, the work of mecwacare takes on renewed importance with more and more people in need of care – in their home, in the local community or in residential settings.

mecwacare has achieved outstanding results for our clients and residents during the past six decades, but there is still so much more to be done. In less than 30 years, the number of people in our community aged 65 to 84 years will more than double. At the same time, the number of Australians aged over 85 will increase four-fold to 1.8 million people.

Not only will the aged population grow rapidly in the future, but as people live longer, their care needs will change and become more complex. There will be more people in need of support, and those requiring it will have more specialised needs, such as dementia care.

Some people may feel they have little to give that can make a real difference in the lives of people in need. However, when it comes to leaving a gift in your Will to mecwacare, nothing can be further from the truth. Even a small percentage in a Will can go a long way to ensuring a better future for older people and people with a disability.

Much has been done in recent years to enhance the dignity of people who are aged and people with a disability in need of care and none of this would be possible without the generous support of our community. Since 1959, mecwacare has come a long way; imagine how much more can be achieved through a gift left in your Will.



Donate your old MP3 player



mecwacare's latest fundraising appeal focuses on bringing the benefits of music to people living with dementia. A key part of this program is the use of a standard MP3 player, such as an iPod shuffle, to play the songs that will ignite fond memories.

If you have an MP3 player gathering dust in a drawer, we would love to use it in our music therapy programs. Simply email fundraising@mecwacare.org.au with the details and we will do the rest. Every MP3 player, when utilised in the right programs, has the power to reignite cherished memories for people living with dementia. You can help us make a difference!

Thank YOU

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

mecwacare would like to thank everyone who has donated to our latest appeal.

Giving during such challenging times demonstrates a selfless, community-minded approach that will provide our residents with programs and equipment that will make their lives better.

Spotlight on mecwacare's lifestyle program

mecwacare's lifestyle programs are diverse, individualised and designed to bring joy to our aged care residents. With each one of our 13 homes having its own unique style and personality, no two lifestyle programs are the same.

To ensure the programs are successful, our Lifestyle teams create monthly plans to cater to the diverse needs of residents. During the coronavirus pandemic, when visits from loved ones and social outings are limited, our lifestyle programs have never been more important for the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Shannon Glover and Corinne Withycombe are two of mecwacare's dedicated and committed Lifestyle Coordinators, who are passionate about providing enjoyable, fun and challenging activities for our residents.

GROWING FROM WITHIN

Shannon Glover has been the Lifestyle Coordinator at mecwacare Park Hill in Mornington for two years. Her interest in working in aged care was borne out of caring for her Nan when she was younger.

Shannon would take Nan out into the community every week and they would have lots of fun together. Shannon received her Certificate III in Aged Care in 2009 and shortly after, started running an art class as a volunteer before her afternoon shift as a personal carer.

Residents soon benefitted from her creative skills and background in visual arts. Almost two years later, Shannon was offered a permanent Lifestyle Assistant role. During the next 10 years, she discovered her true passion in aged care, eventually gaining her Certificate IV in Health and Leisure, and a promotion to Lifestyle Coordinator. It was a great advertisement for where hard work and a love of the job can lead, with mecwacare being extremely supportive of career growth from within its ranks.

Each month Shannon plans programs for the Park Hill residents, which vary week to week. Popular programs include cultural celebrations, where residents and staff celebrate the culture and origin of a resident or a special day or event, and Move to Music, where residents engage in movement from a seated position in time and rhythm to favourite songs and melodies. No activity calendar would be complete without bingo, board games, giant hangman, charades, balloon tennis and ten-pin bowling.

When asked what she loves most about her job, Shannon believes it is being able to share a genuine interaction and social connection with residents, where they have a joke and a laugh, either one-on-one or in a group setting.

"To see the residents form friendships, connections and socialise together is heart-warming and I am often moved by the genuine kindness, interest and relationships they build with each other."



Motivated to make a difference

Corinne Withycombe was Lifestyle Coordinator at the mecwacare Malvern Centre for nine years before she recently moved to mecwacare Vincent House for the “twilight” years of her career, finding the perfect work/life balance while doing what she loves – planning and leading activities for people who are aged.

Vincent House has 30 residents (compared to 100 at the Malvern Centre) and is located in Westmeadows, home to a culturally diverse community. Corinne has always thrived when creating lifestyle programs, but this new challenge has seen an even greater focus on individualised programs that cater to individual residents’ interests and hobbies. Generating music playlists to include something for everyone and games that suit all abilities requires an emphasis on research and planning, which Corinne performs diligently.

An example of a shared activity is bocce, an Italian game of bowls which is a favourite at the centre and makes use of the outdoor spaces. Corinne says that building a sense of belonging and being part of a community is essential to any lifestyle program, and the benefits can also be seen before and after the activities. This enhances relationships with staff, volunteers and the families of residents to build a supportive environment where everyone can have fun together.

Corinne is a country girl at heart, growing up in Korumburra (South Gippsland) with community-minded values and a family that was always part of local committees. While she has been in lifestyle for two decades, Corinne loves the capabilities of the new technology that has been rolled out by mecwacare.

Smart TV has been a revolution for so many different activities, including concerts, church services and armchair travel to places where some of the residents spent their childhood. Watching the enjoyment of Zoom or Skype sessions between residents and their families, mastering their own way of sharing love and life, is a truly remarkable part of the job.

“I love my job and have always been motivated to make a difference to the lives of our residents.”



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:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 My choice \$ _____

Where would you like your donation to go?

- ☐ Older people
- ☐ People with a disability
- ☐ People experiencing financial hardship
- ☐ Area of greatest need

Payment by:

- ☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX AMEX ID _ / _ / _
- ☐ Money Order

Contact Details:

Mr / Master / Miss / Mrs / Ms / Mx / Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____
(optional)

- ☐ Please send me information about remembering mecwacare in my Will.
- ☐ Yes, I'd like to know more about volunteering at mecwacare.
- ☐ I do not want to receive further correspondence from mecwacare.

Cardholder no. _____/_____/_____/_____

Expiry date ____/____ CVV _____

Cardholder's name: _____

Signature: _____



Fill out the donation form and post your cheque or card information to us in the reply-paid envelope enclosed or mail to mecwacare, 1287 Malvern Road, Malvern VIC 3144.



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



To make a secure online donation using your credit card, visit our website www.mecwacare.org.au

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

mecwacare service network

Corporate Services

1287 Malvern Road
Malvern VIC 3144
P 03 8573 4888
P 1800 163 292 freecall
E enquiries@mecwacare.org.au
www.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 Trescowthick Centre
Pahran

mecwacare Vincent House
Westmeadows

Community Housing Services

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

Beaumaris
Glen Iris
Sandringham

Retirement Living

Hoppers Crossing
Malvern (opening soon)

Home Care and Nursing Services

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

Melbourne Service

Nillumbik Service

North West Metro Service

Keilor East

South East Metro Service
Malvern

South East Region Service
Pakenham

South West Region Service
Ballarat and Geelong

Warrnambool Region

Barwon Region

Gippsland Service
Inverloch

Bass Coast Region

Home Care Packages (statewide)

P 03 8573 4777
E homecarepackages@mecwacare.org.au

Community Services

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

Bass Coast Planned Activity Group,
Cowes

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

Opportunity Shops

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

Hawthorn
Malvern
Malvern East
Windsor

Robin Syme

Malvern

Residences by mecwacare

SELLING NOW



Introducing Robin Syme Residences – boutique retirement living in the form of luxury two and three-bedroom apartments in Malvern.

Residents can enjoy stress-free independent living, with a range of communal facilities including a gymnasium, café, dining rooms and business lounge. Residents will live in comfort and style, with the freedom of choice to lead the life they want and the reassurance of access to long-term support, if required.

The time is now! Make the decision to move into one of these beautiful residences and change your life.

TO ARRANGE A TOUR

Contact Pauline and Dianne – 9831 9876
robinsymemalvern.com.au
1253-1259 Malvern Road, Malvern



mecwacare



mecwacare
1287 Malvern Road,
Malvern VIC 3144

T 03 8573 4888
E enquiries@mecwacare.org.au
www.mecwacare.org.au