

mecwacare

WINTER 2023

matters



104 years young

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Caring for Victorians since 1959

Welcome

to the latest edition of mecwacare Matters,

First and foremost, we are thrilled to announce the acquisition of Pascoe Vale Gardens and Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Villages. This exciting development marks a significant expansion of our services, enabling us to extend our commitment to providing exceptional care and support to more seniors in the region.

I am delighted to welcome the residents of Pascoe Vale Gardens and Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Village into our community and work together to create a nurturing and fulfilling environment for all.

We had the pleasure of celebrating the turning of the soil at John Hood Terrace Aged Care Facility. The ceremony marks the beginning of the development of a beautiful new aged care home centrally located in vibrant Richmond. Opening in early 2025, this home will provide older individuals with comfort, support, and a sense of belonging. We look forward to sharing the progress of this exciting project with you as it unfolds.

I would also like to take a moment to recognise the dedication and hard work of our exceptional staff members. It is through their unwavering commitment and expertise that we are able to deliver the highest standard of care to our residents. At the recent staff awards, we were able to highlight their outstanding contributions, showcase the individuals who go above and beyond to make a positive difference in the lives of our clients. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to each recipient and express our gratitude for their invaluable efforts.

Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to our devoted volunteers, who give their time and energy to

On the cover: Alma Gamble

Alma, a resident at Vincent House in Westmeadows, recently celebrated her 104th birthday surrounded by family and friends.



support our elderly community. Their kindness, compassion, and unwavering commitment leave an indelible impact on the lives of our residents. I was delighted to attend our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event, held during National Volunteer Week, where we celebrated their dedication and expressed our deepest gratitude. We are immensely grateful for their selflessness and the invaluable role they play in enriching the lives of those we care for.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter, as we share stories that celebrate growth, dedication, and gratitude.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Michele Lewis'.

Michele Lewis
Chief Executive

Annie's Court, Shoreham

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Above: Commissioner for Senior Australians: Gerard Mansour, mecwacare Life Governor: John Hood, mecwacare Chief Executive: Michele Lewis, Total CEO: Jeff Jones, mecwacare Chair: Ian McHutchison.

A New Era Begins: John Hood Terrace Turning of the SOD

We were delighted to recently hold a Turning of the SOD ceremony for the new mecwacare John Hood Terrace Aged Care facility, due for completion in early 2025.

The facility is named in honour of John Hood, the former mecwacare Chair and Life Governor. John has an incredible association with mecwacare which goes back more than 30 years, with his own mother in a mecwacare residential aged care facility. John also later joined mecwacare as a volunteer.

John has been part of the mecwacare Board for for 23 years, 11 years of which were as Board Chair. In this role, he oversaw mecwacare's significant expansion which established aged care and disability services across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. John provided leadership in the areas of governance and sustainability during a time of unprecedented growth for our organisation.

This thoughtfully designed facility will provide unparalleled care, comfort and support. It also pays homage to the building's heritage, with the revitalisation of the beautiful original building that will be home to delightful common spaces for residents to enjoy.

John Hood Terrace aims to create a warm, welcoming environment where the elderly can thrive and lead fulfilling lives. The new site and its extensive features are set to ensure every resident thoroughly enjoys the lifestyle, while still receiving the highest level of care.

At mecwacare, we understand the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and community among residents. The facility will offer a range of stimulating and immersive activities and programs designed to promote socialisation, engagement, and personal growth. Residents will have access to various amenities, including private and communal dining areas, landscaped balconies, cafe, library, fitness facilities, and recreational spaces.



Welcome Pascoe Vale Gardens

mecwacare was delighted to expand its suite of services in March this year with the addition of Pascoe Vale Gardens Retirement Village, located in Melbourne's north.

Pascoe Vale Gardens Retirement Village is a well-established and highly regarded retirement community that offers independent living units, serviced apartments, and a range of lifestyle amenities for seniors. With the acquisition of this retirement village, we have expanded mecwacare's services to provide a comprehensive continuum of options for people as they age.

"We are excited to welcome Pascoe Vale Gardens Retirement Village to the mecwacare family," said



Above: Pascoe Vale Gardens Clubhouse offers residents a cosy place to catch up.

Michele Lewis, Chief Executive of mecwacare.

"This acquisition enables us to offer a wider range of services to our clients, and we look forward to building on the excellent reputation of this retirement village."

mecwacare's acquisition of Pascoe Vale Gardens Retirement Village ensures an independent, safe and secure lifestyle for the existing residents. With a comprehensive attitude towards care, mecwacare focuses on the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of residents. This approach will be seamlessly integrated into the ongoing operations of the retirement village.

Farewell to Mary McCormack

On the 16th of March, we were delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate Mary McCormack, one the Noel Miller Centre's longest serving volunteers.

Mary, a neighbour who lived just across the road from the Noel Miller Centre, has been a fixture in the lives of residents since the very beginning. Her first visit to the centre came the day after it opened in 1985, and since then she has been a frequent visitor, providing comfort and companionship to those in need. Mary's devotion to the residents has been an inspiration to many, and she has played a key role in the success of the pastoral care program at the centre.

Over the years, Mary has fostered a dedicated group of volunteers, each of whom has made a unique and valuable contribution to the centre's pastoral care program. This team provided a vital service, offering support and comfort to residents and their families during what may be a difficult and challenging time.

The work of Mary and the other volunteers goes beyond simply providing companionship to residents. They have also been involved in organising multi-faith events, leading prayer groups, and supporting residents in a variety of practical ways. For example, Mary and other volunteers have helped residents write letters and cards, provided transportation to appointments, and assisted with shopping and other tasks. They have also been a source of support and guidance to residents, offering a listening ear, a shoulder to lean on and end-of-life pastoral counselling.



Above: Mary at the Noel Miller Centre.

"The impact of the pastoral care program at the Noel Miller Centre has been profound. It has helped to create a sense of community and belonging for residents and has provided them with a source of comfort and hope during difficult times," said Michele Lewis, mecware's Chief Executive.

"It has also helped to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness and has fostered a sense of connection between residents and the wider community."

The recognition and celebration of Mary and her dedication is an important reminder of the power of volunteerism and community service. It demonstrates the tremendous impact that can be achieved through the simple act of reaching out and connecting with others in need. It also highlights the importance of supporting and valuing those who give their time and energy to help others, and exhibits the value of recognising their significant contributions in meaningful ways.

Mary's work at the Noel Miller Centre is a testament to the power of compassion, empathy and human connection. Her commitment and dedication to this important work has made a huge difference in the lives of many, and Mary's contributions will be remembered and valued for years to come.

Steampunk

DISABILITY

On the 25th of May, mecwacare's Barry Fenton Centre hosted a dazzling and inspiring steampunk event. Centre participants and guests came together to celebrate the creativity and innovation of a unique movement by showcasing the amazing steampunk items they had created.

For those new to the movement, steampunk is a subculture that blends elements of science fiction, Victorian-era fashion, and steam-powered technology. It's a style that encourages creativity, individuality, and a love for all things antique and retro. In the world of steampunk, gears and cogs - along with song and dance - are just as important as smartphones and laptops.

Visitors had the opportunity to admire the intricate and stunning steampunk creations that centre participants had been working on for weeks. From handmade costumes to mechanical gadgets, each item showcased the imagination and resourcefulness of the attendees.

The morning consisted of a brunch for the centre's regular Thursday participants, followed by live music and afternoon refreshments for other weekly participants and invited guests. A number of immersive visual displays were set up, including a walk-through time machine.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for centre residents to share their passion for steampunk with the wider community, as well as a chance for them to demonstrate their talents and abilities.

Below: Gayle, Robert and Jenni at the Steampunk event at mecwacare's Barry Fenton Centre.



To keep up to date with exciting and immersive projects such as our steampunk event, follow mecwacare on social media.



Above: Member of Parliament for Flinders Zoe McKenzie with Mrs Meg and Mr Brian Adams.

Park Hill Flag presentation

Flinders MP Zoe McKenzie made a heartwarming visit to mecwacare Park Hill aged care facility in April, presenting a new Australian flag, Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Island flag to residents and staff. This visit was a touching gesture by Ms McKenzie, showing her support for the aged care facility and highlighting her commitment to the local community.

The event was a special moment for the residents and staff of Park Hill in Mornington, who were honoured to receive the new flags from Ms McKenzie. The presentation of the

flags was a symbolic gesture that emphasised the importance of the Australian identity and its unique culture, heritage, and history. It was not only a celebration of these cultures but an acknowledgment of the important role that the aged care facility plays in supporting all Australian communities.

During the visit, Ms McKenzie joined the residents and staff for morning tea and a tour of the grounds. This provided an opportunity for the Flinders MP to engage with the residents and staff, learn more about the facility's services and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the aged care sector.

The tour of the home was a great experience for Ms McKenzie, who engaged with happy, safe and comfortable residents, while witnessing the dedication and care provided by staff.

New Healthy Ageing Service for Ballan Residents

We are most pleased to announce that mecwacare will be introducing a new Healthy Ageing service in Ballan and the surrounding areas. As part of our ongoing commitment to the community, we will begin offering this service from July 1st, catering to the needs of older residents, with a focus on those in the farming community.

The Healthy Aging service will encompass a wide range of offerings designed to promote physical and psychological wellbeing, education, and community information on healthy food choices.

Understanding the importance of holistic care for older adults, mecwacare's goal is to support and enhance their overall quality of life. To ensure the highest level of care, we will introduce a full-time registered nurse with regional and farming experience.

This expertise will be a valuable asset in addressing the specific needs of community members. Additionally, our physical 'hub', located at mecwacare's Ballan Health and Care Services facility, will serve as a central point for accessing our services. This facility already provides a comprehensive range of medical, physical rehabilitation, telehealth and pathology services. Furthermore, our on-site pool and gym will be

available for rehabilitation and general fitness, promoting an active and healthy lifestyle.

Recognising the challenges older people face when navigating the aged care system, we have established the service 'hub' to provide support and guidance. mecwacare's dedicated team will assist community members in understanding and accessing My Aged Care services. We have expanded our availability through outreach programs, telephone consultations and video consultations. Additionally, we have extended our opening hours to ensure convenient access to our services.

Stay tuned for further updates on our progress and the official launch of the Healthy Ageing service. We look forward to making a positive difference in the lives of our aging community.

Below: Ballan Health and Care Services.





Above: Richard and Don reunite.

Friends connect again *60 years later*

A phone call in late 2022 began an unexpected reunion between Richard, 93, who lives at mecwacare's Trescowthick Centre aged care home in Prahran and Don, 82, a volunteer. Their amazing story stretches back more than sixty years.

"I got the call from mecwacare's Human Resources team; they asked me if I would have a chat with Richard the next time I was in at the Trescowthick Centre," Don recalled. "When they told me Richard's full name, I thought: 'I used to work with a man by that name. That was about sixty years ago. Then, I gave it no more thought.'"

Just a few days later, Don made his first visit to the aged care home. What happened next was truly incredible.

Don, who enjoys learning about other's lives and sharing stories, began talking with Richard about

his life and career. As their discussion continued, they discovered that they had both worked in the plastics industry.

While they shared stories, Don turned to Richard and spoke these amazing words: "Don't you remember me? I sat at the desk next to you at Union Carbide."

Richard was shocked: "I knew Don's name was familiar. I was flabbergasted!"

"I just couldn't believe it! It has been more than sixty years since we last saw each other. Don has improved with age," Richard said cheekily.

"I remember Richard as a fantastic bloke. He was greatly respected by his peers. Not much has changed about him," Don said.

Today, both men look forward to Don's visits to the Trescowthick Centre as they continue to build on their long-running friendship more than six decades after they first met.



Above: Shilpa, Surbhi, Sameer, Danni, Warren, Naoko, Mishani.

Harmony Day

Harmony Day is a special day on the Australian calendar. It's a day when Australians come together to celebrate our cultural diversity, promote inclusiveness and foster a sense of belonging for all.

The staff and residents at mecwacare came together to celebrate Harmony Day by wearing their brightest orange and enjoying a multicultural meal together.

With a team of over 2000 staff, mecwacare is proud to have a culturally diverse workforce, representing 89 nationalities and speaking 100 languages. This diversity is celebrated every day at mecwacare, where staff and residents alike are encouraged to embrace their cultural heritage and share it with others.

Harmony Day provides an opportunity for staff to celebrate cultural diversity. During mecwacare's celebration, staff enjoyed a special multicultural meal, featuring dishes from around the world, prepared by the team at home and shared at lunchtime.

The meal was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to share stories and learn more about each other's cultures. There was a sense of excitement and energy in the air as everyone came together in a spirit of friendship and harmony.

The celebrations didn't end with the meal. Throughout the day, staff took part in a range of activities designed to promote cultural understanding and inclusiveness.

Celebrating our amazing volunteers during National Volunteer Week!

On the 16th of May, we had the incredible honour of recognising and appreciating the outstanding efforts of our 400+ volunteers at our annual Volunteer High Tea event at Malvern Valley Golf Club.

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organisation, contributing their time and passion to make a real difference in the lives of others. From mecwacare corporate services to residential care, and op shops to community services, our volunteers are everywhere, selflessly giving their energy and expertise.

Our volunteers come from a diverse range of backgrounds, speak many different languages and represent a wide range of ages. Our youngest volunteer is 16 years old and attends the Malvern Centre, while the oldest volunteer is 94 and part of the Ballan Ladies auxilliary.

During this momentous occasion, we had the pleasure of presenting 34 Service Awards to those who have shown remarkable dedication and commitment. This included three remarkable volunteers who received their 25-year service award; an awe-inspiring achievement that inspires us all.



Our wonderful volunteers at mecwacare's annual Volunteer High Tea.



Best of the best

We celebrated the 2023 Staff, Volunteer and Contractor Awards with a lovely ceremony in March. These awards recognise the incredible work of mecwacare employees and volunteers.

Congratulations to all of our award winners.

Volunteer of the Year
Mary McCormack

Contractor of the Year
Dinesh Subramani

**Encouragement Award
(Community Services)**
Mike Edmonds

**Encouragement Award
(Corporate Services)**
Andrew Johncey

**Encouragement Award (Home
and Community Services)**
Sam Paterson

**Encouragement Award
(Residential Services)**
Raharni Ampuan

**Support Service Award
(Corporate Services)**
Surbhi Kedare

**Support Service Award (Home
and Community Services)**
Louise Henderson

**Support Service Award
(Residential Services)**
Michael Hewitt

**Administrator of the Year
(Corporate Services)**
Sharon Weinman

**Administrator of the Year
Award (Home and Community
Services)**
Matthew Phillips

**Administrator of the Year Award
(Residential Services)**
Fiona Feenaghty

**Carer of the Year
(Home and Community
Services)**
Sue Jayne Phillips

**Carer of the Year
(Residential Services)**
Mavis Lawrence

**Clinician of the Year
(Residential Services)**
Jorge Bustos

**Clinician of the Year
(Home and Community
Services)**
Indy Kupper

**Employee of the Year
(Residential Services)**
Sanjeet Sharma

**Employee of the Year
(Home and Community
Services)**
Chantelle Keven

**Employee of the Year
(Corporate Services)**
Hilke Wenzel

**Chief Executive
Special Award (Teams)**
The HR team

**Chief Executive
Leadership Award**
Dayolen Kistnen

**Chief Executive
Leadership Award**
Jill Cairney

**Chief Executive
Leadership Award**
Rosemary Perrone

STAFF AWARDS



Above: Michele Lewis with Michael Hewitt.

Spotlight on Michael Hewitt, music therapist at Noel Miller Centre

Noel Miller Centre's music therapist, Michael Hewitt, was this year's recipient of the Support Services Award for Residential Services.

Michael provides a positive and engaging music program which has received great feedback from residents and families. A real rock star in his field, Michael's dedication to improving the lives of residents through music therapy is truly inspiring.



Opening August
2023

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