

mecwacare



Caring is at the heart of
everything we do


ANNUAL REVIEW 2020-21

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.


OUR PURPOSE

 Partnering with the elderly and people with a disability to live fulfilling and purposeful lives

OUR VISION

 Enhancing life changing experiences with our community

OUR VALUES

 Our values are at the centre of everything we do: Caring, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical

OUR COVER: Caring is at the heart of everything we do at mecwacare. Our residents, clients and staff come from all walks of life. They have banded together and stayed strong throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board Chairman and Chief Executive Report



Our 62nd year of caring for Victorians was a defining one amid the unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

Caring connects people. When you provide care to vulnerable people during a prolonged crisis, you are privileged to be part of their lives – and you become fiercely protective of their welfare and wellbeing.

Our staff and volunteers donned full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to continue providing care and support. These services were lifelines during lockdowns, with large numbers of clients living in ecosystems of isolation where mecwacare’s home services became a precious gift of “contactless” contact.

Unfortunately, one of our aged care homes was significantly impacted by COVID-19 in the first outbreak and the loss of life was a terribly confronting and deeply upsetting experience for the families and our staff, who cherish the relationships they have with residents.

We have had to make some very tough decisions and getting the balance right has not always been easy. Locking down facilities against family wishes and balancing the threat of infection is hard, recognising the value of the relationship and time. One of the key strategies was to ask staff to work for one employer rather than multiple employers during the pandemic to minimise risk of the virus entering our sites. This precautionary measure was later mandated by the federal government. *Read more about our pandemic response on page 5.*

This multi-faceted year for the mecwacare community defied predictability. It tested us and pushed us, and it encouraged us to take stock of our evolving business.

Could we innovate, adapt and grow to fulfill what this extraordinary year was demanding of us – a significant re-engineering of our business?

Could we meet the most unprecedented and immediately pressing challenges, such as the booming demand for home-based care and services?

We measured ourselves against the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommendations. This confirmed that we are ahead of the game; we have either already achieved or are working towards the standards set out in the final report. This includes already delivering the standard recommended for registered nurses from 2022, with RNs rostered on every shift across mecwacare – and providing 200 minutes of care per resident per day. This will increase to 230 minutes from 2024. We are extremely proud of our achievements and progress in these areas.

We are also proud that as a not-for-profit aged care and disability provider, we are staying true to our founders’ vision by putting people at the centre of everything we do.

Our current building and refurbishment program ensures we provide modern, well-appointed and comfortable environments, where residents, clients, staff and volunteers can live and work in comfort and safety. *Read more about our building program on page 6.*

As a not-for-profit organisation, we are in the unique position where we can channel every dollar we make back into high-quality care and services.

Our fiscal management policy has achieved the continuous growth forecast. As at 30 June 2021, we have grown our assets and revenue to more than \$500 million. This sound financial strategy has set us up for significant expansion of our core business during the past 12 months and going forward.

As Victoria’s largest provider of government-funded home care services, our growth in 2020-21 further bolstered our balanced major revenue streams. This market diversification provided revenue “insurance” so that during the lockdowns, when the residential aged care sector was under enormous pressure, we were well positioned to step up our involvement in home care services.


Of course, in the transition from block to client funding and advance payment to arrears payment, the robustness of our strategy will continue to guide us. When the Commonwealth Government introduces an open market aged care system and as the industry implements the Royal Commission recommendations, we are structured to remain highly competitive.

This is an era that mecwacare has been preparing for, from our humble beginnings more than 60 years ago. Our founders were people of action who defined care in their selfless, generous concern for others. As we redefine mecwacare today, we may be developing our own business identity, but our legacy of care is as perpetually strong as ever.

Finally, we thank our skilled and compassionate staff and volunteers. Your kindness and resilience throughout the challenges of the past 12 months has been nothing short of exceptional. A special thank you to the Leadership Team, who have not only exemplified integrity and courage, but stayed the course and inspired confidence that we will define our future and continue to stand up for some of our community’s most vulnerable people – no matter what.

John Hood, Board Chairman
Michele Lewis, Chief Executive

2020-21 Snapshot



3


age of our youngest disability client
(Cranbourne North)

104

age of our oldest home care client
(Templestowe)

106

age of our oldest aged care resident
(Rositano House, Richmond)



100%

compliance following

114

external audits and reviews

73,299

meals delivered to home care clients

84,338

hours of home care provided to disability clients



95.7%

supported or concessional clients

500

volunteers



19

age of youngest volunteer
(South Gippsland meals on wheels)

89

age of oldest volunteer
(East Malvern Op Shop)



449

solar panels installed



247,374

occupied bed days

languages spoken by our staff
(including sign language)

100



89

nationalities make up our workforce



24,568

loads of washing in our aged care homes



4,786

fresh meals served every day in our aged care homes



15,600

kilograms of watermelons



125,195

cups of tea



160,480

kilograms of beef



780,728

hours of care provided to Victorians

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Our COVID-19 response

722,000

face masks and gowns

\$960,000

spent on PPE

mecwacare’s approach to the COVID-19 pandemic is to remain calm and ensure a coordinated and controlled response. Our number one priority has always been to keep our vulnerable residents and clients safe, alongside our staff and volunteers.

We continue to maintain a conservative approach to reopening our aged care homes when lockdowns are lifted and use advanced PPE and infection control measures beyond the official government advice.

Throughout 2020-21, we responded to constant and evolving challenges to continue caring for the 17,000 people who rely on us for support.

We proactively implemented a range of robust infection prevention and control measures, and frequently updated our COVID-safe business continuity plans.

Our responses included providing emergency food deliveries and cleaning services to clients locked down in Flemington and North Melbourne public housing towers, purchasing and distributing hundreds of thousands of PPE items and regularly updating stakeholders.

Introducing technology to assist with infection control at our aged care homes represented another facet of our proactive approach. Installing thermal cameras to check temperatures and electronic sign-in and visitor booking systems underpinned our robust coronavirus management plan.

We embraced the challenge of supporting clients through periods of isolation. From welfare checks by phone and in-person visits (when restrictions permitted) to providing emergency respite care for disability clients living with older family members, it was critical that we regularly checked in to make sure they were healthy and safe.

These were just some of the initiatives that made up an organisation-wide re-engineering of how we work and what we need to do to ensure that caring for our residents and clients remains at the heart of everything we do.

Volunteers were invaluable, delivering meals and playing a frontline role that supported so many clients through some of the most difficult and lonely times. Wearing goggles and gloves ensured safe, contactless delivery.

Many clients reported that the daily delivery of meals to their front door was essential social contact that meant the world to them. In the City of Melbourne, for example, we were asked to scale up these services in response to a growing number of people in need.

Understanding the unease of many clients, we recognised the need to reassure them that our highly capable and experienced care practitioners could safely deliver services in their homes.

At our Fisher Street Centre, when peak infection rates heightened community anxiety, we responded by advising families about our strict infection control practices – hourly cleaning of high touch points, strictly adhering to room density limits and staff wearing full PPE (masks, face shields, gowns and gloves).

At our aged care homes, staff, residents and their families were remarkable in embracing PPE and accepting the necessary restrictions and interventions involved in lockdowns. Acutely aware of

the importance of regular social interaction with loved ones, they quickly adapted, sharing knowledge and using technology to keep in touch via Skype, Zoom and FaceTime. Families utilised external window visits and internal “enhanced” window visits, where possible.

As we entered the second year of the pandemic, we strongly advocated for resident and staff vaccination as fast as possible.

Sadly, at the height of the second wave in Melbourne, COVID-19 made its way into the mecwacare John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing. We deeply regret that some of our residents succumbed to the virus. *Read more about our response to the outbreak on page 9.*

Our highly skilled and thoughtful team of registered nurses and care staff, under the expert guidance of the management team, have done a tremendous job during this most difficult and at times, heart-breaking period. They and the many mecwacare staff from across all areas of the organisation who have dropped everything to assist during our time of need are our pandemic heroes.

Our team has worked around the clock to protect our residents, clients and their colleagues. They have “stayed the course” despite the impact that COVID-19 has had on their own personal lives. *See how we acknowledged their efforts on page 23.*

A thank you also to the managers and volunteers of our four opportunity shops, who persevered, always with a smile, throughout the many stop-start openings of our stores. They rallied to provide books and games to keep our aged care residents busy and engaged.

Our drivers were also quick to lend a hand, delivering PPE supplies across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

As at 30 June 2021, all mecwacare sites and homes were COVID-free.

Building for the future

mecwacare’s extensive building and refurbishment program is based on the belief that safe and genuine care begins with facilities that are modern, fresh and comfortable.

While work conditions were impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, mecwacare’s building program continued at a rapid pace to increase capacity and enhance modern, safe and home-like environments.

In 2020-21, construction began on one of our biggest investments in an aged care home – the luxuriously appointed Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert North.

Built on land adjacent to the existing home, this stately four-storey, 100-bed residence, due for completion in early 2023, will double the size of the original site, which opened in 1978. It will transform the 43-year-old facility with vinyl floors, hospital-like corridors and separate bathrooms into a vastly evolved aged care home environment with quality inclusions throughout that support safe and genuine care.

This \$40 million project will feature a variety of public and retail spaces for residents and their guests, as well as sweeping views to the east. It will include spacious lounges, light-filled dining areas, cinema, café, library,

clubroom and hair and beauty salon, alongside spacious rooms, balconies, outdoor areas and in some instances, suites.

Excitement is building as residents and their families keep a close eye on the development of their new home. A timelapse camera is capturing every moment. Visit www.bit.ly/SPCtimelapse to see this much-anticipated project taking shape.

mecwacare is investing millions of dollars in building and refurbishment projects across our growing residential portfolio.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we are in the unique position where we can channel every dollar we make back into high-quality care and services for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Our Mont Albert project complements mecwacare’s other major development in Church Street, Richmond, where we are transforming the former Richmond Hill Hotel into a beautiful new 80-bed aged care residence, to be named John Hood Terrace.

Late in 2020, we opened a premium retirement village in Malvern next to the Malvern Centre aged care home. Robin Syme Malvern offers boutique independent living, with 31 luxurious

two and three-bedroom apartments offset by first-class amenities, including a café, piano lounge, library, private dining room, wine bar and cinema.

Better bathrooms

Single bathrooms are essential to mecwacare’s commitment to provide all residents with the quality and safe accommodation they deserve. This includes infection control, privacy and comfort.

In March 2021, we acquired our 14th aged care home – mecwacare Squires Place in Altona North. We immediately began a significant refurbishment program to turn the home into a modern and comfortable residence, with a café, library, hair and beauty salon, cinema and spacious lounge and dining rooms. This major upgrade and extension included converting 45 rooms with shared bathrooms into 60 rooms with individual bathrooms.

A bathroom upgrade at the Simon Price Centre was completed in March 2021 to improve infection control and increase convenience for residents. We added bathrooms and upgraded existing facilities to ensure every resident has their own bathroom. Eight existing beds were removed to make way for the new bathrooms. At the Noel Miller Centre in Glen Iris, more than 60 new bathrooms were refurbished.

While major capital projects illustrate our vision for the future of aged care, bathroom upgrades and other works at existing homes demonstrate our commitment to maintain high standards for all residents.

Other refurbishment works during 2020-21 included increasing the seating capacity of the cafe at Noel Miller Centre, which is a popular meeting place. Tables and chairs in the dining room were updated to create a sophisticated dining experience and new curtains, carpet, furniture and fittings were installed throughout the home.

At Calwell Manor in Safety Beach, an airlock door was fitted at the main entrance and a swipe card system introduced to improve security and access to the home, as well as infection control management. New carpet was laid throughout.

Refurbishments at Annie’s Court in Shoreham included painting and renovating the front reception area, updating the hair and beauty salon, and installing new carpet throughout.

A training room was added that will serve as the Mornington Peninsula’s base for enhancing staff capability without the need to travel to Melbourne. More renovations are planned as part of an ongoing program of upgrades for the home however, they were delayed due to COVID-19.

Mornington growth

A home care office on the Mornington Peninsula is the latest addition to mecwacare’s growing network.

Co-located with our Calwell Manor aged care home in Safety Beach, the office will support mecwacare’s growth in home care services and home care packages while underpinning our strategic expansion in the region.

This new office complements our presence in a region where we have three aged care homes – Calwell Manor, Annie’s Court in Shoreham and Park Hill in Mornington.

We identified an opportunity to establish a permanent base for operations in the region after securing the tender with Mornington Shire Council to provide home care services to new clients from December 1, 2020. Since then, more than 1,000 clients have been referred to us.

We are proud of this “in-house” project in which our own team converted a self-contained unit into a comfortable office space. Work included removing internal walls, a bathroom and bedroom to create an open plan space, carpeting, painting and installing LED lighting.

Our sustainability initiatives

Solar panels, hybrid cars, waste management, LED lighting, electric water and heating system upgrades are all part of a major environmental initiative that will cut costs and increase efficiency at mecwacare.

An expanding sustainability program demonstrates our ongoing commitment to reduce operating expenses and increase environmental stewardship.

Solar panels were installed at three mecwacare sites – our corporate office in Malvern and two aged care homes, Jubilee House in Caulfield North and John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing.

This was the first stage of a four-year solar panel installation program across our residential portfolio. mecwacare also has solar panels at Annie’s Court in Shoreham, Calwell Manor in Safety Beach and the East Malvern Opportunity Shop.

These installations use 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 now being assessed for solar installations.

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

Efficient lighting through LED upgrades are reducing running costs while boosting efficiency. LED lighting will be installed at all mecwacare sites over the next three years.

Printing and waste management have been identified as other areas for use of more efficient and environmental technologies. Our use of multi-function printers was reviewed as part of research into technologies that reduce printing and copying volumes across the organisation.

Converting organic waste into compost, soil conditioner and mulch products, and disposing of cardboard by installing compactors and balers were the focus of a review to improve waste collection practices.

As part of mecwacare’s generator-ready project to ensure back-up power for our aged care homes, a mobile generator is now based at mecwacare Park Hill in Mornington. This is “ready” to be moved to any site should there be a disruption in power supplies. We have fitted plugs at all our sites and we installed fixed generators at Annie’s Court, Calwell Manor, and O’Mara House in Traralgon during 2021-21.



Newly-installed solar panels atop mecwacare’s Corporate Services office in Malvern.



mecwacare is adding a second aged care home in Richmond, with the refurbishment of the Richmond Hill Hotel in Church Street.



Work is underway on the new Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert North. This luxuriously appointed residence will have 100 beds, twice the size of the original aged care home.

Residential Services

31,751
lifestyle hours provided

4,061
online and face-to-face
training sessions

mecwacare continued to support the residents in our care, providing them with a COVID-safe environment and embracing myriad change during the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Residents, staff and their families adapted to lockdowns, wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), using technology to keep in touch and staying connected via external window visits and internal “enhanced” window visits.

Residents adjusted to these interventions and strongly supported management and staff efforts to keep them healthy and safe.

Intensive staff education and training was undertaken to ensure infection control processes were strengthened and maintained. Recognising the benefits of keeping our messages fresh, we reached out to all staff through online quizzes and impromptu information sessions via email.

mecwacare Jubilee House resident **Robert Gordon** receiving a window visit from his son **Oscar** for his birthday.



Supported by the Learning and Development team, education on the correct use of PPE and best-practice handwashing was provided face-to-face on-site at each home.

mecwacare Malvern Centre became the first aged care home in Victoria to lock down in response to a COVID-19 threat from a visiting general practitioner in March 2020. It was the catalyst for our proactive pandemic management strategy. Through this brief but concerning experience, the growth of infection control processes and robust educational learnings placed the home and the wider organisation in a strong position to bolster our defences and develop strategies to protect our residents and staff.

There was a lot of emphasis on all our homes to become extremely vigilant with hygienic practices and surveillance to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of our vulnerable residents, staff and the wider community. In May 2021, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission visited the Malvern Centre for an impromptu review of the home’s preparedness. It was a great success and no further recommendations were provided. This became our experience during all visits by the commission over the 12-month period, as well as numerous successful infection control audits by multiple government agencies as part of regular checks.

A potential COVID-19 exposure resulted in the short-term closure of the commercial kitchen at the mecwacare Trescowthick Centre in Prahran. A temporary food preparation area was set up in the home’s dining room and Medirest, our catering partners, continued to provide residents with fresh and nutritious meals.

mecwacare’s reputation for providing nutritious and delicious food, tailored to individual tastes and needs, continued across all our homes. We are proud to provide meals that are freshly prepared on-site daily.

Welcome Squires Place

On March 1, 2021, mecwacare added to our residential portfolio with mecwacare Squires Place, increasing the number of aged care homes to 14 across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Located in Altona North, this home was previously a privately owned business with 51 rooms, a mix of shared rooms and shared bathrooms. In keeping with mecwacare’s commitment to provide residents with the high-quality accommodation they deserve, we immediately began a refurbishment program to provide single rooms, single bathrooms and a 10-bed extension.

This upgrade will maintain high levels of care and infection control while increasing accommodation to 60 beds. Residents and staff transitioned smoothly into the mecwacare family, with residents being kept informed about the progress of the renovations through regular meetings, welcoming the introduction of new technology and embracing a new menu.

Staying active

mecwacare’s Lifestyle programs are curated to stimulate and entertain. They are diverse, individualised and designed to bring joy to our residents. In response to the multiple lockdowns throughout 2020-21 and limited personal interactions with loved ones, this already successful program adjusted to the circumstances by introducing several innovations and additional activities.

Our lifestyle and care teams supported residents’ social and emotional needs while continuing to provide them with stimulating activities. Their wellbeing during these challenging times was as important as their physical health. Our staff worked thoughtfully to provide mentally challenging games and activities.

They mastered the use of iPads, introduced in 2020 to assist residents to stay connected with their family, friends and community.

Cultural activities are a high priority and special days are a regular feature on the lifestyle calendar, tailored to resident feedback on how they want to celebrate cultural and spiritual events. Music, food, art and movies are popular choices.

As part of a cultural development initiative, a connection was established with the charitable institution CO.AS.IT, which supports the general wellbeing and quality of life of the Italian-Australian community. This partnership is designed to enhance mecwacare’s culturally-appropriate volunteer programs and ensure residents of Italian background remain involved with their community, celebrating events and enjoying other Italian activities.

Cultural hubs have been developed at all homes to ensure a safe environment for residents from all backgrounds, enhancing our person-centred approach to care. Residents are able to have conversations in their chosen language, enjoy cultural activities and continue their connections and experiences through resources, such as books, magazines, papers, movies and music. The hub program will also enable cultural exchange and promote greater understanding within the mecwacare community.

A review of the exercise program introduced tai chi, yoga and other types of exercise, as well as mindfulness sessions, at the residents’ request.

Music therapy is offered in group sessions and on a one-to-one basis to suit resident preferences. Art therapy is another popular and relaxing exercise, particularly at mecwacare Park Hill where the group’s work is regularly displayed in local galleries.

A social inclusion program enhances social interaction and creates friendship groups within each mecwacare home. Activities include Coffee Club, Happy Hour, Wine and Cheese Tasting, Gold Class Movies and Armchair Travel. These groups were still able to be enjoyed in line with infection prevention protocols, including maintaining social distancing.

Targeted innovations at individual homes include a Music, Art and Montessori

program at the Trescowthick Centre to enable residents living with dementia to lead a purposeful life with meaning and dignity. Annie’s Court in Shoreham introduced virtual counselling sessions in partnership with Better Choice Australia to support the mental health and wellbeing of residents and staff.

It was very rewarding for our staff to ensure this vibrant program thrived in a COVID-safe environment and provided the necessary benefits for our residents to remain healthy, happy and active.

Standing strong

As coronavirus infection rates peaked across Victoria in 2020, with thousands of active cases, the mecwacare John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing received shocking news.

A visiting allied health consultant, who also worked for other organisations, had tested positive for COVID-19. This sparked an outbreak among the home’s residents and staff. All of mecwacare sprang into action, with staff from across the organisation dropping everything to assist.

This skilled and experienced “taskforce” worked around the clock, risking their own health for more than six weeks to care for COVID-positive residents and to keep healthy residents safe in quarantine.

Sadly, when the home was finally declared free of COVID-19 on October 15, 2020, some of our residents had succumbed to the virus. We are deeply sorry.

This devastating outcome would have been worse if not for the incredible professional support and assistance of mecwacare staff from all areas of the organisation.

Nurses, clinical care managers, care workers and administration staff put their hands up to work together under expert supervision to care for infected residents who did not require hospitalisation and safeguard those at the home who had not been infected.

Staff wore full PPE (face masks, clear face shields, gloves and gowns) throughout their shifts and changed

every time they entered a room or had contact with a resident.

Dozens of quarantined residents who avoided infection were kept as close to their normal routines as possible.

Families were regularly updated on developments and every effort was made to keep them in touch with their loved ones through contactless communication, such as video calls and telephone calls. It was one of the most difficult periods in mecwacare’s 60-year history.

A robust infection prevention management program is in place across our 14 aged care homes and all other mecwacare sites. In an early adopted prevention protocol, mecwacare suspended its involvement in the Transition Care Program with Eastern Health. Under the program, the Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert North provided short-term care and support for older hospital patients, as part of their transition to return to their family homes.

Sharing of some bathroom facilities at the centre was considered too great a risk for transmitting infection. A bathroom upgrade was completed in March 2021 and every resident room now has its own bathroom facilities.

Our most senior resident **Flora Looker** celebrated her 106th birthday at mecwacare’s Rositano House in Richmond in April 2021. Until a couple of years ago Flora would regularly walk down to Bridge Road to do her shopping and banking. In 2021, across our 14 aged care homes, 18 residents were set to celebrate their 100th and 100-plus birthdays.





mecwacare
Park Hill resident
Moira Walsh

Housing Services

Retirement Living

Construction of the luxurious Robin Syme Malvern retirement village was completed in October 2020 with the first residents moving in on October 28.

Special guests at an official opening on December 8 included mecwacare Life Governor Robin Syme, who the village is named after, and Melbourne Cricket Club President Michael Happell, who talked about how COVID-19 had impacted Melbourne’s most loved sporting arena.

This boutique retirement living complex offers 31 beautifully crafted two and three-bedroom apartments, with stunning finishes, views and an abundance of space and light.

At 30 June 2021, many apartments had been sold, with residents scheduled to move in during the following months. Residents enjoy a life of convenience, comfort and wellbeing in a safe and secure environment.

Residents have access to a range of activities and first-class amenities, including a cinema, cafe, private dining room, library, wine cellar, gymnasium and regular outings. Residents have more time to do the things they love because the new apartments require little or no maintenance and are easy to lock up and leave for travel and adventure.

At Hoppers Crossing, residents at the John Atchison Retirement Village continue to enjoy lifestyle options that combine independent accommodation and shared facilities with priority access to care should their needs change. Residents benefit from maintenance-free modern living with access to an on-site hair and beauty salon, comprehensive lifestyle program, meal provision and community transport.

Both mecwacare retirement villages are co-located with mecwacare aged care homes, so residents can be supported with changing needs in the latter stage of their lives.

Community Housing

“A great sense of community” was one resident’s description of living in a mecwacare community housing complex during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Residents in all three locations – Beaumaris, Glen Iris and Sandringham – appreciated mecwacare’s regular communication about the pandemic and any impacts it might have on them.

During the lockdowns, mecwacare maintained regular contact with all residents, providing them with the latest health advice. Residents said they also appreciated receiving information about COVID-19 vaccinations.

mecwacare’s Community Housing program offers quality, affordable housing for people aged over 65, or living with a disability and who meet the Department of Health’s eligibility criteria for a concessional rent allowance.

One of our new residents said they loved being part of a community where everyone looked out for each other.

“I feel very safe and we all look out for each other and that means a great deal to my family. They often comment on how happy I am and that is a direct result of the comfort all the residents and staff provide me,” Angela said.

Residents said they appreciated that mecwacare managed the units, including all maintenance issues, such as replacing smoke detector batteries and tending to communal gardens.

Delivering heated throw blankets to the residents of our community housing units provided them with an extra source of warmth while reducing their heating costs during Melbourne’s cooler months. These soft and warm blankets were donated to mecwacare by 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 each.



Apartments are selling fast at mecwacare’s luxurious Robin Syme Malvern retirement village. For more information, visit robinsymemalvern.com.au

Home Care Services

649,534
hours of care and support

11,050
wellbeing checks

mecwacare’s strategy to leverage infrastructure at existing locations is supporting the continued growth in our home care services.

Under this strategy, we established Barwon region and Mornington offices within existing mecwacare sites to support this service expansion.

Our new Barwon office is co-located with the Elstoft House aged care home in Hamlyn Heights (Geelong) and the Mornington office is co-located with Calwell Manor in Safety Beach.

A Barwon office is essential after the transition of Commonwealth Home Support Programme funding from

Surf Coast Shire to mecwacare on October 1, 2020. In addition to this, we transitioned the South West Region’s Barwon Health contract and other business to the new Barwon team.

We recruited office-based staff and additional direct care workers to meet the needs of local community referrals, with the office officially opening on October 1, 2020.

Growing our services

Steady growth was the story across all our regions as they shared similar challenges during lockdowns and responses unique to their locations.

North West Metro’s team provided a rapid response to 40 clients living in the public housing apartment complexes in Flemington and North Melbourne, dubbed “COVID Towers”.

Direct care workers continued to provide in-person support under the extremely difficult quarantine circumstances. Other vulnerable clients were supported by telephone-based welfare checks.

Establishment of an Eltham meals delivery centre, led by a meals coordinator and volunteer workforce, continued to provide meals and welfare checks during lockdowns to residents in Melbourne’s north.

Our North West teams responded to complex client and staff issues by significantly changing service delivery and employment arrangements due to the restrictions. They provided a rapid response to requests to scale up meals services to deliver hundreds of additional meals weekly to clients in need.

Gippsland regional office continued to provide care and support to South Gippsland and Bass Coast, where we have been providing services for 18 months. Our office staff and support workers are now fully established with strong relationships with clients.

Staff growth has been essential in supporting clients in the Home and

Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP), Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), private care services, Meals on Wheels service and Bass Coast Regional Assessment Service (RAS).

South Gippsland continued to grow and consolidate as we successfully delivered services to some of the most rural and remote areas in the region. Home maintenance is popular, as clients seek assistance to minimise bushfire risks and maintain house safety. Shopping support is also in demand. Due to the distance and lack of public transport options, remote clients are picked up and driven to the nearest town to do their shopping and pay bills.

Home care services in Cardinia, Maroondah, Knox, Yarra Ranges and Casey local government areas continued to grow and we improved our HACC PYP service delivery in Maroondah and Knox, increasing service hours.

Successful transition of HACC PYP assessment from City of Ballarat to mecwacare expanded the South West Region team.

Due to the unprecedented demand for our services, we embarked on an extensive recruitment campaign. Recruiting qualified staff to fill roles across our expanding home care services brought home how the coronavirus had drastically changed the care needs of thousands of vulnerable Victorians.

As the demand for home-based care and services increased significantly, including a 457% rise in demand from home care packages clients, we recruited staff and adapted our operations to support this rapidly expanding client base.

This dramatic change in our home care packages business was driven by growth in the Barwon and Mornington regions, and clients seeking more services in the home.

mecwacare now has have seven home care offices in Malvern, Ballarat, Geelong, Inverloch, Keilor East, Mornington and Pakenham.



Home care client
Marjorie with mecwacare nurse
Liliana Olivera

Home Care Packages

27%
growth in clients

102,519
hours of home, personal
and respite care

A substantial increase in demand for Home Care Packages during the 2020-21 financial year resulted in clients purchasing significantly more services.

This expansion is attributed to changing government priorities and funding initiatives, and clients initially deferring services during coronavirus restrictions and lockdowns, and subsequently resuming delivery of services when Victoria “opened up” in late 2020.

Since mecwacare established Home Care Packages in 2013, the program has achieved substantial and consistent annual growth.

While this year’s result represents a major achievement for mecwacare’s home care packages business, the most gratifying outcome is that the increased level of care will support improved client health and wellbeing.

Packages range through four levels, from basic care to high care. Clients can choose the type and delivery of services they receive, in line with their personal preferences and health needs.

Clients recognising the value of accessing their entitlements is an important benefit for our communities and ensures people continue to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

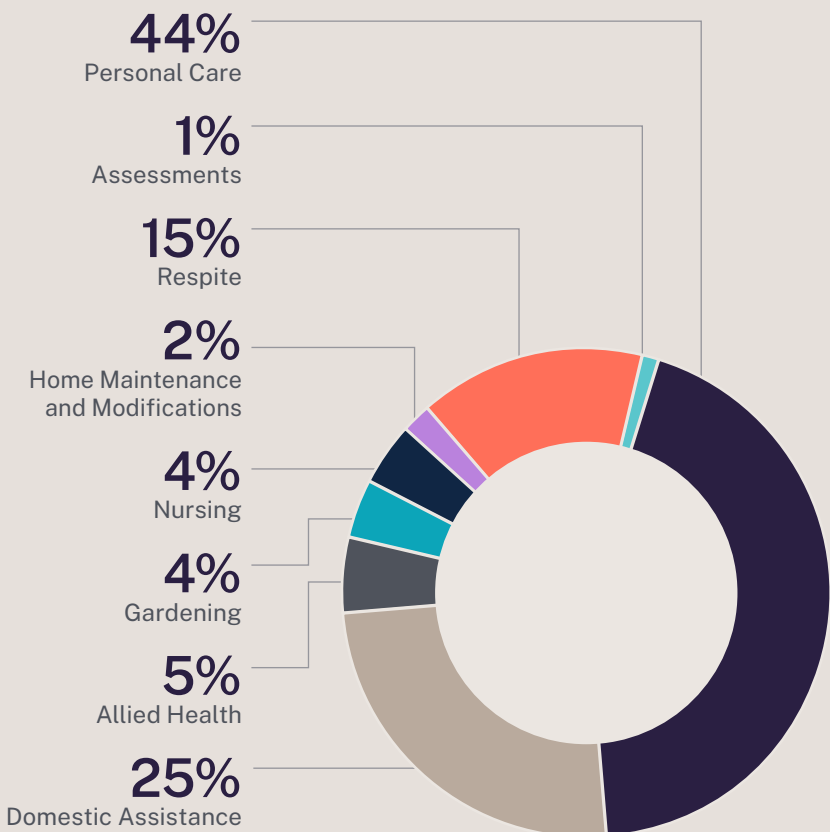
Our work continues to coordinate services that suit the client’s needs, using technology to facilitate improved service outcomes.

Personal care and domestic assistance continue to be the most common services provided to clients. Personal care includes bathing, showering, personal hygiene and grooming. Domestic assistance includes cleaning, personal laundry services, gardening, managing medication, rehabilitation and emotional support.

We are particularly focused on reducing social isolation for clients receiving care at home, ensuring their independence and interaction with the community remains a key aspect of their daily lives.

This has never been more important than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services funded by HCP in 2020-21



Pandemic Support



For many of our elderly clients, staff visiting their homes to provide nursing care and support is the only physical and social interaction they have during the challenging periods of self-isolation as a result of lockdowns.

Our goal is to maintain continuity of service for some of the most vulnerable people, who rely on us more than ever to support them to continue living independently in their own home.

We are privileged to be able to provide this important support. Reducing social isolation remains a key focus for mecwacare.

Disability Services

978
NDIS clients

22,473
service hours provided in
day centres

mecwacare’s Disability Services prioritised safety for clients, their families and our staff, and minimising disruption to care and support during the past 12 months and the COVID-19 pandemic.



mecwacare Fisher Street participant
Jordan Low

As high infection rates increased community anxiety, we took practical steps to reassure clients and their families who, understandably, did not want to risk infection by attending our community centres.

Robust infection control practices covered every aspect of client protection and site safety, from hourly cleaning of high-touch surfaces to exceeding the government’s standard for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

While the lockdown disrupted day programs, clients and their families appreciated our vigorous plans to safeguard the health and wellbeing of everyone able to attend the centres when restrictions permitted.

During lockdowns, Fisher Street Centre remained open for emergency respite services for participants living with older family members.

mecwacare works with clients and their families to develop skills and increase their ability to live as independently as possible. Our Support Coordination team offers a range of in-home and community access options tailored to clients’ individual needs and choices.

Our other major focus during 2020-21 was aligning our service delivery model and framework to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission’s Practice Standards. This work prepared us for a successful NDIS Certification Audit in August 2020, which was the first time the NDIS had audited registered providers.

During the lockdowns, our team contacted clients regularly for conversations and wellbeing checks. Additional support options were provided to ensure they felt safe and connected at all times.

Fisher Street Day Centre is home to various group programs such as

developing life skills, technology, arts and crafts, gardening and the environment, and leisure options.

These programs assist clients to meet their NDIS goals. They also encourage participants to pursue their interests and be inspired by each other. This approach resulted in a content boost for readers of the Fisher Street newsletter.

With the activities program temporarily on hold, the centre faced a challenge to fill the pages while trying to keep the newsletter interesting for centre participants and clients.

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

She suggested including a recipe and staff jumped at the opportunity. Rachel’s Recipe Corner, Natasha’s Crafty Corner and Mark’s Sweet Corner, in which he shares his favourite recipes, has built a keen following.

The introduction of columnists has become a staple of the newsletter which is a real team project. Every month, participants develop ideas to create a monthly issue filled with valuable information, updates and activities.

A popular group activity is the Mecwa Magic basketball team. Participants enjoy competing against teams and trying to beat their personal best each week. Mecwa Magic was second on the ladder when the tournament was cancelled due to another lockdown.

For more than 20 years, mecwacare has been providing opportunities for people living with a disability. With the introduction of the NDIS in 2018, individualised support places the client at the centre of the decision-making process and empowers them with more choice than ever before.

mecwacare complies with the Carers Recognition Act 2012. We inform employees about the Act at orientation and through our Model of Care and Philosophy Statement to ensure all supports reflect care relationship principles. Awareness is promoted through staff interactions, in policies and procedures, and via information handbooks, resulting in quality carer support.



mecwacare
Barry Fenton Centre
participant **Ron Higgins**

Community Services

Centre-based activities are a crucial aspect of mecwacare’s Community Services. They support people to live independently by providing them with important social connections through group activities. Our clients were profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions during 2020-21.

However, despite the challenges, it was the “never say die” attitude and resilience of our staff that came to the fore.

Our dedicated team continued to support clients through the pandemic with practical assistance, such as increased use of virtual meeting platforms. This was warmly welcomed by families because it assisted in addressing the risk of social isolation for clients. While well received, the increased use of technology did require upskilling for some staff, families and clients in a short timeframe.

Many clients are now more technologically savvy and confidently participating in online groups.

We focused services on empowering clients to age well in their own homes and community by providing supports, structures and systems, specifically designed for the physical limitations of lockdowns.

Staff maintained regular contact via newsletters and telephone calls, and arranged the delivery of care packages, including food, games and quizzes, to help keep clients stimulated while in isolation.

Our programs were reorganised with an improved focus on the person and making them central to how we provide the programs. This change encouraged better choice and control for those needing support.

Carers support groups at the Barry Fenton Centre in Malvern East, Rivendell House in Pakenham and

Cowes (Phillip Island) continued to provide a vital outlet for anyone in a caring role, giving them an opportunity to meet with other carers and share experiences.

Being a primary carer is a challenging role that can be emotionally and physically demanding, leading to social isolation and chronic tiredness. Maintaining this group’s social connections during the pandemic was more important than ever.

Members appreciated the opportunity to share health concerns, anxieties and fears compounded by the growing burden of physical distance from loved ones.

Other support groups continued to thrive despite the challenges.

At Rivendell House, guest musicians, a cooking group and gardening were favourites, while word games and quizzes kept minds sharp. One-on-one woodworking classes, which have been a key program at the centre for many years, built bird houses, stools and bookends.

At all our centres, a range of events were celebrated, with cultural days, the Melbourne Cup, AFL Grand Final and Halloween providing opportunities to dress up and enjoy the lighter side of life.

Group activities for people who are aged and/or living with an acquired brain injury continued at the Barry Fenton Centre. Targeted programs include strength training, social activities and stimulation in line with the Commonwealth Home Support Programme and NDIS guidelines.

During periods of relaxed restrictions, our staff continued to ensure robust processes such as strict infection prevention controls and client safety protocols underpinned all programs.

Happy feet

Regular podiatry treatment is a vital support service for many people because healthy feet assist mobility and prevent falls. mecwacare’s in-house podiatrist continued to treat clients at the Barry Fenton Centre in Malvern East during the pandemic.

Regular podiatry sessions yield measurable improvement in conditions such as diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. With exercise one of the five permitted reasons to leave the home during lockdowns, it was crucial to maintain healthy feet.

This essential service, which is available to residents living in the City of Stonnington and surrounding suburbs, provided 1,356 hours of treatment in 2020-21.

Delivering meals

mecwacare home delivered more than 73,000 nutritious and delicious meals to a range of vulnerable clients living alone throughout 2020-21. During the lockdowns, some clients experienced difficulty safely accessing food and this significantly increased demand. Our Meals on Wheels volunteers and workers used contactless methods to deliver meals safely to clients, donning face masks, goggles or clear face shields and gloves, and maintaining social distancing.

Corporate Services

380%
increase in flu vaccinations

18,817
Facebook post engagements

People and Culture

COVID-19's impact across the aged and disability care sector required an urgent and innovative recruitment program to fill new roles in mecwacare's home care business.

As demand for home care package services increased substantially (see page 14), our human resources team worked around the clock to recruit qualified staff to ensure there was a capable workforce to support both home care and residential aged care.

Urgency and the occasional need to work remotely in line with mecwacare's COVID-safe approach necessitated innovation and streamlining of processes.

We introduced online onboarding of new staff, including orientation forms, and improved recruitment processes to overcome the challenges of face-to-face meeting limitations.

These innovations improved the candidate experience and the speed of placing new staff into the workplace. In many instances, staff were at work within 48 hours of receiving their job offer.

Following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, there are now increased reporting and screening requirements. These new responsibilities include introducing an NDIS worker screening check and providing

more opportunities for part-time work in what has previously been a largely casual workforce.

Other key initiatives included developing a new online performance development framework and a learning module that focuses on communication, values and how we work with others, policies, processes and laws that cover staff working at mecwacare.

Business Improvement

A new online platform called “mecwapedia” is now supporting flexible staff learning and development opportunities, including mandatory training.

This significant project went live in June 2020 after 12 months of testing and development by the Learning and Development team, with input and support from multiple departments.

mecwapedia gives staff access to a range of online learning courses and resources that they can view and complete on demand, as well as previews of upcoming face-to-face and e-learning alternatives. Staff can easily check on their enrolment status in training courses and what mandatory training they must complete.

For managers, mecwapedia provides real-time reports on staff training status. This new system also saves time due to automatic enrolments and notifications, avoiding duplication of processes. It is expected to speed up training and build staff confidence in their capability and knowledge.

Our Quality and Risk team contributed to coronavirus management and planning by continuing to develop and review systems and processes, with a focus on infection control and aligning with best-practice policies, processes, systems and training.

They supported mecwacare's response readiness through intensive COVID-19 and infection control training, with nurse educators attending all aged care homes for hand hygiene and PPE competency assessments. A total of 1,901 workplace competency assessments were completed.

COVID-19 restrictions presented a major challenge to the learning and development program, demanding greater flexibility and a blended training model to ensure safe training. Face-to-face programs (including orientation and annual mandatory refresher training) were moved online via Microsoft Teams, resulting in greater efficiencies.

Information Technology

Upgrading check-in processes at our aged care homes to protect the health and safety of our vulnerable residents was part of mecwacare's robust COVID-19 management plan.

We installed thermal cameras and electronic sign-in and visitor booking systems at all homes, significantly improving infection control and maintaining opportunities for residents to spend time with their loved ones safely.

Our IT Help Desk was involved in reconfiguring and relocating staff and their work stations to meet social distancing requirements in the office. This work ensured staff were COVID-safe while retaining access to all IT systems and, importantly, providing uninterrupted services to our clients. We also supported staff to work from home.

Robotic Process Automation was introduced to streamline some repetitive tasks, such as processing invoices and setting up new clients in our systems. This initiative ensures business efficiency and facilitates growth while allowing our staff to focus on supporting clients.

Dynamics 365 – which continued to be rolled out across the organisation – was rebranded as FISH (Feedback, Incidents/Improvements, Suggestions and Hazards). FISH unifies our line-of-business IT systems and, as more functionality is developed, will progressively become the backbone of our business systems.

As part of the project, manual paper-based audits were progressively converted to electronic audits, improving the timeliness of data and reporting capabilities.

Maintaining a high degree of cyber security continued to be a priority. In line with Australian Cyber Security Centre recommendations, multi-factor authentication (MFA) was introduced to ensure safe and secure access to mecwacare systems.

Finance

mecwacare's Finance team partnered with our home care team and residential facility managers to provide efficient and responsive services.

Our Accounts Receivable team focused on providing a high standard of customer service when delivering billing and revenue services for Residential Services, Home Nursing, NDIS, Community Housing, Retirement Living and institutional clients, as well as the timely collection of payments.

In 2020-21, the team received more than 9,000 inbound calls involving collections, assisting with direct debit sign up and dispute resolution, in particular, managing clients experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic. Our team sensitively and collaboratively worked with staff and clients to ensure clients continued to receive care and support while rehabilitating their arrears on realistic and affordable payment plans.

A series of efficiencies and improvements were rolled out during the year to set up a seamless payment journey for invoicing clients across all lines of business.

Working within financial guidelines and banking regulations, mecwacare received approval to sign up clients

for direct debit over the phone instead of post. Clients appreciated the assurance of their direct debits being paid on time for their monthly services without leaving home.

A standardised invoice was rolled out across all lines of business with clearer descriptions and clarity on any residual balances to help prompt clients to call, make payments and set up direct debit.

The Finance team successfully completed several external and internal reporting obligations and audits, including the Aged Care Financial Report for Residential Aged Care and Home Care Services, and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme annual Financial Report and Stocktake.

Property and Ancillary Services

Ancillary services cover maintenance, community housing and retirement living, procurement and contracts.

A new site – mecwacare Squires Place in Altona North – was added to our property portfolio, increasing the number of sites to 34.

A self-contained apartment at Calwell Manor in Safety Beach was transformed into a new home care office with most of the work carried out by our team.

A busy maintenance and gardening schedule continues to ensure high standards of presentation at all mecwacare sites and functionality for residents and clients at our aged care homes, retirement villages and community centres.

A diverse portfolio of work during the year included ordering and distributing thousands of items of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as clear face shields, surgical masks, disposable gloves and gowns, and hand sanitiser across all mecwacare sites.

Purchase costs frequently exceeded \$100,000 a month, which is not funded by the government.

Marketing, Communications and Fundraising

Our 20th Annual Charity Golf Day attracted a record number of supporters to the prestigious Yarra Yarra Golf Club in March 2021 after a snap lockdown postponed the event in February.

Our signature fundraising event raises money for programs and services for the elderly and people living with a disability. This year's event supported the purchase of specialised strength training equipment to prevent falls and improve quality of life for our vulnerable residents and clients.

We sponsored an award-winning short film called Trust Frank, which is a sentimental and gently humorous story about two lonely elderly neighbours struggling to battle serious infirmities as they age. At 30 June 2021, the film had screened at 31 film festivals around the world and won 74 awards. We are proud of our association with writer and director Penny Moore's film, which sensitively put dementia in the spotlight and showed that you are never too old to find love and friendship.

mecwacare continued its partnership with the Victorian Amateur Football Association, which enabled us to reach an audience that is primarily responsible for making decisions about loved ones' care and support.

As living with the coronavirus became the new “normal”, we maintained regular contact with our many stakeholders. At the height of the pandemic in July and August 2020, we provided more than 90 updates to our care home residents and their families, clients, staff, volunteers, community housing and retirement living residents, and contractors. A total of 246 communications were distributed during the 12 months.

Two fundraising appeals raised money for our Pandemic Response Fund and the HUR leg press, which is specifically designed for older people.

Our social media presence continued to grow in 2020-21 with a total of 18,817 engagements on Facebook alone. Overall, we increased our social media followers by 17 per cent across all platforms.

mecwacare is an inclusive organisation that respects diversity by embracing each individual's unique dimensions. These include knowledge, skills and perspectives that may result from race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical ability, religious belief(s), political belief(s), work experiences, geographic location or other ideologies.

Board of Directors



Life Governors: Robin Syme and Jorgen Elstoft

Our Board consists of volunteers with targeted professional skills and experience, who oversee the governance structures of mecwacare. The Board works with the Chief Executive to ensure responsibility for mecwacare’s financial performance, strategic priorities and quality of care and services.

Our Governance



Leadership Team

Our Leadership Team oversees 2,000 employees and 500 volunteers who support more than 17,000 people across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. They are responsible for mecwacare upholding the highest standards in aged and disability care, and creating a culture that reflects the mecwacare values of caring, accountable, respectful and ethical. Between them, they have over 150 years’ experience in providing aged, disability and health care services in the not-for-profit, government and private sectors.

*Pictured from left: **Steven Lambert** (Executive General Manager, Corporate Services), **Leesa Conn** (Executive General Manager, Business Improvement), **Susan Camilleri** (General Manager, People and Culture), **Michele Lewis** (Chief Executive), **Linda Smart** (Executive General Manager, Home and Community Services) and **Loretta Radge** (General Manager, Residential Services).*

Board Committees
Chief Executive Review Committee Mr J. Hood (Chair) Mr J. Atchison Mr C. Squires Mr I. McHutchison
Finance and Audit Committee Mr C. Squires (Chair) Ms D. Coe Mr J. Hood (ex officio) Mr I. McHutchison Ms R. Au
Clinical and Service Governance Committee Ms E. Dimitriadis (Chair) Ms S. Barton Mr J. Hood (ex officio) Ms S. Calwell Mr B. Fenton Mrs A. Court

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

mecwacare’s Strategic Plan 2020-2024 supports us to achieve our purpose and vision, with six strategic priorities underpinning everything that we do to support some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

We monitor our performance against these objectives through numerous measures that are reported monthly to the Board of Directors.

There are three sub-committees that meet regularly to monitor and address the organisation’s performance in these key areas. Reviews and monitoring are undertaken for organisational achievements against the strategic plan, as set by the Board, to meet resident and client expectations and legislative requirements.

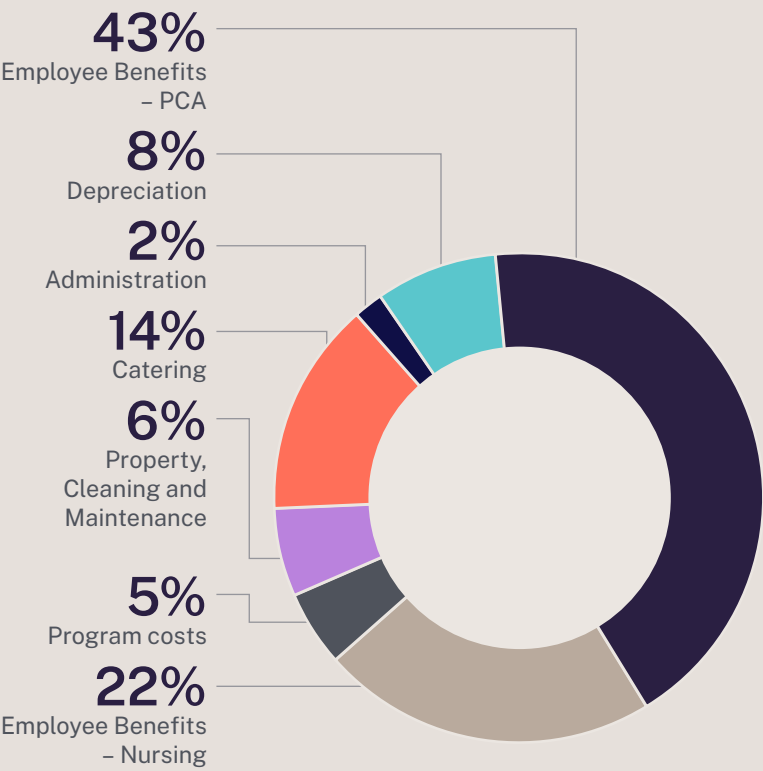
Strategic Priorities

1. Give practical effect to life changing experiences for all service recipients. Embrace choice, diversity and inclusion.
2. Maximise workforce capacity, capability, flexibility and sustainability.
3. Leverage infrastructure at existing locations.
4. Establish integrated services in geographic areas that support a full continuum of care.
5. Implement technologies to maximise consumer support.
6. Establish a pandemic plan across the organisation to ensure a proactive and swift response to minimise risk.

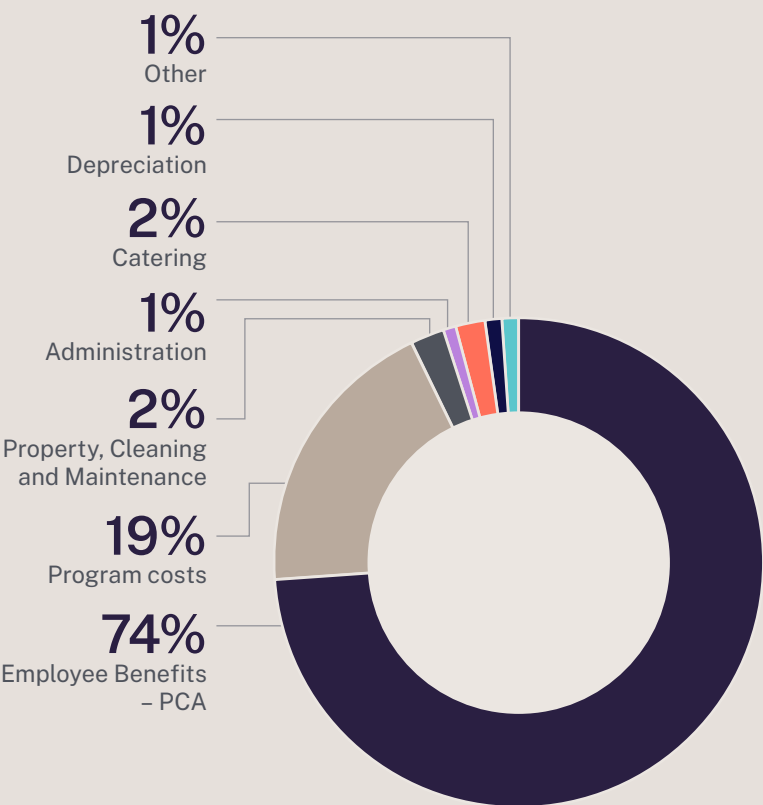
Financial Statement

Expenses

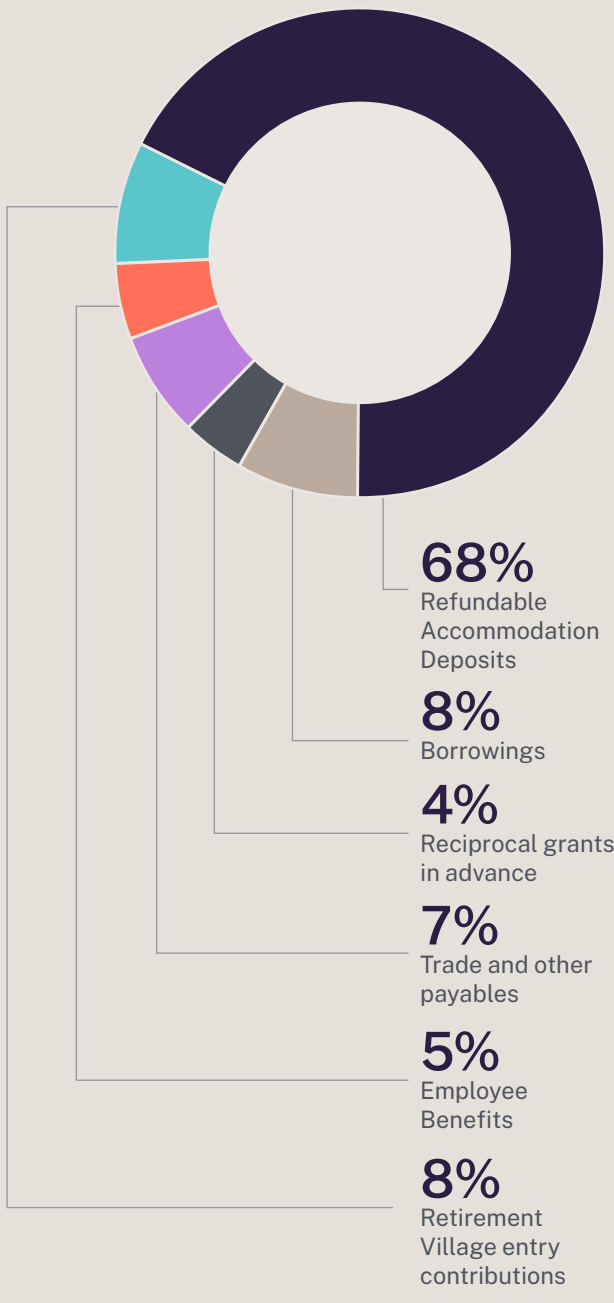
Residential Services



Home Care Services



Liabilities



Our People

Employee, Contractor and Volunteer Awards



It wasn't just our values that united us at mecwacare's annual Employee, Volunteer and Contractor Awards.

After an online presentation ceremony the previous year due to COVID-19 restrictions, staff from across the organisation were able to gather in person at the Malvern Centre in March 2021.

Chief Executive Michele Lewis presented 26 awards, saying it was very satisfying to honour every area of the organisation – especially those who had risen to the challenges of the pandemic.

Staff nominated 100 of their colleagues for recognition as high-performing individuals and teams, who go above and beyond to deliver exceptional care and support to our 17,000 residents and clients. They also epitomise mecwacare's values – Caring, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical.

Chief Executive Leadership Award (Residential Services)
Loretta Radge

Chief Executive Leadership Award (Home and Community Services)
Linda Smart

Chief Executive Leadership Award (Corporate Services)
Susan Camilleri

Employee of the Year (Residential Services)
Annette Mclean

Employee of the Year (Home and Community Services)
Kevin Kreiner

Employee of the Year (Corporate Services)
Luke Angliss

Clinician of the Year (Residential Services)
Mohammed Oukal

Clinician of the Year (Home and Community Services)
Caroline McLelland

Carer of the Year (Residential Services)
Saffron Wileman

Carer of the Year (Home and Community Services)
Ashlee Roberts

Learning and Development Award
Paramjit (Pally) Singh

Support Service Award (Residential Services)
Eleanor Hillis

Support Service Award (Home and Community Services)
Seung (Steve) Tac Yahng

Support Service Award (Corporate Services)
Jessica Lemoine

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

Administrator of the Year Award (Home and Community Services)
Miranda Kellett

Administrator of the Year Award (Corporate Services)
Peter Griffin

Encouragement Award (Residential Services)
Amanjot Brar

Encouragement Award (Home Nursing Care Services)
Dumida Niyamgoda

Encouragement Award (Corporate Services)
Daniela Campana-Leesa

Encouragement Award (Community Services)
Christine Gardner

Contractor of the Year
Michael Evans

Volunteer of the Year
Marjorie Waite

Volunteer of the Year
Noel and Julie Farmilo

Long-term Contribution Award
Lucy Chapman

Chief Executive Special Award (Teams)
Home Care Nursing Team – Clare Chalmers, Dee Greenwood and June Davis

Celebrating our pandemic heroes

When COVID-19 broke through our defences at the mecwacare John Atchison Centre in Hoppers Crossing, Eleanor Hillis had one thought: What can I do to help?

Eleanor has worked as a cleaner and laundry assistant at the care home since it opened in 2018. Conscientious and loyal, Eleanor is always respectful of those around her and happy to roll up her sleeves and get on with whatever needs to be done.

Her “can-do” attitude came to the fore when COVID-19 impacted the home in 2020. Despite contracting the virus herself, when she recovered Eleanor jumped straight back in without any hesitation to support her colleagues and residents.

Eleanor’s manager said she went above and beyond, assisting residents to move into new rooms as part of the government’s “zoning” policy and ensuring each resident was comfortable with how the room was organised.

Eleanor was like a breath of fresh air and always had a smile for everyone she came into contact with. Her manager says her consistent presence during a very difficult time was appreciated by all, describing her as “one in a million and a true star in our eyes”.



Eleanor Hillis
Laundry Assistant at John Atchison Centre

Volunteers

More than 60 years after mecwacare was founded, volunteers continue to play a significant role in all areas of the business. This includes our 14 aged care homes, four opportunity shops and community centres.

In 2020-21, mecwacare’s 500 volunteers contributed 20,852 hours of service, which was a 44 per cent reduction on the previous year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

While many were unable to continue their regular work, others rose to the challenge to ensure essential services, such as meal deliveries and transport continued. This was a daunting time for our volunteers, many of whom are in the vulnerable age group, to be out in the community. Our clients greatly appreciated their efforts.

mecwacare’s volunteers adapted to the changing environment. They completed COVID-safe training and donned PPE to keep them and our clients safe.

While the trend across Australia showed volunteers withdrawing from service, mecwacare was delighted to welcome 115 new volunteers.

mecwacare would like to thank all our volunteers, past and present, for the positive contribution they make to enhancing the lives of our vulnerable residents and clients.



Long-time volunteer and now mecwacare resident Margaret Watson

In 2021, it was our privilege to welcome Margaret Watson into mecwacare Jubilee House in Caulfield North. Margaret was a mecwacare volunteer for more than 50 years and epitomises the legacy of our founders.

For over 35 years, Margaret mended jewellery that had been donated to the Malvern Opportunity Shop, painstakingly rethreading beads and restringing necklaces to sell in the store. She also dismantled leftover jewellery to design new pieces. One of her pieces sold for five cents!

Margaret, who is one of mecwacare’s “treasures”, celebrated her 100th birthday in April 2021 and was delighted to receive a letter from the Queen.

Opportunity Shops

Our four opportunity shops in Malvern, East Malvern, Windsor and Hawthorn continued to inject much-needed funds into mecwacare’s programs and services, while offering rare retail opportunities and eye-catching window displays.

Like so many retail businesses across Melbourne, our shops were severely impacted by the pandemic in 2020-21 – forced to close for a total of 113 days due to lockdowns.

Without the support and contribution of our volunteers, we would not be able to generate the additional income that directly benefits the elderly and people living with a disability.

Goods across the four shops were continuously replenished by the community, who made the most of lockdowns to clean out their homes and donate to the shops.

Many customers found themselves in dire need due to loss of income as a result of the prolonged restrictions and appreciated the value of shopping in our stores.

Recycling “pre-loved” goods also represents mecwacare’s contribution towards environmental sustainability, which complements our many other “green” initiatives (see page 7).

Our shops provide volunteers with a sense of belonging, connectivity and friendship,

Award winners

Noel and Julie Farmilo couldn’t know what was in store for them when they signed on as volunteers in 2020.

This Meals on Wheels delivery couple from Leongatha arrived for duty just as the coronavirus began disrupting our everyday lives. But they weren’t daunted by it.

Instead, they swotted up on COVID-safe protocols, donned full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and began delivering meals. They even did hospital pick-ups to ensure our Gippsland clients had access to the services they needed.

Noel and Julie’s efforts were recognised with one of mecwacare’s Volunteer of the Year Awards in March 2021.



Julie and Noel Farmilo

Marjorie Waite knows every nook and cranny of mecwacare’s East Malvern Opportunity Shop – and even more about style.

A volunteer for 18 years, Marjorie is a legend for her outstanding retail knowledge, impeccable presentation and conversation skills.

She is a fashion matchmaker, impressing shoppers with her knowledge of stock and what will suit them. Marjorie says she is always eager to try something new and takes pride in learning because it “keeps the grey cells moving”.

Marjorie was one of the recipients of mecwacare’s Volunteer of the Year Awards.



Marjorie Waite

Staff and Volunteer Recognition

35 Years

Jennifer Ritonja

30 Years

Irene Tan

25 Years

Romaine Peck

Anne Wright

Margaret Walker

20 Years

Kerry Cowled

Margaret Scotter

Jean Mason

Jeff Maimone

Amanda Carpanedo

15 Years

Jane Kluts

Karen Macreadie

Karen Barbalace

Suzanne Lacey

Celina Przybylowski

Helen Fouyaxis

Kendy Tesfay

Erna Davies

James Hildebrandt

Mandy McCoy

Sue Wilson

Sree Praveenkumar

Wendy Astbury

Renata Fraatz

Annie Kuanzambi

Catherine Dentith

10 Years

Meseret Woldeyes

Debbie Simpson

Melba Rivera

Steph Ranasinghe-Mawzoon

Simon Zele

Amanda Holder

Aida Hanania

Jess Maund

Donna Watts

Eduardo Uycoco

Margaret Langford

Lioubov (Luba) Braude

Katia El-Azar

Leanne Kruize

Harjot Kaur

Michelle Dobrich

Michelle Zutt

Keti Zdraveska

Dale Cummings

Nina Xuereb

Corinne Dalach

Effie Mitsiopoulos

Grace Mendoza

Rachel Gugich

Trish Evans

Annie Shabbir

Indu Sivanewaran

Juliana Walker

Peter Moncur

Isabel Vera

Ann Littleford

Wimon Charoenwattanawinyoo

Andrew Kerr

Satvinder Bachhal

Kathryn Schofield

Ester Benstead

Linda Williams

Winnie Yee

Amritpal Kaur

Teresa Eaves

5 Years

Lisa Partosh

Keiko Schumacher

Rebecca Binding

Janette Eastaugh

Chrissie Trewin

Stephanie Choo

Sladana Furundzic

Mary Lozanovski

Danielle Bugeja

Roxanne Payne

Rose Ou

Tracey Studd

Christina Dau

Aimee Schmid

Jalpa Patel

Eshtiyak Deng

Roslyn Sumpter

Ayuen Leet

Loreto Carin – Larcombe

Neenu John

Monika Marquez

Sandhya Pandey Kharel

Liya Geberhiwot

Olga Lister

Joe Srampickal

Cynthia Santiago

Jennifer Trigg

Allison Renton

Nancy Robinson

Adel Mitiyas

Alex McIntosh

Brendan Free

Rhea Pillay

Brenda Roberts

Janeth Bryant

Lucy Wettenhall

Georgina Deak

Deanna Hawkins

Joanne Edwards

Kerrie Cardwell

Candy Grewal

Andrias Asfaha Ali

Kandace Cochrane–Robertson

Michelle Sutherland

Vinoy Sebastian

Andrea Pender

Angela Wiley

Audrey Rawlins

Sosena Birru

Ricky Rojas

Amanda Browning

Kayla Collie

Heather Sager

Caitlin Ralston

Lauren Webb

Ravi Kaur

Lucinda Pyman

Dipendra Regmi

Tyrone Gordon

Jannine Russell

Vilma Limpin

Beverley Fraser

Marga Bouten

Shalini Shandil

Courtney Stone

Andrew Alagos

Kishor Kumar

Blessy Babu

Harpreet Kaur Sanhu

Isis Mill

Christine Chapple

Victoria Cartledge

Anne Miller

Daniela Campana–Lessa

Barbara Slade

Stewart Ramsay

Donna Meade

Marc McHallam

Lauren Tucker

Brenda Davies

Courtney Saunders

Anupreet Kaur

Maddison Mail

Clare McAllister

Chelsea McGrath–Rafferty

Aziw Yel

Kathryn Fisher

Maria Fe Jasmin

Trisha Marshall

Wendy Doyle

Vicky Cvetanovic

Bridget Moylan

Lilly Habul

Indy Funke Kupper

Pamela Omara

Karen Kerr

Brooke O’Leary

Sandra Durant

Natasha Whelan

Daisy Towett

Abigail Noceja

Volunteers

20 Years

Corrie Van der Velden
(O’Mara House)

15 Years

Dallas Coe
(Board Member)

Sandra Beauchamp
(Noel Miller Centre)

Joan Griss
(East Malvern Op Shop)

Patricia Gaffney
(East Malvern Op Shop)

Klaus Georgi
(East Malvern Op Shop)

Melissa Doyle
(Malvern Op Shop)

10 Years

June Eva
(Community Transport)

Dianne Milne
(Community Transport)

Kathryn (Kitty) David
(Malvern Centre)

Meena Lalwani
(Malvern Centre)

Robert Melotte
(Malvern Centre)

Lynne Witynski
(Trescowthick Centre)

Community Support and Partnerships

Individual	Corporate and Community		Trusts, Foundations and Bequests
Aldy Felix	Accru Melbourne	Independence Australia	Aged Persons Welfare Association Allen Meredith Downie Australian Communities Foundation Bridget Monaghan Trust Caterpillar Foundation Durrabool Fund Casey Cardinia Foundation Hopetoun Fund Joan Lavender Charitable Trust Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust Macquarie Foundation Meals on Wheels Victoria Mioko Wood State Trustees The William Angliss Charitable Fund
Andy Smith	Aged Care Developments	LeasePLUS	
Ann Sylvester	Aged Care Online	Malvernvale Hotel	
Anne Court	Aidacare	Meals on Wheels Victoria	
Ava An Hwa Wu	Allanby Press	Medirest	
Averil Dent	Amicum	Medsafe	
Barry Peake	ANZ	Modern Promotions	
Colin Squires	Appliances Online	Moores	
Craig Walton	Australia Post	Neon Tiger	
Helen Eddy	Barry Fink Holdings	Norden Conversion	
Gary Rothville	Becon Constructions	PTA Architecture	
Geraldine Russell	Bidfood	Q Signs	
Jenny Poolman	Big Ben	SAJ Fruit Supply	
Joan Donaldson	Brighton Toyota	Sheen Malvern	
Joan Gibbs	Chadstone Toyota	Simply Sensational	
John Hood	Community Bank	Catering	
Joseph D'Abaco	East Malvern	SJM Developments	
Leif L Lie	eCommunications	Spectrol	
Peter Lemon	Essential Fire	Supercare	
Robert Palmer	Safety Services	Taking Care Mobile	
Robert Tadgell	Felix Relocations	Massage	
Robin Syme	Fisher Lane Mobility	The Bloom Room	Government Support Bass Coast Shire Council Cardinia Shire Council Commonwealth Department of Health Department of Veterans' Affairs Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Sandie Gorton	Gary Peer and Associates	TW Recruitment	
Sarah Donnan	Guardian Network	United Physiotherapy Group	
Sue Manton	Goodwin Recruitment		
WH and EA Melbourne	Grey Army	Via Architects	
Wendy R Taylor	Grill'd	Victorian Amateur Football Association	
William P Lewis	Hengyi	Warragul Linen	
	Hesta Super Fund	Winc	
	HWL Ebsworth Lawyers		

mecwacare would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their kindness, generosity and support during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Sidney Bailleu Myer AC: gifts for staff at mecwacare Annie's Court (Shoreham)	Haigh's Chocolates: gifts for Father's Day
Pink Carnation: flowers for mecwacare Elstoft House (Geelong)	Home Moving Planners: numerous items for our opportunity shops
Bunnings Hoppers Crossing: potted plants for residents and face shields for staff at mecwacare John Atchison Centre (Hoppers Crossing)	Reckitt/Woolworths: disinfectant products for meals on wheels clients
	Shield Corporate Security: face masks
	Rosie Bogdan: letters to residents in aged care homes

mecwacare would like to acknowledge and thank all our donors for their generosity throughout the year. Donations over \$250 have been listed in this report.

Service Network

Aged Care Homes	Home Care Services	Community and Disability Services
P 03 8573 4812 E admissions@mecwacare.org.au mecwacare Annie's Court 3905 Frankston-Flinders Road, Shoreham P 03 5989 5588 mecwacare Calwell Manor 111 Country Club Drive, Safety Beach P 03 5981 7288 mecwacare Elstoft House 12-14 Beulah Street, Hamlyn Heights (Geelong) P 03 5277 3081 mecwacare John Atchison Centre 312-318 Derrimut Road, Hoppers Crossing P 03 8015 2888 mecwacare Jubilee House 52 Northcote Avenue, Caulfield North P 03 8567 8288 mecwacare Malvern Centre 1245 Malvern Road, Malvern P 03 9248 6100 mecwacare Noel Miller Centre 9-15 Kent Street, Glen Iris P 03 9835 2333 mecwacare O'Mara House 15 Hunter Road, Traralgon P 03 5174 4628 mecwacare Park Hill 160 Mornington-Tyabb Road, Mornington P 03 5975 2700 mecwacare Rositano House 273 Church Street, Richmond P 03 9427 1404 mecwacare Simon Price Centre 13-25 Strabane Avenue, Mont Albert <i>Under construction (opening early 2023)</i> mecwacare Squires Place 375-379 Mason Street, Altona North P 03 9392 5678 mecwacare Trescowthick Centre 70 Charles Street, Prahran P 03 9510 6100 mecwacare Vincent House 125-135 Kenny Street, Westmeadows P 03 9333 3022	P 03 8573 4980 E intake@mecwacare.org.au South East Metro 1287 Malvern Road, Malvern P: 03 8573 4999 North West Metro (includes Melbourne and Nillumbik) Level 1, 34 Amis Crescent, Keilor East P 03 9325 5500 South East Region 4/66-68 Main Street, Pakenham P 03 5945 0888 South West Region (includes Warrnambool) 10 Drummond Street North, Ballarat P 03 5333 0900 Barwon Region 12-14 Beulah Street, Hamlyn Heights (Geelong) P 03 5271 4888 Gippsland Region (includes Bass Coast) 14 Reilly Street, Inverloch P 03 5671 6888 Home Care Packages P 03 8573 4812 E homecarepackages@mecwacare.org.au Community Housing P 03 8573 4970 E housing@mecwacare.org.au Beaumaris Glen Iris Sandringham Retirement Living P 03 8573 4970 E housing@mecwacare.org.au Hoppers Crossing Malvern	E community@mecwacare.org.au Bass Coast 6 Lions Court, Cowes (Phillip Island) P 03 9564 5100 mecwacare Barry Fenton Centre 72 Bowen Street, Malvern East P 03 9564 5100 mecwacare Fisher Street Centre 57 Fisher Street, Malvern East P 03 9572 9000 mecwacare Rivendell House 8 Henry Street, Pakenham P 03 5943 7500 Podiatry 72 Bowen Street, Malvern East P 03 9564 5104 E podiatry@mecwacare.org.au Opportunity Shops E: enquiries@mecwacare.org.au East Malvern 299 Waverley Road, Malvern East P 03 8573 4670 Hawthorn 111 Auburn Road, Hawthorn P 03 8573 4690 Malvern 136 Wattletree Road, Malvern P 03 8573 4680 Windsor 52 Chapel Street, Windsor P 03 9521 1774 Corporate Services 1287 Malvern Road Malvern VIC 3144 Freecall 1800 163 292 P 03 8573 4888 E enquiries@mecwacare.org.au W mecwacare.org.au

mecwacare is proudly a not-for-profit,
non-denominational charitable organisation that
has been caring for Victorians since 1959.

mecwacare

Freecall **1800 163 292** • **mecwacare.org.au**



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