

mecwacare

SUMMER 2021

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Caring for Victorians since 1959

Safeguarding the vulnerable

High vaccination rates and on-site rapid antigen testing are permitting us to approach the holiday season with cautious optimism.

We are as prepared as we can be. But we must acknowledge that after the ups and downs of the past 22 months, it is difficult not to wonder what the new year will bring.

As a community we have earned our relative confidence about 2022. COVID-19's unpredictable trajectory is keeping us all on high alert, particularly the dedicated staff at our aged care homes. As the hectic activity of the holiday season approaches, their care and gate-keeping role becomes even more critical.

They will be ensuring total compliance with the robust prevention and detection measures safeguarding your loved ones – whether there are high or low community infection rates. Our standards are non-negotiable. We are here to do a job and we will continue to exceed what is expected of us.

I know how much you appreciate the efforts of all our staff so when you visit, please show your support with a smile and a few kind words.

I especially appreciated your goodwill in September when we, regrettably, announced that the existing mecwacare Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert would close earlier than expected. This was to make way for a new \$40 million 100-bed luxurious home.

This decision was due to COVID-19 creating materials shortages in the building industry. Our construction partner had to amend the project schedule, which brought forward demolition of the old building.

We have relocated residents and staff to other mecwacare sites and services until the beautiful new home opens in 2023. I would like to thank residents, their families and our staff for their understanding and cooperation, which made this difficult job very manageable.

Closing the Simon Price Centre wasn't the only recent reluctant farewell. At our Annual General Meeting in October, Board Chair John Hood formally announced that he would be retiring after 22 years on the Board. John joined us in 1998 and has served as Chair since 2009. While he was at the helm, mecwacare thrived. We wish John well in retirement.

We have launched a new website, which is designed with you, our clients, in mind. We hope you find it helpful and easy to navigate. I encourage you to check it out at mecwacare.org.au

While this has been another year that has taken a lot of energy and patience, it's important that our Christmas appeal gets the attention it deserves, too.

This year we are highlighting the growing concern of elder abuse.

Our staff are trained to identify this appalling behaviour, to act and assist. It is upsetting reading, but I encourage you to increase your knowledge of this quiet tragedy and support our appeal. We all have a role to play to protect our precious older people.

Finally, I want to acknowledge our skilled and compassionate staff and volunteers. Your commitment and resilience throughout the challenges of another COVID year has been nothing short of exceptional. I am incredibly proud of you.

Michele Lewis
Chief Executive

On the cover: Noel Miller Centre resident Denise



mecwacare staff Anne Bouchier (inset) Janice Donohue and Mary Aguilar

A Miller's tale of memories

If you asked Janice, Mary and Anne who brought them together, these legends of mecwacare nursing would answer: Olive and Noel.

That's Olive Miller, the namesake of mecwacare's second nursing home built on land next to MECWA House in Warner Street, Malvern. It opened in 1991 and closed in 2003, making way for "Noel" – the much larger Noel Miller Centre – honouring Olive's husband.

This little trip down memory lane was jogged by a recent presentation of staff service awards, which spotlighted career parallels between three long-serving nursing stalwarts.

Janice Donohue, Mary Aguilar and Anne Bouchier have made their mark over many years of outstanding and loyal service, first at the Olive Miller Nursing Home and now at Noel Miller Centre in Glen Iris.

Janice and Mary were recently honoured with 30-year service awards and Anne was close behind, with 25 years' service.

Their longevity and professionalism tell a story of dedication to their chosen careers and to mecwacare. In an industry where many members are transient, Janice, Mary and Anne represent stability.

Janice was the first to step through the doors of "Olive" in February 1991. An enrolled nurse, she is now a night duty specialist at Noel Miller Centre, working as night supervisor.

After 30 years, she is a font of knowledge and is renowned for being able to settle residents if they have difficulties during the night. One of the secrets to her approach is

knowing residents' preferences and choices.

Mary started not long after Janice in August 1991 and her experience is highly valued by her colleagues. The parallels with Janice continue because Mary, a registered nurse, also works on night duty.

Mary's colleagues especially admire how thorough she is and she has a well-earned reputation for managing assessments and documentation, with an exceptional eye for detail.

An enrolled nurse, Anne works afternoon and night shifts and as a supervisor. Residents and staff describe her as approachable and caring. Her colleagues agree that she's "gold" – loyal and pleasant and always giving her best.

looking for RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE?

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

Our residential aged care locations:

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


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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.

Walking a *mile* in their shoes

An adventurous streak led Chantelle Keven to an impressive career in home care services.

A nature-lover her whole life, she went to work in an indigenous community in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

"I was supposed to be working with youth in the public health space, implementing a program to promote healthier living," Chantelle says.

"However, I found that I spent more time talking with the Aboriginal elders. I was drawn towards older people, I think. The Elders had so much wisdom and so much insight into life.

"If you have a look at older people in general, you can take so much from them, which can guide your everyday life and decisions in a positive way."

As General Manager of mecwacare's Home Care Services in the North West Region, Chantelle has since

accumulated a wealth of experience that she brings to her work supporting the wellbeing and independence of older people and people with disabilities.

She came to mecwacare as a Client Services Supervisor in 2013 and has taken on a variety of management roles, while undertaking a Bachelor of Social Science/Gerontology.

"In terms of working in this sector, I get a lot of satisfaction from being able to support positive outcomes for people, whether that is staff or clients," Chantelle says.

She credits her "amazing staff" with keeping her afloat on the toughest days and acknowledges that the past two years have been difficult for clients and staff alike.

"It's complex dealing with that high level of human emotion around COVID," she says.

"I have always been passionate about supporting people to achieve their life goals. To do this well you need to work collaboratively with a strong team.

"My current team is supportive and passionate and goes the extra mile to achieve positive outcomes for all. I love working with them every day."



Chantelle Keven, Home Care Services
General Manager, North West Region

"In my spare time I like to sea kayak on lakes and rivers. I've done that for most of my life. I find it a very positive way to relax."

Chantelle Keven



Chantelle taking to the Gippsland Lakes in her sea kayak



mecwacare client Tim Collins with wife Vicki

Finding the *right* support

Ballarat couple Tim and Vicki Collins know that when it comes to support workers, it is essential to find a good match.

A fitter and turner by trade, Tim was first matched with a mecwacare support worker in 2017 after being diagnosed with Huntington's disease three years earlier.

Tim and support worker Hayden made weekly visits to the nearby Men's Shed, which provided projects to stimulate the body and mind.

"They would make lots of things together," Vicki says. "Stools, garden ornaments, you name it, they made it."

Huntington's disease is a genetic condition that affects the part of the brain responsible for the way we think, move and feel.

To help manage his symptoms, support workers accompany Tim to physio or doctor's appointments when Vicki is busy.

He also enjoys playing chess, visiting the local pool or simply going for walks.

Tim's outings have resulted in a new interest. After attending dance/fitness classes at the nearby aquatic centre, he was surprised to find how much he enjoyed it.

"If you had asked me before I would have said no, but it was the best fun I've had," Tim says.

COVID-19 has impacted Tim's outings, as he was advised to minimise community contact to protect his health. Vicki made the difficult decision to leave her job and become Tim's primary carer.

"We've stayed with mecwacare for support workers all the way through and it has been a godsend."

Vicki Collins

"I can't speak more highly of how (the team) helps us. They've just been so wonderful. We know that when we ask for something, they work very hard to get the right worker in for Tim."

mecwacare is committed to supporting people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MECWACARE'S HOME CARE SERVICES,
CALL 8573 4980 OR EMAIL INTAKE@MECWACARE.ORG.AU

Wish you were here

High teas, movie days and Olympic-inspired sporting feats kept mecwacare residents in good cheer as Victorians endured long stretches of lockdown.

Engaging activities and special events have never been so important as they were this year.

With visitor restrictions to keep vulnerable residents safe, family members and loved ones have missed each other dearly.

We innovated ways to stay in touch, including visits behind protective screens and video calls.

Nothing can replace a hug, but good company and shared experiences have gone a long way towards keeping residents busy and entertained.

mecwacare's lifestyle programs reflect the diversity and needs of individual residents, such as learning new skills, staying in touch with the wider world, reaching for new goals, adapting to changes in physical and cognitive function or simply relaxing.

Annie's Court Scarecrows



Park Hill Potted and Painted



AGED CARE HOMES



Jubilee House
Happy Hour



Malvern Centre
Ladies' High Tea

Variety is the spice of life

Here is a snapshot of activities inside some of our homes during the lockdowns.

John Atchison Centre
Remembrance Day



Simon Price Centre
Milestone Birthdays



TUNES AND CHEERS

Caulfield North

Happy hour at Jubilee House took a musical turn when resident Tony, with wife Elsie, provided live entertainment. We are so lucky that residents generously share their talents to create a party atmosphere.

CHEER SQUAD

Glen Iris

Noel Miller Centre resident Dorothy McColl proudly cheered on her grandson James Rook as he made Olympic history when he competed as Australia's first male coxswain steering a women's eight rowing team to victory in Tokyo. Dorothy is a keen sportswoman herself and often stays up late watching international sport. She loved the Olympics broadcast even before James hit the sporting big time.

LEST WE FORGET

Hoppers Crossing

At 11am on November 11 at the John Atchison Centre, we observed a minute of silence to honour the courageous women and men who served their country, including those in our aged care homes, our clients, and their family and friends.

POTTED AND PAINTED

Mornington

Park Hill residents combined art and gardening to great effect, painting colourful terracotta pots and enjoying classical music for a relaxing and therapeutic afternoon. We're always amazed at the talent of our residents and inspired by those who are trying a new skill for the first time.

SCARECROWS

Shoreham

They are called scarecrows, but these creations from Annie's Court are actually quite cute, which is why we have dubbed them "Care Crows". Built from upcycled plant pots and other art supplies, the Care Crows embody the finest improvisation traditions of scarecrow culture, inspired by the recent scarecrow festival on the Mornington Peninsula.

LADIES' HIGH TEA

Malvern

Facility Manager Karin hosted a Ladies' High Tea in the private dining room for seven residents at the Malvern Centre. A tea set was purchased from mecwacare's Windsor Op Shop and it was perfect for the occasion. All the ladies said they had a lovely time and felt very special.

TWICE THE FUN

Mont Albert

Double the birthdays, double the birthday cake! Back-to-back birthdays at the Simon Price Centre saw Lai Ping turn 90 in August and Amy turn 102 the next day. As well as flowers from family and friends, Lai Ping received a special certificate from State Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, the Hon Bruce Atkinson MLC.



mecwacare has 15 aged care homes across Melbourne and regional Victoria

Book a tour today. Call 8573 4812.

Ralph's *renaissance*

AGED CARE HOMES

DISABILITY SERVICES



mecwacare Park Hill resident Ralph Parker is having an artistic reawakening since rediscovering a passion for painting that lay dormant for 38 years.



Ralph with one of his paintings

A Mornington local, Ralph joined us at Park Hill in April. It had been nearly four decades since he last picked up a brush.

Proving it is never too late to reignite an art spark, Ralph, 90, returned to painting landscapes as part of Park Hill's vibrant lifestyle program.

Lifestyle coordinator Shannon Glover says his progress is inspiring.

"In a matter of weeks his dexterity has improved and he has taken off," Shannon says.

"Ralph comes to all the art groups. He is also painting in his bedroom and his family drop off extra supplies. He is developing new relationships in the home.

I think that coming into care has given him a new lease on life and confidence with his art."

Shannon draws on her background in visual arts to set up still life painting sessions for residents.

They combine classical music and art slideshows to round out the cultural experience.

"I reassure and encourage the residents that when you are drawing nature, you can't go wrong," Shannon says.

"Some of the residents are very self-conscious because they've lost dexterity and steadiness and vision. It's all about loose, fluid strokes. I'm like, it's absolutely perfect. It makes

their artwork more impressionist in style.

"We've got a resident with zero experience looking to have a go, who focuses on colour and patterns. It doesn't have to represent anything."

When he is not painting, Ralph takes a daily walk in the beautiful Park Hill gardens and enjoys a beer in the afternoon with his neighbour.

He credits honey with keeping him looking and feeling far younger than his 90 years.

An exhibition of works from Park Hill's creative residents was held at the Oak Hill Gallery in Mornington in November.



mecwacare has three beautiful homes on the Mornington Peninsula at Mornington, Safety Beach and Shoreham. Book a tour today. Call 8573 4812 or email admissions@mecwacare.org.au



Fisher Street participant Kris with Disability Support Worker Paula Mejia Vesga

Fisher Street's *winning* ways

Tunnel ball and table tennis, karaoke and bowling ... our Fisher Street athletes competed in the Paralympics their way and broke records for fun.

Fisher Street Paralympics were just what our participants and staff needed during the lockdown in winter.

This celebration of community-friendly sports at the disability day centre "stadium" was a winning initiative for everyone involved.

Medallists Kris and Sam gave the thumbs up to the work of the Fisher Street team and their selection of events.

Kris won gold in the karaoke and enjoyed the bowling. Sam loved playing tunnel ball with all his friends, collecting a silver medal.

Sam was one of many participants who was highly amused by staff attempts to keep up with the Paralympians. Staff got "lapped" and graciously accepted that the better teams won on the day.

Staff ensured everyone was engaged and enjoyed the experience.

On enthusiasm alone, every Paralympian was worthy of stepping onto the Fisher Street podium.

The laughter and smiles from the Fisher Street Paralympics will be a record that's hard to beat.



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



Jingle sells

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

With Christmas just around the corner, our Op Shops have swung into festive gear, with staff and volunteers rallying to create eye-catching traditional Christmas window displays.

While our Op Shops in Hawthorn, Windsor, Malvern and East Malvern have been closed for much of the year due to lockdowns, staff have been busily establishing a new way to trade – we've gone online!

The mecwacare Op Shop eBay store is going gangbusters, with pre-loved designer gear, best-selling books and even fabulous furniture being snapped up by savvy shoppers from the comfort of their own home.

All funds raised through the sale of goods in our stores stay in the local community and support programs and activities for the elderly and people living with a disability.

As with all retail, the Op Shops have been hit hard this year. We appreciate your support in visiting our stores and finding yourself a new treasure or two while you are there.

Thanks to generous donations from the mecwacare community, our five stores are fully stocked with goodies and bargains.

Visit our online store at:
ebay.com.au/usr/mecwacare_opshops



Donations of goods are vital to the success of our stores. If you have any books, clothing, bric-a-brac or other items you would like to donate, please call 8573 4670 or email enquiries@mecwacare.org.au

Bunnings *gives* back

When lockdowns keep us apart, it is heartening to see members of the broader community reach out to show they care.

In August 2020, staff at Bunnings in Hoppers Crossing found they had excess stock of face masks, an in-demand item during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities Organiser Antonette Spiteri reached out to mecwacare's nearby John Atchison Centre, to which she had previously donated Christmas decorations.

"I immediately thought of mecwacare as the only aged care facility in my area that is not-for-profit," Antonette says.

This useful donation was gratefully received and mecwacare was delighted to hear from Bunnings again soon after the thoughtful gesture.

"During lockdown we thought, 'a lot of people won't see their families, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in some cases'," Antonette says.

"We wanted to do something nice for them. I rang and found out roughly how many (residents) there were and I spent a couple of days potting and planting succulents for each resident so they had something to look after themselves."



John Atchison Centre staff, from left, Shiva Nepal, Eleanor Hillis and Jackie Johnson

In September 2021, Bunnings provided a further donation of plants for staff areas, as a thank you for all their hard work throughout the pandemic.

mecwacare is fortunate to enjoy strong support from many businesses and individuals in the community, but Antonette says it is she who feels privileged to be in a position to help.

"I'm very lucky indeed."



Buiding 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.

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.

At Annie's Court in Shoreham, recently completed works included painting and renovating the front reception area, updating the hair and beauty salon and installing new carpet throughout.

A private dining room has also been added with a lovely outdoor view of the picturesque gardens. Featuring custom French doors, the dining room adds another touch of elegance to the stately home.

Private dining is becoming very popular at our aged care homes with residents enjoying sharing the space with family and friends for special occasions.

A training room was also added that will serve as the Mornington Peninsula's base for enhancing staff capability without the need to travel to Melbourne.

At nearby 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.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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AGED CARE HOMES

Fond farewell

Saying goodbye to the "old" Simon Price Centre was an emotional moment for Lucy Chapman.

For the long-serving and popular facility manager, vacating the Mont Albert premises was like parting with an old friend.

Lucy had worked at the home since mecwacare acquired the building in 2016 and renamed it after former board member and life governor Simon Price.

Lucy and the residents bid farewell in September to make way for a new \$40 million home – a luxurious, 100-bed residence.

Closing the old home was brought forward due to COVID-19 constraints on the building industry which forced changes to the project schedule.

Lucy has memories of many wonderful residents, families and staff over her time at the centre.

She built a work environment that was a hit with residents and staff and is now bringing her management and leadership skills to mecwacare Vincent House in Westmeadows.

Simon Price Centre staff and residents were given the opportunity to relocate to another mecwacare facility until the beautiful new home opens in 2023.

You're invited to follow the building's progress via our on-site camera at the following link: <https://bit.ly/SPCtimelapse>



Simon Price Centre Facility Manager Lucy Chapman



Robin Syme
Malvern



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AND BAR



GUEST
ROOM



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