



WINTER APPEAL 2022

Nurse – Lorraine
Resident – Rosa

There's new hope for debilitating pain.

Your joints are consumed by fire, while sharp blades are piercing delicate, sore and tired muscles. Your skin is crawling with repeated waves of stinging pinpricks.

The flames of burning pain are scorching across your arms or legs. Your nerves are throbbing, hurtling confused signals of agony, exhaustion and resignation to your brain.

You want to run; you need soothing. You must scream as the horrible sensations consume you.

But you can't; your voice won't give words to the distress and hurt that is wracking your body. And, as the waves of pain continue to crash over you, there's no way anyone can know what you are experiencing.

No one is aware that you need help and relief.

This horrible scenario is experienced every day by many elderly, frail and vulnerable people.

The person smothered by pain could be your mum, good friend, grandfather, sister, neighbour...

Don't they deserve better?

Liz cannot speak. Is she in pain?

Liz* is 92 years old. She lives at Annie's Court, the mecwacare aged care home in Shoreham, 90 kilometres south of Melbourne. Liz has severe difficulties with memory and concentration. She is also not able to speak. Liz cannot leave her bed and feels harsh pain.

While nursing staff can recognise changes in Liz's behaviour, it's impossible to know how much pain she is experiencing. Staff are unsure how much support she needs to get through a pain episode without this knowledge.

"We have been using a pain assessment tool on a smart tablet to help assess Liz's pain levels," explained Jasvir Kaur, a registered nurse at Annie's Court. "She isn't able to speak, so this tool is vital in helping to support her through her severe pain."

* Not her real name.



You can help us raise \$50,000 to fund a new tool to help beat the pain across mecwacare's 15 aged care homes.

Suffering in silence.

A report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says:

“Older Australians, those with disabilities and those in residential care are at higher risk of experiencing chronic pain. However, there are additional barriers to identifying and treating their pain... cognitive or communication disabilities, such as dementia or hearing loss, may prevent people from reporting their experience of pain.”

Who will shatter the silence around debilitating pain in aged care?

mecwacare is taking that stand to end the suffering of our vulnerable residents.

You can help us to fight back against this silent outbreak of pain.

A new tool to help beat the pain



According to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, existing tools used to identify and measure pain in people with dementia can't accurately tell the difference between a person experiencing pain or a person displaying similar behaviours unrelated to pain, such as physical strain.

The gold standard for identifying and assessing pain in aged care residents relies on the older person's ability to describe their pain level according to a numbered scale.

What happens when a resident has a stroke and loses the ability to speak? What happens when a person is living with dementia?

Thanks to an Australian developed smartphone/ tablet application that uses the device's camera, we can recognise and record facial

muscle movements that indicate pain.

Using this information, the app generates a score that helps the doctor or nurse measure and understand the impact of a person's pain.

Through regular testing, storing and comparing pain scores, caregivers can monitor a resident's response to treatments. Applying this knowledge to a resident's care helps them to live a better quality of life with less pain.



Will you help us to fight back against this silent outbreak of pain? Please give generously to help mecwacare equip our staff with new devices to better measure pain and provide better quality of life with less pain. *Thank you for your support.*

To make a donation call 1800 163 292 or complete the form below and mail to: mecwacare, 1287 Malvern Road, Malvern VIC 3144

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All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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