

mecwacare

WINTER 2022

# matters



## *Warming up for winter*

**Making his  
own mark**

page 3

**Healthy  
connections**

page 6

**New homes  
taking shape**

page 10

*Caring for Victorians since 1959*

# Vigilance is the key to ward off *winter* nasties

It's hard to believe that winter is here. In the blink of an eye, we are halfway through 2022.

And while COVID continues to play a major role in our work and personal lives, we are far better equipped to manage these challenges than we were 12 months ago – and look how far we have come since the pandemic began more than two years ago.

This is a testament to the resilience and commitment of the entire mecwacare team to provide high-quality, safe and genuine care every day. I am so proud of all the team for their amazing efforts.

As we enter our third year of the pandemic, COVID continues to evolve with the emergence of yet another variant – and the influenza and gastro seasons are here, too.

It is timely to remind everyone to remain infection control

vigilant. Excellent hand hygiene and the use of masks in busy places such as supermarkets and sporting venues are our best defence against all of these highly-contagious and potentially deadly viruses.

The government has recommended a “COVID-19 winter booster” for aged care residents and vulnerable workers to increase their protection. And the Victorian Department of Health has now mandated rapid antigen tests for all visitors to aged care homes. This, of course, is not new to mecwacare as we implemented compulsory rapid tests for visitors and staff last year despite the easing of restrictions.

I recently had the privilege of presenting the annual staff, volunteer and contractor awards. It is a very special event, where we had the opportunity to come together and celebrate some outstanding achievements. See story, page 9.

It was a delight to celebrate Harmony Week and acknowledge the cultural diversity of our organisation, with staff from 87 countries making up our workforce. See story, page 8.

You can read about our extensive building and refurbishment program, which continues to forge ahead despite the challenges of a rapidly changing COVID environment, rising fuel and supermarket prices and the unrest in Europe.

Our latest fundraising appeal will raise money for life-changing clinical support technology that assists us to manage our residents' pain.

Thank you for your ongoing support of mecwacare. Take care and stay safe and warm.

Michele Lewis  
Chief Executive

---

*On the cover: Fred*

Calwell Manor, Safety Beach

## Where everybody matters

Boutique aged care home by the sea, recently refurbished.

BOOK A TOUR • Call 8573 4812 • [mecwacare.org.au](https://mecwacare.org.au)



mecwacare



# Making his own mark

Working independently in a café is a source of pride for Portarlington local Mark.



With support from mecwacare, Mark, 35 years of age – who was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the age of four – travels to and from his nearby workplace and attends medical appointments and social outings.

Bev, Mark's mum, and Sharon, mecwacare's Disability Liaison Officer, work closely to gain maximum benefit from his NDIS funding plan; assistance that Bev says is “absolutely fantastic”.

“Sharon’s been able to do things that I can’t,” Bev says.

“Mark had developed a back injury and Sharon was able to get in contact with the plan’s manager to release funding for treatment. They didn’t seem to want to listen to me.”

With Sharon’s support, Mark was able to access a physiotherapist and exercise physiologist. He has a carer who goes with him twice a week to his appointments. Mark found his own job in the community, working three half-days a week,

and Sharon arranged transport for him to get to the café and back home.

“He’s working for a lovely lady. It’s not in a 'special' supported workplace,” Bev says. “He turns up, does his job, like everyone else.”

“Sharon has been great at giving advice about how she thinks things are going, talking about future plans. It brings balance in (to the situation).”



**Mark and Sharon**

*Sharon was recently named as the recipient of the Support Service Award in the Home and Community Services category at mecwacare’s annual Staff, Volunteer and Contractor Awards.*



To find out how mecwacare can help you coordinate an NDIS program, contact our friendly team on **03 8573 4980** or email **community@mecwacare.org.au**

*"We spent a wonderful day together, creating amazing memories."*



*Izzy's special day out*

## So much more than horsing around

Sixteen-year-old Izzy lives with her mum and five siblings; Izzy and two of her siblings receive support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Izzy loves horses, and her ambition is to work with these graceful animals.

With mewacare's support, Izzy recently spent the day at an equestrian event in Ballarat. Taking Izzy out was a huge support for her mum, who was recovering from dental treatment.

"It's really valuable to get Izzy out into the community to enjoy new experiences," said Sharon Harriage, Izzy's Disability Liaison Officer at mewacare. "Izzy was smiling and patting the horses. She loves spending time with them."

## Fred's Story

Fred Roadley, whose photo is on the cover of this edition of mewacare Matters, has lived at mewacare Ballan since January 2021.

When it comes to the care and support he receives from our staff, Fred always has a kind word to say.

In Fred's working life, he held various roles, including as a clerk, banker, carpenter and concreter; he's a bit of an all-rounder.

Best of all, he's a self-described Aussie larrikin!





# Giving more than his time



Long-time mecware supporter Ken Holmes passed away on 31 March 2022.

His love of repairing and restoring watches and clocks was at the heart of his long-standing contribution to mecware.

“Ken gave his time to support mecware’s Malvern op shop for more than 50 years,” shop manager Juliana Walker says.

“He began volunteering with mecware in 1971 and helped to set up the Malvern shop. He loved watches and clocks and said his work to restore them was ‘just a hobby’, but he put so much time and effort into it.”

Ken would purchase old clocks and watches at auction and lovingly restore the timepieces to pristine condition and working order. He would then drop them into the Malvern op shop for sale.

We estimate that Ken’s work raised thousands of dollars for mecware over the years.

“Ken purchased the watches and clocks with his own money. He put countless hours of his time into restoring them,” she says.

“He was a private person who never asked for recognition. For around 50 years, he was happy being behind the scenes. He was generous and so passionate about supporting mecware.

“He will be sorely missed by us all.”

Vale, Ken.

STAFF



## When you know, you know

A casual job to help pay for her wedding led to a lifelong career in Ballan for Tracey Shirreff.

“When I first started, we had a hospital with six little beds, mostly filled with the elderly,” she says. “I talked to them, made some beds and I thought ‘nursing is for me.’”

Tracey, who is now the home’s Facility Manager, did her nursing training in Melbourne.

“I’ve always tried to work in the not-for-profit sector, even when I did my graduate year. It’s all about service and that’s what I love,” she says.

mecware took over Ballan Health and Care Services late last year and Tracey says the transition will provide opportunities for many positive changes.

“I get excited about the plans for the future,” she says. During her 21 years at Ballan, Tracey has cared for three generations of families and her children have grown up around the health precinct.

After years of being on-call, she is looking forward to having the support of a larger organisation behind her.

“I was back at work when my kids were 10 weeks old,” Tracey says. “I brought them in because there was no one replacing me. I had a cot in my office and carried a baby monitor. You have to multi-task.”

Word of mouth continues to be a valuable method of reaching out to a community where people still come first.

*“It’s the residents and staff I work with every day that keep me going. Here in Ballan you aren’t just a number, you are a person.”*

*“ I know my patients well.  
We have a connection.”*

*- Rakhi*



## *Rakhi's* healthy connections

Dr Rakhi Basu is a general practitioner at the mecwacare Ballan Medical Clinic. Her focus? Helping patients to better manage their health and wellbeing.

mecwacare Ballan's medical clinic, located in the heart of the township, provides high-quality healthcare services for the whole community, from newborn babies to older residents of the town.

“They say GPs provide whole-of-life care,” says Dr Rakhi Basu, the clinic's general practitioner.

Rakhi enjoys delivering care across generations and continuity as they age and transition to residential care.

“This connection helps to improve the quality of care we provide, thanks to the dedication and skills of the GP's in our clinic.”

Rakhi began her career in obstetrics and now enjoys working with aged groups, particularly older members of the community. “In my role I am involved in end-of-life care and helping my patients to manage their pain. This is totally opposite to where I began my career,” she says.

“I am always learning more about end-of-life care and managing pain. Helping residents is a key part of my role. Some of my patients have arthritis or other joint pain. I prefer to help them to manage the pain and reduce their medications through a range of approaches like physiotherapy, movement and hydrotherapy Rakhi said.”



Ballan Health and Care Services in the heart of Ballan provides a range of services that support the health and wellbeing of the local community. There are two aged care homes, a medical clinic, allied health and pathology services, an opportunity shop and Centrelink agency. There is also an on-site hydrotherapy pool and recently extended gym that are available for rehabilitation and general fitness.

To find out more, visit [mecwacare.org.au](https://mecwacare.org.au) or call **5366 7999**.



## Ballan Medical Clinic



## BALLAN HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES



## Get active in Ballan

mecwacare Ballan is home to an all-new gym and hydrotherapy pool. Thanks to our significant investment, the community can get moving with new cardio training equipment, rowing and pulley-based exercise machines. And... There's more to come.

Residents at the nursing home are already enjoying greater mobility and overall better health thanks to exercising in the hydrotherapy pool.

The hydrotherapy pool and gym are open to the Ballan community. Winter is a wonderful time to start a new health and fitness journey. Come in to meet our friendly gym staff; they will get you going.



*Ballan Auxiliary Sausage Sizzle*

*The Ballan Auxiliary team have a proud history of raising money to support the wonderful work of their local health and community services. Fundraising profits go straight back into the Ballan community.*



**Ballan Opportunity Shop**



*Stop by for a cuppa!*

## A sense of Community



*The wonderful volunteers at the Ballan Opportunity Shop are serving up cups of tea, coffee and, for the lucky ones, a cup of winter soup!*





**India:** Olita Dsouza,  
Recruitment Coordinator

**Iran:** Mostafa Tohidian,  
IT Senior Systems Coordinator

**Brazil:** Daniela Campana-Lessa,  
HR Administration Coordinator

**India:** Abbey Chatterjee,  
Talent Acquisition Partner

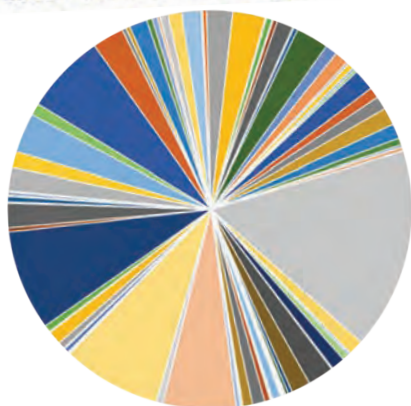
**Kenya:** Christine Njoroge,  
Intake Officer

**Australia:** Peter Griffin,  
General Manager,  
Information Technology

**Greece:** Chrisella Hondrakis,  
HR Administrator

# Everyone belongs

mecwacare languages



Each section represents a language spoken at mecwacare.

mecwacare is a melting pot of cultural diversity. Our workforce is made up of 87 nationalities, who speak 100 languages. This makes us a virtual United Nations!

At our head office in Malvern, we celebrated Harmony Week with a “Taste of Harmony”, with cuisine from around the globe, and staff shared their national foods.

Staff wore splashes of orange, which is the official colour of Harmony Week. The theme for the week was Everyone Belongs – inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

This was a wonderful celebration and a great break from managing COVID. Harmony Week created a great opportunity for staff to come together and celebrate.



Looking for a rewarding career in aged care?

Visit our website at [mecwacare.org.au](https://mecwacare.org.au) to explore career opportunities with us.

## 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, disability and health services across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.





## Bowled over by her team's support

A love of Aussie cricket and a desire to explore led Olita Curren Dsouza and her husband to leave Mangalore in southwestern India and move to Australia in 2016. The presence of Olita's childhood friend in Melbourne helped her to decide where to find her new home.

"India is a land of diversity with different religions, languages, customs, traditions and cultures. This is similar to Melbourne in many aspects, which has helped me be respectful of others and care," Olita said.

After arriving in Melbourne, Olita discovered the opportunity to volunteer with mecwacare, thanks to her friend Kishor Kumar, a member of our Information Technology team. As a volunteer, Olita worked with the Human Resources and the Marketing, Communications and Fundraising teams.

Olita quickly moved from a volunteer role to working as an archive assistant in Human Resources. Today she works as Recruitment Coordinator, helping to bring in new staff to our Home Care and Community Services teams.

Talking about her role with mecwacare, Olita explained: "My team is immensely supportive, and I am learning new things every day."

# Best of the best

## OUR STAFF

**We celebrated the 2022 Staff, Volunteer and Contractor Awards with a lovely ceremony in March. These awards recognise the incredible work of mecwacare employees and volunteers during what has been another very challenging 12 months.**

Their positive attitude, agile mindset and willingness to support others has kept us afloat during challenging times. Most importantly, their outstanding efforts mean the world to our residents and clients. Every day, our staff, volunteers and contractors directly contribute to improving their quality of life.

**Volunteer of the Year**  
Ian Stewart

**Contractor of the Year**  
Lyn Game  
from Facilities First

**Encouragement Award (Community Services)**  
Kate Blenheim, Op Shop  
Team Leader and Windsor  
Store Manager

**Encouragement Award (Corporate Services)**  
Anoop James,  
IT Systems Team Leader

**Encouragement Award (Home and Community Services)**  
Judy Plummer,  
DCW, North West Metro

**Learning and Development Award**  
Olita Curren D'Souza,  
Recruitment Coordinator

**Support Service Award (Corporate Services)**  
Deb Manning,  
Business Analyst

**Support Service Award (Home and Community Services)**  
Sharon Harriage,  
Disability Liaison Officer

**Support Service Award (Residential Services)**  
Erica Gherghinescu,  
Hotel and Food Services  
Coordinator, Ballan

**Administrator of the Year (Corporate Services)**  
Eloise Cookson,  
Marketing and Fundraising  
Coordinator

**Administrator of the Year Award (Home and Community Services)**  
Amanda Gibb, Senior  
Admin Assistant

**Administrator of the Year Award (Residential Services)**  
Leonora McLennan,  
Trescowthick Centre

**Carer of the Year (Home and Community Services)**  
Abel Rozas, DCW,  
South East Metro

**Carer of the Year (Residential Services)**  
Angelina Ross,  
Squires Place

**Clinician of the Year (Residential Services)**  
Susan Kumar, Clinical Care  
Coordinator, Squires Place

**Clinician of the Year (Home and Community Services)**  
Dianne Geronimo,  
Assessment Officer, South  
East Metro, Jonally Palma,  
Assessment Officer,  
South East Metro

**Employee of the Year (Residential Services)**  
Prince Jacob, PCA,  
Noel Miller Centre

**Employee of the Year (Home and Community Services)**  
Louise Gale, Team Leader,  
South East Region

**Employee of the Year (Corporate Services)**  
Lyndal McNamara,  
Business Projects  
Manager

**Chief Executive Special Award (Teams)**  
Admissions Team - Vickie  
Gillan, Veronica Disley  
and Danielle Frost

**Chief Executive Leadership Award**  
Warren Kam,  
Payroll Manager





*John Hood Terrace, Richmond Hill*



Artist impression



Annie's Court, Shoreham



Calwell Manor, Safety Beach



Trescowthick Centre, Prahran



Noel Miller Centre, Glen Iris



Squires Place, Altona North



Ballan Nursing Home





Artist impression



mecwacare offers a safe, therapeutic environment for all our residents.

To find out more or book a tour, call our friendly Admissions team on 8573 4812.

# New homes taking shape



Demolition work is well and truly underway on our 16th aged care home, John Hood Terrace in Church Street, Richmond.

We are converting a former hotel into a beautiful 80-bed residence that will maintain the historic building's facade. John Hood Terrace is named after Life Governor John Hood, who recently retired from the mecwacare Board after 23 years, including 11 years as Board Chair. John is also a Director at Australian Red Cross. He has extensive corporate experience across sectors, including leadership and executive recruitment, software and technology.

Meanwhile, the new four-storey Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert is on track for completion in 2023. This premium home will offer a level of luxury that reflects its stately surrounds. The

redevelopment will double the size of the original home, which opened in 1978.

As a not-for-profit organisation, mecwacare is in a unique position where we can channel every dollar back into high-quality care and services. Our building and refurbishment program ensures we provide modern, well-appointed and comfortable facilities.

We have also completed significant refurbishments at Annie's Court in Shoreham, Calwell Manor in Safety Beach, Trescowthick Centre in Prahran, Noel Miller Centre in Glen Iris and Squires Place in Altona North.





Robin Syme  
Malvern

# Designed for inspired living

Settle into Melbourne's most exclusive boutique retirement village. Perfectly crafted to meet your lifestyle needs and boasting all the comforts of a modern haven.



## AWARD WINNING LUXURIOUS APARTMENTS

Book your personal one-on-one inspection with Robyn today on 9831 9876.



[robinsymemalvern.com.au](http://robinsymemalvern.com.au)

## RETIREMENT LIVING UNITS FOR SALE

mecwacare



### Ballan Retirement Village

BALLAN

A stone's throw from Ballan's health and community services precinct, these beautifully refurbished units create a vibrant village.



11

✓ Open plan living

✓ Close to health services

✓ Low-maintenance garden



### John Atchison Retirement Village

HOPPERS CROSSING

A small community of 10 units in Melbourne's bustling west that combines independent living and social engagement.



10

✓ Close to shops

✓ Great lifestyle

✓ Maintenance-free modern living

To book a tour or for more information:  
Call 03 8573 4812 or  
email [admissions@mecwacare.org.au](mailto:admissions@mecwacare.org.au)

1800 163 292 | [mecwacare.org.au](http://mecwacare.org.au)