

mecwacare

SPRING 2022

# matters



## Spring in bloom

Celebrating  
aged care  
page 3

Creativity  
and caring  
page 4

Our amazing  
volunteers  
page 10

*Caring for Victorians since 1959*



# People are at the heart of all we do

Spending time at our aged care homes and on site with our other services and programs reminds me that a key focus of our work is to connect with our residents and clients and leave them with a smile, better health outcomes and feeling safe and cared for.

And while COVID continues, mecwacare's staff and volunteers live our organisational values, ensuring that we are Caring, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical in all we do.

I'm proud that these are more than buzz words; these values are on display every day as our compassionate, experienced staff deliver high-quality care, supporting our clients and residents to live their best lives.

I believe in leaders empowering their staff to excel, and I'm

thankful for the dedication of our managers, who continue to lead our teams in our 15 residential aged care homes and our home care services across the state. Each day they start early and finish late, support and inspire their staff, and are personable and engaged as they connect with residents or clients and their families.

mecwacare's foundations were laid in the late 1950s by volunteers who identified the need for quality aged care services in Malvern. Today, we value the dedication of our 500 volunteers across the state. Their efforts in our aged care homes, op shops, meals on wheels and other support services are vital in ensuring mecwacare can support vulnerable Victorians. I truly enjoyed coming together to celebrate their efforts in May. See page 10 for a story and pictures of our celebrations.

We have five op shops in Ballan, Hawthorn, Malvern, Malvern East and Windsor. With thanks to our volunteers who keep the

doors open, our op shops help to fund mecwacare to deliver our services. You can support this work by donating your high-quality, unwanted items for sale. Our op shops are happy to receive donations of books, bric-a-brac, fashion, furniture and household items, jewellery, shoes and boots and more. Learn more about our op shops on page 7.

Thank you to those who gave generously to our tax appeal. Your support means we can implement world-leading technology in our aged care services that helps manage the pain experienced by our residents. In this edition of mecwacare Matters, you can read about our next major fundraising initiative, our inaugural Charity Tennis Day.

Thank you always for your kind and generous support.

Michele Lewis  
Chief Executive

---

*On the cover:  
Frank and Paula, story page 4.*

Annie's Court, Shoreham

## Your perfect choice

Quality respite, palliative and aged care minutes from the beach.

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



mecwacare



*"I really enjoy talking with clients about their needs and explaining the support they can receive to stay at home safely and independently."*

- Yi, Care Advisor,  
Home Care Packages.

## A special day to say, *"Thanks for caring"*

Aged Care Employee Day on 7 August was a chance for all of us to say, "Thanks for caring". mecwacare's aged care staff give their all, bringing compassion to each interaction with residents and living our creed: *"Caring is at the heart of everything we do"*.

"I'm so grateful to our hard-working, dedicated staff who give their all every day to ensure our aged care residents live their best life. Staff in our aged care homes receive thanks and appreciation from residents, their loved ones and friends. I love hearing this feedback," Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive said.

To mark Aged Care Employee Day, we encouraged our staff, clients, residents and their friends and families to say "Thanks for caring" when they visit our aged care homes.

*Thanks for caring.*

*"It's complex and you have to be meticulous and to think outside the box, but I really love my job,"*

- Dayolen, Facility Manager at mecwacare  
O'Mara House in Traralgon.



*"The most wonderful part of working as a nurse in residential aged care is getting to know the residents. When you show them how much you care about them and their wellbeing, you really form a bond,"*

- Robert, enrolled nurse at  
mecwacare Malvern Centre.



*"At the end of the day, I want to see that residents are happy and well and enjoy their food. Whatever I cook, I do it to make them happy,"*

- Abhi, cook at mecwacare Squires  
Place in Altona North.





## Creating, engaging and caring *every day*

“Everything we do at Fisher Street Centre is tailored to meet our clients’ needs,” explains Paula Mejia Vesga, Centre Manager at mecwacare’s centre-based provider of disability day programs, located in Malvern East in Melbourne’s southeast.

Paula, who has been in the role since late 2021, became the manager after working on site as a Key Worker Lead. Across her time at Fisher Street, Paula has built strong connections with the centre’s clients, all receiving support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

When discussing her work, Paula reflected that many clients have been coming to Fisher Street Centre, engaging in programs, and accessing support for more than 20 years.

“For some of our clients, we are their second home; our caring staff provide dedicated support and assistance with essentials, like preparing and eating meals, creating amazing artworks and developing new skills.

“What is wonderful for all of us, for staff and clients, is that we are a community, we are all a family at Fisher Street.

“We welcome new clients and are excited to offer support and care to those who need it; we are adding new activities and programs to keep people engaged and better meet their needs. We offer a range of inclusive, fun activities, including cooking, art, basketball, gardening, swimming, gentle exercises, music and bowling.

“We are constantly developing and running inclusive activities and programs; we want everyone to get involved and to have fun.”

**Above: Jesse and Paula.**

**Opposite left to right: Michelle, Llew, Samia and Roisin, Sean, Daniel and Paula, Ben and Natasha.**





Fisher Street  
Creative  
*Activities*

*"What is wonderful for all of us, for staff and clients, is that we are a community, we are all a family at Fisher Street."* - Paula



Find out more about mecwacare Fisher Street Centre and its services and programs at [www.mecwacare.org.au/services/disability-services/centre-based-programs](http://www.mecwacare.org.au/services/disability-services/centre-based-programs)



# New technology helps residents take a stand

Residents of mecwacare O'Mara House in Traralgon are stepping up to meet the challenges of strengthening their lower limbs, improving their mobility and enhancing their balance.



Thanks to the generosity of the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust, established by Mr Chenhall, a Traralgon local, in 2002, a new HUR Leg Press is in place at mecwacare's O'Mara House aged care home located 165 kilometres southeast of Melbourne.

The Leg Press is an automated exercise machine that helps older adults to safely build muscle strength in their legs, hips and buttocks.

## Getting stronger for better health

Studies show that muscle weakness and poor balance are major risk factors that can lead to falls for older people. Australian research found that, when it comes to injuries from falls, 58% of people who need to go to the hospital for treatment and recovery are over 65 years old.

Building leg muscle strength is an important way to improve balance and prevent falls.

## Standing tall at O'Mara House

"We have seen good results from using the leg press in physiotherapy and lifestyle programs," said Dayolen Kistnen, Facility Manager at O'Mara House.

The machine is easy to use, with instructions and guides presented on a digital touchscreen. In addition, staff at O'Mara House attended two training sessions covering the safe use of the HUR Leg Press.

**Opposite: Michele Lewis, Alan McKie and Ian Keith.**

*"Our physiotherapists are trained to use the machine and found residents now have stronger legs, meaning they are less likely to fall,"*

*-Dayolen, Facility Manager at mecwacare O'Mara House in Traralgon.*



Retro style

# Spring cleaning sorted!

The sun's shining again, the birds are joyfully chirping, and flowers are blooming. A new season has sprung. If you're looking for spring cleaning inspiration, read on.

Do you have overflowing cupboards? Are your home storage spaces set to burst? mecwacare's five opportunity shops are here to help. You can find our op shops in Ballan, Hawthorn, Malvern, Malvern East and Windsor.

Best of all, they are taking donations of pre-loved goods, books and clothing right now!

By decluttering at home, you are helping us to raise needed funds.

Sales made by mecwacare's op shops help support the delivery of high-quality aged care and disability services.

*You can help make a difference by donating pre-loved items such as clothing, kitchenware, furniture, books and other knickknacks.*

Discerning op shoppers visit our stores looking for treasure; your unwanted goods could be just what they are looking for.

**Above: Jamie Baxter, Op Shop Coordinator, East Malvern**



To donate good quality unwanted items for sale, bring your items to your nearest mecwacare store. To find the location of your nearest op shop, visit [www.mecwacare.org.au/support-us/opportunity-shops](http://www.mecwacare.org.au/support-us/opportunity-shops).

You can also drop items at our residential aged care homes and our donation bins.





*"Reducing the amount of waste we create is so important."*

*- Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive.*

## Reducing waste at Richmond Hill

mecwacare's John Hood Terrace development project in Richmond will see the reconstruction of a former hotel into a modern, purpose-built aged care home. The knockdown and rebuild created a wonderful opportunity to re-use and recycle many items, saving them from going to landfill.

The former Richmond Hill Hotel in Church Street is the site for a new, 80-bed mecwacare aged care home; construction will be complete around mid-2024. Rather than allowing fixtures and items from the former hotel to go to waste, mecwacare's staff joined a company-wide effort to recycle and re-use a range of pieces.

"This redevelopment allowed us to recycle and re-use many items, such as lamps and vacuum cleaners, ovens, microwaves, washing machines and clothes dryers, fire extinguishers, mops, brooms and more. Doing so made a lot

Recycle  
Re-use  
Reduce



*Bright ideas for less waste*

of sense from a business point of view. Still, it is also important to me that we reduce the waste we create," said Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive.

"Some furniture went to our op shops for sale, including tables, chairs, couches, desks and picture frames. We sold some items for as low as one dollar. We also enabled our staff to purchase hair dryers, bedside tables, cutlery, kettles, toasters, coat stands, televisions, coffee tables, beds and wardrobes.

"Significantly, we saved hot water, hydronic heating and air conditioning units for use at our other aged care homes, minimising costs and waste.

"Practical steps like these are vital as we continue to look at ways mecwacare can reduce its environmental footprint," Michele said.



# Comfort and security thanks to *care at home*

After a heavy fall in 2018, Trish needed joint surgery. Her health further deteriorated after experiencing difficulties controlling her movements, contracting an infection and developing speech difficulties. With mecwacare's support, Trish has high-quality care, and the family can enjoy more time together, while balancing other responsibilities.

"mecwacare has been brilliant," said Jeff, Trish's husband, reflecting on the assistance his family has received. "Unfortunately, Trish's knee replacements were not successful, and her legs weren't able to bear her weight; in mid-2019, she had a bad fall.

"An MRI showed Trish had developed cerebella ataxia, a condition where she experiences involuntary movements. She lost a lot of independence," he reflects.

"She had her knees done again in late 2019. I took 16 months off work on carer's leave. Dealing with the NDIS was challenging; that's where mecwacare has been an enormous help, even through COVID.

"Trish is now non-conversational. But she has gotten to know her carers and has built a connection with them. They help her with eating, using the toilet and creating a better life."



*"The support Trish receives has given me and our beautiful daughter, Amanda, the certainty and comfort we need to know she's taken care of." - Jeff*

**Above: Jeff, Amanda, Peter and Trish.**



To find out how mecwacare can help you, contact our friendly team on **03 8573 4980** or email **[intake@mecwacare.org.au](mailto:intake@mecwacare.org.au)**





# Our amazing volunteers

As part of celebrating National Volunteer Week, our annual volunteer appreciation event was held at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in mid-May. The joyous occasion brought together more than 100 people from our community to acknowledge the efforts of our amazing volunteers.

Among the attendees was Ian Stewart, our Volunteer of the Year, together with long-serving volunteers Anne Court, who continues to give her time to our organisation after 15 years, and Tina Madafferri, who now volunteers at our Malvern op shop. Tina's journey with mecwa care began more than 20 years ago when she started delivering meals on wheels to vulnerable people in the community.

Speaking at the event, Michele Lewis, mecwa care Chief Executive said: "Australians have a great

tradition of giving back and of reaching out to support those who most need it.

"In 1959, this commitment led a group of volunteers to establish mecwa care.

"mecwa care's 500 volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, speak different languages and represent a range of ages, from one of our youngest, who is 19 and volunteers with our South Gippsland meals on wheels services to another who is 91 and continues to volunteer at our East Malvern workshop," Michele said.

"Some of our longest-standing volunteers have given their time to mecwa care for over 50 years," said Ian McHutchison, mecwa care Board Chairman.

"Thank you to all our volunteers, and congratulations to all our award winners; you embody the giving, caring spirit of mecwa care and we will always appreciate all that you do for us," Ian said.

**Above left: John Iddles & Marg Staples**

**Above right: Ian McHutchison, mecwa care Board Chairman with Anne Court, mecwa care Board member.**

## Who we are

mecwa care 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.

mecwa care 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 mecwa care 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.



# Serving up a new, major fundraising event

mecwacare's newest fundraising event, our Charity Tennis Day, will see first serves fired on Monday 12 September.

The day provides mecwacare's business and philanthropic community with a chance to support our fundraising efforts, as well as to play on the courts of one of Australia's most exclusive clubs, the Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club in Toorak.

"mecwacare greatly appreciates our donors and their generosity; this enables us to deliver high-quality support to aged care residents and people who access our support services," said Michele Lewis, mecwacare's Chief Executive.



*"We are excited to hold our first annual event and look forward to growing our tennis day into a regular and successful part of mecwacare's community engagement and fundraising."*

*- Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive.*

# Kicking goals at every age

The mecwacare Masters competition is open to players over the age of 35, providing new opportunities for footballers to stay involved in local events.

The Masters format means teams play matches every second week, giving players the flexibility to juggle work and life. The success of the first Masters competition means the Victorian Amateur Football Association (VAFA) is looking to expand future events to include female teams too.

mecwacare is proud to support the VAFA competitions: we believe in kicking goals at every age, and know how important it is to keep active as we age. You can find out more by searching "mecwacare Masters" on the VAFA website: [www.vafa.com.au](http://www.vafa.com.au)



**Right: Joel Smith, Marcellin Bald Eagles.**





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 [housing@mecwacare.org.au](mailto:housing@mecwacare.org.au)

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