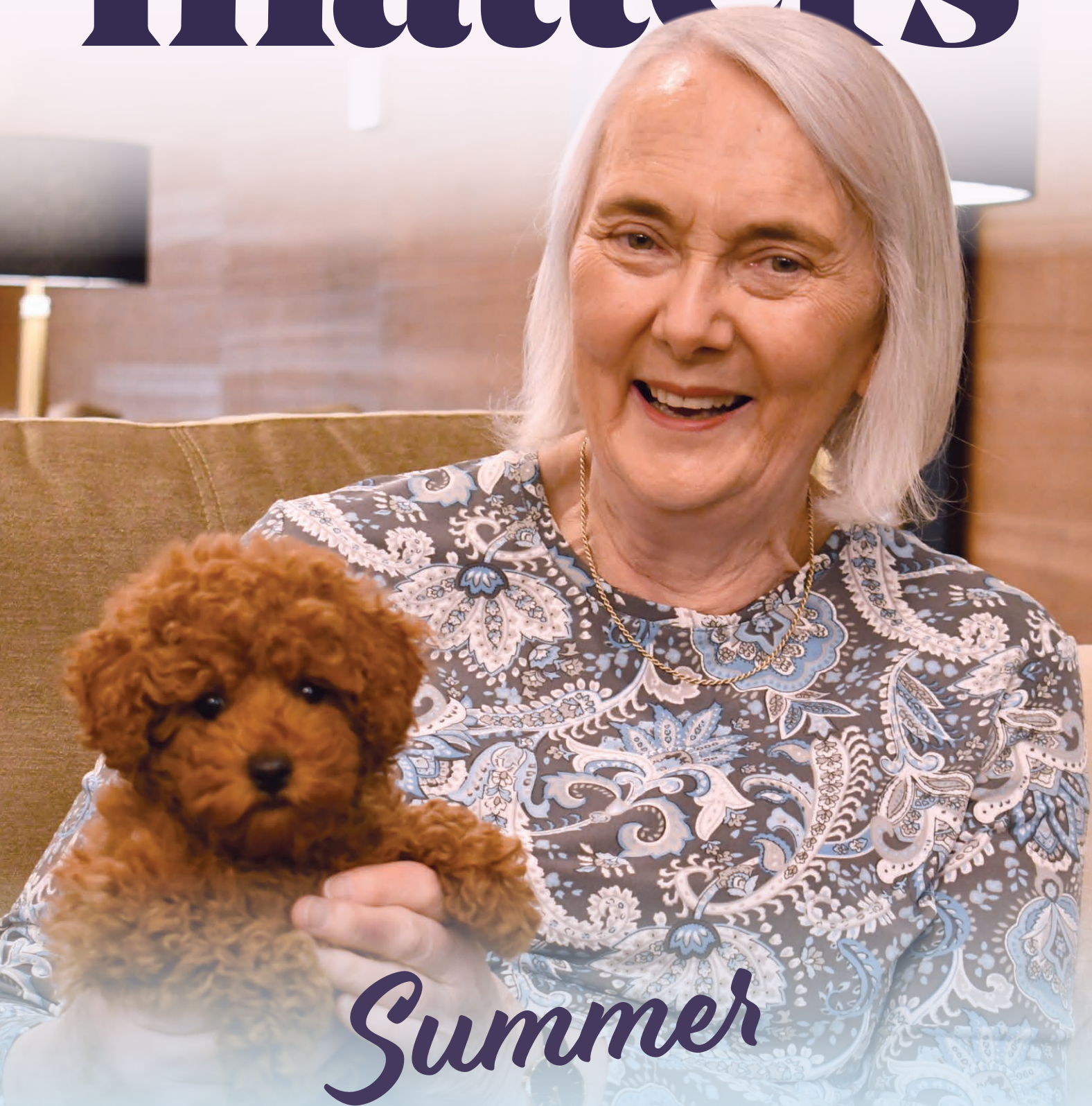


mecwacare

SUMMER 2022

matters



Summer

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Caring for Victorians since 1959

A season of happiness and hope

Supporting people to live their best lives is at the heart of all we do. At the end of 2022, we are now able to look past the challenges of recent years and make time for the people and things we love most in our lives. As we enter the festive season, now is the time to review our year, refocus our priorities for the future and re-energise for a successful 2023.

I am excited to share with you that we will be working with a bright young entrepreneur who has developed a novel approach to limiting plastic waste. His passion for protecting our planet is inspiring, as are his drive and business acumen. You can read more about our sustainable toothbrush program in this newsletter.

You can join our efforts to protect our environment by purchasing your end of year gifts, decorations, tableware and more from our op shops in Ballan, Hawthorn, Malvern, Malvern East and Windsor. Your purchase will help to minimise items going to landfill while supporting our programs and services. Make your festive season a sustainable one!

Sustainability in the age care sector, in the Australian political environment, requires mecwacare to continue to grow our service offerings.

We look forward to building and developing new aged care homes and services in 2023 and 2024, including homes in Ballan (which you can read about on page 3), Mont Albert and Richmond.

We invite you to help us bring more balance to our clients' lives: our end-of-the-year fundraising appeal is supporting the purchase of state-of-the-art balance training machines for our community service centres. The machines will enhance the outcomes of our strength training programs, reabbling and assisting clients to reduce the risk of falls and build their strength and balance for safely climbing stairs, getting up from bed, carrying groceries and more.

In October, at the mecwacare Annual General Meeting, we celebrated many achievements from the past year, as well as the service of, and the successes of, our amazing team. Being together and seeing their smiles

and appreciation at being recognised was wonderful. Our Annual Review 2021-22 is now available. I invite you to read the report by visiting the Publications page at www.mecwacare.org.au. Alternatively, call us on 1800 163 292 to receive a copy.

As I write this, communities in Victoria's north are at risk with flood warnings in place. Summer can bring the devastations of fire, flood and drought: our hearts are with all those impacted, we wish those communities a quick recovery.

On behalf of the Board and our staff, I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas, a joyous festive season and a wonderful New Year.

We have a lot to look forward to.

Michele Lewis
Chief Executive

On the cover: Carolyn and her dog Sophie, story page 6.

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AWARD WINNING LUXURIOUS APARTMENTS





Above: Artist's impression of mecwacare's new aged care development in Ballan.

Boosting our commitment to Ballan

Work has begun on our \$20 million expansion to mecwacare's aged care and health services in Ballan, located 80 kilometres northwest of Melbourne. The investment supports the development of an all-new, luxury 60-bed aged care residence. It also extends the services available to people living in the town and nearby communities.

The new aged care home expands mecwacare's services in the region, complementing our existing nursing home, the general practice and allied health medical clinic, hydrotherapy pool and gym.

When completed in 2024, the development will feature rooms with premium fittings and finishes, many large rooms with balconies offering fresh air and views over the surrounding countryside.

Speaking about the new project, Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive said: "mecwacare is excited to build on our commitment to providing

high-quality aged care and healthcare services to the Ballan community.

Our new aged care development is part of our dedicated health precinct, including the Ballan Medical Clinic, allied health services, hydrotherapy pool and gym.

"We encourage people to come and join the gym. A gym membership will support the community across preventative health strategies and building fitness and wellness. Our health services provide peace of mind to families who know we will look after their loved ones. The health of our residents is always our number one priority," Michele said.

The project creates an additional pathway from retirement living in the site's boutique village to high-quality aged care.

Keep up to date with the development of our new Ballan-based services by following our social media accounts and reading our newsletter.

Vincent House celebrates 30 years of care

In October we were proud to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Vincent House, our aged care home in Westmeadows in northwest Melbourne. The home was purchased by mecwacare in 2016 and has a proud history of delivering care to the elderly in the local community.

When mecwacare purchased the home from VincentCare, we made the decision to cement our connection with the residents, their families and the home's staff: VincentCare staff were invited to work for mecwacare. We also wanted to honour the history of VincentCare, the efforts of its founders and its connection to the community by naming the site "Vincent House".

A new era

We built on the wonderful workforce at Vincent House, bringing in highly experienced mecwacare management staff and additional qualified clinical carers to ensure our residents had access to the best quality care.

In 2019, major works saw the refurbishment of the home's recreational areas, creation of a new library, a quiet room and a welcoming outdoor space. Other upgrades included new curtains, blinds and floors, with flooring updates focused on fall prevention. On-site ramps were also modified to improve accessibility. We are now upgrading the kitchen to ensure the onsite chef has the best equipment to prepare high-quality delicious, nutritious meals for residents to enjoy,

Celebrating 30 years of care

Speaking at an event to mark the anniversary, Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive said: "The wonderful work of Lucy, our Facility

Manager, and her team has created a lovely home which we are proud to celebrate. Our Vincent House residents regularly share how lucky they are to have Lucy, and I agree. She gives so much back to residents and her work focuses on empowering residents to make decisions about their lifestyle and the care they receive.

"Thanks to the dedication and care provided by the team, residents enjoy an active social program and have access to the support of qualified and dedicated staff who deliver exceptional care.

"Most importantly, residents are comfortable and feel safe at home at Vincent House: congratulations to everyone at Vincent House."



Above:
mecwacare
Chief Executive,
Michele Lewis
and Vincent
House residents.



Beautiful cupcakes prepared by our in-house chef.

"We enjoy lots of activities together. We keep people engaged with quizzes, trivia, arts and crafts; it's all about building connections."

- Rebecca



Building stronger connections

Pascal, who was injured in a car accident, is the Barry Fenton Centre's joker. He has been attending for more than 20 years and enjoys spending time with friends.

"Coming here is a good break from home," Pascal said. "I love listening to music and going out together. It's great being here in summer. Everyone here is my mate."

Clients and their families receive support from staff to assist clients to keep in contact, build connections, create and share resources and set up opportunities for feedback on programs and activities.

The centre supports people who are isolated, aged, living with dementia or with intellectual disabilities, the impacts of traumatic brain injuries or a stroke.

Programs include dementia support groups, a weekly music event with performances by local artists, outings, cultural events, arts and

crafts programs, exercise and strength training activities and a meals program. The centre also runs a support program for carers.

"We're here to support clients to find the right program that fits their needs," explained Rebecca Spencer, the Centre Manager at Barry Fenton Centre. She brings more than five years of managing and working in disability support, and a passion for supporting clients, to her role. "When clients come on board, it's important to get the best fit; we want people to experience less isolation, make meaningful connections in the community and participate in rewarding activities.

"Our social programs are a key to building connections for our clients," Rebecca said. "Being together with others who have had a similar experience enhances people's quality of life; clients enjoy having morning tea and joining in activities after strength training programs.

"I love that our staff are so connected to our amazing clients and to each other; we've all worked together to create a caring environment where everyone is supported," she said.

Above: Pascal and Rebecca, Barry Fenton Centre manager.

Where it's easy to *live your best life*

Residents at mecwacare's Robin Syme Malvern enjoy a full social calendar, movie nights, café catch ups, live music and more. With access to care if needed, chef prepared meals and stylish, modern apartments to call home, it's easy for residents to live their best life.

Carolyn now lives at Robin Syme. The luxury retirement village is somewhere she feels well looked after, while maintaining an independent lifestyle. "There is always someone to have a chat or a laugh with when we meet in the café for coffee," said Carolyn, who lives with Sofie, her gorgeous toy poodle. "I was planning to retire in a larger village, but here I know everyone's name; it's very friendly, secure and welcoming."

Marlene Hage, Robin Syme's retirement living coordinator, enjoys planning each month's activity calendar. "Our residents enjoy being social: they share each other's company in the café or wine bar, watch movies or sports on the big screen or enjoy performances by visiting musicians, while having the option to enjoy their personal space in their apartment," Marlene said.

The village's private dining room is also busy, with residents gathering for celebrations with family and friends.

The café's coffee machine gets a great workout, and the relaxing, comfortable space is filled with laughter and happy conversations as friends and family come by for a catch up.

Residents keep their mind and body active, with access to a modern, fully equipped business lounge and the ability to stay fit, thanks to the on-site gym. The recently opened Wellbeing Salon offers a range of competitively priced beauty services, including manicures and pedicures, eyebrow and eyelash tinting and mini facials.

Below: Carolyn and Sofie, her toy poodle.



"I am grateful that I decided to move to Robin Syme. We all look out for each other." - Carolyn

Pally is sharing the smiles

"We are an extended family at Jubilee House. I love seeing my residents smile. I want this place to feel like home for all of us."

- Pally



Pally Singh, Facility Manager at mecwacare's Jubilee House aged care home in Caulfield, starts each workday with a question for residents: "What can I do to make your life better?"

"I grew up on a farm in India and I quickly realised I did not want the farm life. After I finished my studies as a registered nurse, I decided that I wanted to work in Melbourne," Pally reflects.

"Ever since I was young, I have been interested in other people's welfare and wellbeing. So, working in the healthcare sector and working in disability care felt like a natural progression, and now I am in aged care.

"Before coming to mecwacare I worked as a registered nurse and in community welfare. Then, mecwacare offered to support my visa application. I moved to regional Victoria and

started my mecwacare journey at O'Mara House in Traralgon; it was wonderful to experience the country life and now I am happy to be here at Jubilee House."

In 2021, Pally received mecwacare's Learning and Development award, recognising his commitment to improving his work skills and knowledge.

"I enjoy putting a smile on the faces of our residents. Each time I see them smile; it's so rewarding. Every smile reminds me that this isn't just a job; I am here to make a positive change.

"Residents know that I am here for them. They can come and ask me a question they might have or just have a little chat anytime.

"Our discussions are so rewarding and enjoyable. I like to learn about their life story. I have learned so many life lessons. You also discover how amazing each resident is. I enjoy coming to work every day."

Above: Pally Singh, Jubilee House Facility Manager.

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.

Through the fire

In his day job, Ben Logan is a Maintenance Officer, working at mecwacare's Vincent House aged care home in Westmeadows. He's also an operational firefighter, and his efforts in helping to fight fires across the 2019/20 bush fire season have been recognised with a National Emergency Medal.



"My dad's a builder and I learned a lot from him; I enjoy doing a variety of jobs. I started working with mecwacare in March this year and was in Ballan. Now, I work across Melbourne's west and sometimes at the Malvern Centre," Ben said.

"My work is really varied, with a focus on maintenance. I do different things, like painting or patching walls and other needed repairs. I also work with contractors who are on site: I inspect their jobs and assist them when on site. I want to be sure that the job is done properly, safely and to a high standard so I can be proud of the facilities mecwacare offers.

"I became a volunteer firefighter when I was sixteen. I joined up thanks to my dad, who is also a firefighter. Over fifteen years I've done summer deployments. Things can get pretty hairy on the grasslands near Geelong.

"I've also deployed as a firefighter when things are bad in other states; you get deployed for a week. The only information you get is "You're going to New South Wales": you don't know where you're going until you get there.

"We train for the worst-case scenario. You need to know what you're going to do if you're confronted by a wall of fire: how do you tackle this?

"I'm still an operational firefighter. I live around Daylesford now and I help train people who are new to being deployed. I love sharing what I know and helping people to learn before they are out there fighting fires."

mecwacare congratulates Ben on his achievements. We are very lucky to have him working with us.



Left: Ben Logan proudly displays his National Emergency Medal.



Brushing away the plastic

mecwacare is moving to use more recycled products and materials while minimising the amount of waste we produce. We are working with Ned Heaton and the Turtle Tribe to “say no to plastic” toothbrushes.

Ned, also known as the “clean ocean crusader”, founded his business, the Turtle Tribe, at the age of 11, with the support of his dad. In four years, he has grown into one of Australia’s largest suppliers of bamboo toothbrushes. Ned’s inspiring story and mission connected with Michele Lewis, mecwacare’s Chief Executive.

“mecwacare is very focused on our drive to limit our environmental impact and to deliver better outcomes for the communities we serve,” Michele said.

“We have made significant progress in re-using and recycling materials. I am impressed by Ned’s creativity and drive, and I wanted to get on board to support him and be part of the change he believes in.

Above: Ned is a passionate crusader for cleaner oceans.

These bamboo toothbrushes are the impressive initiative of a passionate eleven-year-old boy who sees the damage being done to ocean environments by plastic waste. The toothbrushes are made of bamboo and can be broken down by bacteria, eliminating any waste.

“The toothbrushes are colour coded, which means we can easily keep track of when it’s time to replace them, delivering better dental health for our residents,” Michele said.

“Every year, eight million tonnes of plastic waste enters the world’s oceans; the impacts on sea life are devastating. It is exciting to support Ned’s efforts, and we are proud to be part of his mission to end the use of plastic toothbrushes.”



To learn more about Ned’s work, visit www.theturtletribe.com.au



AGM



Dr Tim Sharp

Reflections on a year of growth and challenges

A highlight of mecwacare's Annual General Meeting in October was coming together to mark the successes of the last 12 months. More than 80 people, including members, staff and volunteers, joined the mecwacare Chief Executive and Board at our Malvern Wellbeing Centre for the event, which featured an engaging and inspiring presentation from Dr Tim Sharp.

As mecwacare moves past the challenges of the pandemic and expands its commitment to delivering high-quality care across Victoria, it was reassuring to see us shifting from such challenging times to a period of more optimism and opportunity.

Attendees heard from "Dr Happy", otherwise known as Dr Tim Sharp, the founder and Chief Happiness Officer of The Happiness Institute, an organisation that enhances happiness in individuals, families and organisations. Dr Happy's presentation focused on building habits for happiness and included insights into

how happiness works and actions we can all take to boost positivity and joy in life.

Recognising and rewarding growth, success and learning

Following on from Dr Sharp's words of encouragement, the Annual General Meeting was an opportunity to celebrate the services offered by mecwacare and the contribution of staff and volunteers.

This year, mecwacare marked the incredible dedication and commitment of Marilyn Gallop, a Care Assistant working at our O'Mara House aged care home in Traralgon; Marilyn continues to be a valued member of the home's Lifestyle team after 35 years – Congratulations! We also recognised many other staff who have worked with mecwacare over decades.

"I'm so grateful to our long-standing staff for their passion, dedication and commitment to our vision and values. Congratulations to them all. I know our clients and their families deeply appreciate their long-term dedication to delivering excellent care," said Michele Lewis, mecwacare Chief Executive.

Above: Michele Lewis, Chief Executive and some of our long-standing staff.

You can read the mecwacare Annual Review 2021-22, including details of our achievements and financial statement on our website.
www.mecwacare.org.au/publications

Investing in our staff and our future

mecwacare's Board of Directors Scholarship program supports our staff to build their skills and knowledge through training courses, tertiary education and conference attendance. We believe in investing in our staff to support their growth and success.

At this year's mecwacare Annual General Meeting, the Board awarded 11 scholarships to staff.

"I really value and appreciate this opportunity to learn more about working with Microsoft Azure. Cloud computing is central to collaboration and to stronger IT security. I hope this training will help me deliver more value to my team and the whole organisation," said Muzammil Hussain, Computer Network and Systems Engineer, one of the scholarship recipients.

Board of Directors Scholarship program recipients

Gemma Fyfe, Clinical Project Officer, Corporate Services will complete a Certificate IV in Education and Training. This study will give her a deeper understanding of approaches to adult learning, specifically around knowledge transfer.

Mostafa Tohidian, Senior Systems Administrator, Corporate Services will attend training to boost his technical skills, increasing his capabilities to manage IT Support operations.

Andrew Johncey, Accounts Payable Officer, Corporate Services will complete part of his CPA Australia certification.

Paul Bijil, Registered Nurse, John Atchison Centre will complete training to advance his nursing knowledge and skills.

Sunaiah Anwar Khan, IT Projects Officer, Corporate Services will attend training in agile methodologies.

Muzammil Hussain, Computer Network and Systems Engineer, Corporate Services will complete training in working in the Microsoft Azure environment.

Sushma Ghalan, Personal Care Assistant, Trescowthick Centre will attend training to complete her nursing placement.

Alan Ramsey, Health & Safety Advisor, Corporate Services will complete training to build capacity to report on incidents that have resulted in or could result in injury, damage or commercial losses.

Nisha Chhantyal, Enrolled Nurse, Trescowthick Centre will attend training to advance her career from the role of Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse.

Arun Kumar, Business Analyst, Corporate Services will complete additional training to support work in ongoing projects that use the Power Platform.

Loretta Radge, Executive General Manager Residential and Housing Services will complete a Master of Business Administration to explore and learn best practice thinking and strategies for senior managers, helping to support the growth and development of mecwacare into the future.

Below: Muzammil, John Atchison, Mostafa.

Congratulations to all our recipients.
We are excited to see how your growth will help to shape mecwacare's future.





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