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Shining bright

Welcome Flora Hill International Day of People with a Disability

page 6

Sandringham's superstar page 10

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Welcome to the autumn edition of mecwacare Matters!

In this issue, we explore the new Simon Price Centre and the celebration held for its opening. We introduce you to Barley, one of mecwacare's home care clients and learn how he stays independent.

Meet our newest aged care facility in Bendigo's Flora Hill and celebrate International Day of People with Disability at the Fisher Street Centre.

Recognise our outstanding volunteer Sandra as she attends Stonnington Council's Volunteer Awards, and revel in the longstanding love story of Phyllis and Lionel for Valentine's Day.

Enjoy a throwback to the days of glitz and glamour with mecwacare's very own music star, Ricci, while catching up on the happenings at Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Village's 2023 Fete.

Learn about the magic of music therapy, read about our Annual Charity Golf Day and see King David School students shining alongside residents at the Trescowthick Centre.

Finally, enjoy puzzles, real social media 'pages' and tell your friends about the request for art in any form.

We hope you delight in this edition of Matters.

LETTER TO THE



Do you have any suggestions, questions or story ideas for mecwacare Matters? Feel free to reach out via email at media@mecwacare.org.au or on 03 8573 4812.

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ON THE COVER

Ava from the mecwacare Fisher Street Centre celebrating International Day of People with a Disability. Story on page 6.



Simply the best at the new Simon Price Centre

The official opening of the new Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert North took place on Tuesday, December 5, with residents, staff and special guests in attendance.

CEO Anne McCormack gave a speech about the history of the site, before Chair of mecwacare's Board of Directors, Ian McHutchison OAM, offered some background about the centre's namesake, the late Mr Simon Price OAM. Ian then invited former Board Member and now Life Governor John Atchison to cut the ceremonial opening ribbon.

Guests in attendance included Simon and Jane Price's three daughters, Jodie, Jenny and Julie, Whitehorse City Councillor Amanda McNeill, various industry professionals, and many of the centre's residents. Pat Penetta from radio station 3AW also did a number of live crosses from the event.

Below: Anne McCormack (mecwacare CEO) with Simon and Jane Price's daughters Jodie, Jenny and Julie. Susan Calwell (mecwacare Board member) with Chipo (mecwacare regional manager). Guests were treated to a tour of the facility before enjoying a morning tea prepared by the centre's chef Jin and his kitchen team.

The event was a delightful, exciting day for all in attendance. It was a wonderful tribute to Simon and Jane Price, and a celebration of all the hard work undertaken to create the facility.

> Below: Rob Guest (mecwacare Executive General Manager - People and Culture) with special guests at the opening event.









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Keeping clients *connected*

Barley's level of independence and connection to his local community has been strengthened since he started receiving home care services from mecwacare.

As a valued mecwacare care client since September 2021, Barley receives a variety of services to support him to live independently at home, allowing him to maintain his freedom and sense of self.

Receiving domestic assistance ensures that Barley can stay living in his own home. Regular cleaning, assistance with shopping, delivery of meals and gardening services at home allow Barley to focus on his health and independence.

Where older people have limited mobility, there is an increased chance of becoming isolated. In addition to receiving regular physiotherapy through mecwacare's home care services, Barley has received assistance in the purchase of equipment to enhance his mobility.

"Through mecwacare and the support they offer me, I have been able to acquire mobility aids which has given me my independence and has helped me to connect to the community," Barley said.

"It has had a significant impact on my life."



Photo: Barley with good company.

Each of the services Barley receives are facilitated by his care advisor, who maintains a strong relationship with each of their clients to ensure a smooth and efficient delivery of services.

This is one of the points that Barley most enjoys as it provides an opportunity for Barley to feel secure, to grow his confidence and to maintain his quality of life.



Find out more about our home care services. Visit **www.mecwacare.org.au** to read detailed information on how we can help, or phone our friendly team on **1800 163 292**.

Welcome to Flora Hill

We are delighted to welcome Flora Hill Aged Care, Bendigo to the mecwacare family following its acquisition from Royal Freemasons.

mecwacare will officially acquire Flora Hill Aged Care on Wednesday May 1, 2024, making this the sixth acquisition from Royal Freemasons and its 19th aged care facility overall.

This acquisition is in line with mecwacare's commitment to increase its impact in the community and expand its service capability. It allows mecwacare to bring excellent care to even more people in need of aged care accommodation and extend its service capability to the Bendigo region.

"We are thrilled to once again work with Royal Freemasons and welcome Flora Hill Aged Care to our mecwacare family," said mecwacare CEO Anne McCormack of the new acquisition.

"We look forward to getting to know the residents and workforce by providing a great place to live and work. and we are delighted to be able to extend our service capability to the Bendigo region." "mecwacare has been and always will be an organisation of people committed to enriching the lives of every resident and client to whom we provide care."

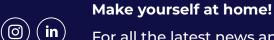
Flora Hill is well established and equipped to provide specialised care to residents with a wide range of needs, including general residential care, dementia care, palliative care, and respite services. These provisions are complemented by longstanding relationships with local hospitals and medical facilities.

mecwacare believes its role as a welcoming and experienced organisation is to challenge current aged care models and approaches, as well as to provide positive, relevant services and accommodation to each person it serves.

We look forward to bringing Flora Hill into the mecwacare family, and getting to know the residents and workforce.

A warm welcome to our *new friends*

Photo: Flora Hill residents.



For all the latest news and information about mecwacare, visit **www.mecwacare.org.au** or check out our social media channels.

Celebrating International Day of People with Disability

International Day of People with Disability is always a wonderful day at mecwacare's Fisher Street Centre, and this year was no exception, with a special afternoon event celebrating clients and their achievements.

The event was held on a warm December afternoon with beautiful artwork created by Fisher Street clients and staff displayed in a photo gallery for guests to view. Attendees enjoyed a barbecue lunch cooked by client Sean and assisted by a volunteer.

Fisher Street Centre Manager Lawrence also brought some culinary flair to the event with a pizza oven brought from home that he used to produce delightful handmade pizzas for attendees.

There was also a raffle, with the proceeds going towards sponsoring program activities at Fisher Street for 2024. Prize winners took home festive gift hampers including a gingerbread house. Guests were also treated to a special performance by Fisher Street clients, who excitedly sang popular eighties and nineties tunes for their audience, including a rendition of their favourite song, 'We Are Australian' by The Seekers.

The event was a huge hit, with everyone enjoying the food as well as mingling and socialising throughout the afternoon.

Photos opposite: Artwork by Fisher Street clients and team members; Natasha; Dawn Starrett (Senior Manager Community Services) and Linda Smart (Executive General Manager - Home and Community Services); Jodi Barry (Disability Support Worker) and Matthew; Gayani, Sean and Roisin Alexander (Disability Support Worker); Lawrence Easton (Fisher Street Centre Manager).



Fun and games at Fisher Street!

At the Fisher Street Centre's International Day of People with Disability celebration event, Ava provided some amusement in between enjoying karaoke sessions with her dedicated long term carer. The two have a great bond and have been working together for many years.

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We have a variety of different disability and community services available at mecwacare. To find out more, visit **www.mecwacare.org.au** or phone our friendly team on **1800 163 292**.



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Coleman

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Sandra shines at the Stonnington Awards

On Wednesday, October 25 at Malvern Town Hall, Sandra Beauchamp attended the 2023 Stonnington Volunteer Awards after being nominated. A volunteer at mecwacare's Noel Miller Centre, Sandra attended the event with her husband, daughter, and grandson.

Despite not receiving an award, Sandra is still a winner to us.

Having been a Meals on Wheels volunteer when the program was previously delivered through the Stonnington Council, Sandra has been volunteering with mecwacare for 17 years. She now runs a classical music session at the Noel Miller Centre each Wednesday.

Lifting residents up with wonderful classical music every week, it is a session that everyone excitedly anticipates. Sandra has an impressive knowledge of classical music and has built friendships and a strong rapport with Noel Miller Centre residents over the years.

A staunch supporter of classical music, Sandra's sessions have a very positive effect on residents. This is backed by scientific studies that have established a proven link between listening to classical music and physical and mental health benefits.

These benefits include supporting cardiovascular health, improving social relationships, decreasing blood pressure, assisting healthy sleep, improving memory, reducing the severity of anxiety and depression, and decreasing levels of pain, just to list a few.

The respect and care Sandra shows to residents is commendable and her attention to detail is

fantastic. We thank Sandra for her continued dedication and are endlessly grateful for her effort and commitment over the past 17 years.

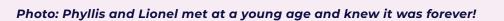
Photo: Julianne Neilson (mecwacare Volunteer Manager) with Sandra Beauchamp at the 2023 Stonnington Volunteer Awards.

Lovely Sandra shining brightly





National Volunteer Week 2024 runs from May 20 - May 26. Keep your eyes peeled in the next edition of mecwacare Matters for more volunteer stories!



More than 66 years together

A timeless Love

In January 1957, Phyllis and Lionel were going through simultaneous breakups. Both aged 22, they met at a Saturday night dance in Brunswick Town Hall.

Lionel drove Phyllis home that night, and the two arranged to meet again the next day. Two days after meeting, they drove to Portsea to go fishing and swimming, sharing fish and chips in a nearby park on the way home.

The rest, as they say, is history - the two married in August 1958.

Several years later, electrician Lionel experienced an accident, getting stuck on a live wire and being rendered clinically dead. Upon discovery of Lionel, his colleague freed him from the wire and delivered first aid. Luckily, there were no long term issues for Lionel, and his romance with Phyllis continued.

A year later, Lionel and Phyllis decided to embark on a new journey together: parenthood. Thought to be unable to conceive due to a prior surgery of Phyllis', the couple ended up adopting a two-week old baby boy. Little Bruce was treasured as an only child until two years later when baby Cathie Anne was adopted. When their daughter was only a few months old, Phyllis and Lionel got the surprise of a lifetime when they discovered they had conceived a baby naturally. Just before Cathie Anne's first birthday, little brother Malcolm was born.

Finally, Phyllis gave birth to their fourth child, Lindsay, and the family was complete. Lionel said he "celebrated with a vasectomy."

Phyllis, Lionel and their four children lived happily together, navigating many of life's challenges and good times.

Their once-complete family was fine tuned to perfection with the eventual addition of seven grandchildren: twins Mathew and Christopher, Breanna, James, Aaron, Troy, and Guy.

Now, having spent just over 66 years together, we are glad to call Phyllis a mecwacare resident, and to see her love story with Lionel flourish for many years to come.



BACK TO WORK! March 1972 10 days after Bridgette was born Newtown Leagues Club - Sydney With Kenny Johnston Big band

Sandringham's superstar

New Zealand born and raised, Ricci Carr has worked in the entertainment industry for more than 50 years, in over 25 countries.

Renowned in her town as a child for gathering up the neighbourhood kids and creating intricate concerts to perform for parents, music would later take Ricci to some wild and wonderful places. Ricci learned piano under the tutelage of esteemed New Zealand opera soprano Dame Malvina Major, who introduced Ricci to jazz music, which proved to be the catalyst for a sparkling career to come.

Aged 19 and on a break from nursing at New Zealand's Waikato Hospital, Ricci was in Sydney visiting family when they went to dine at the local RSL. The venue's musical act was having a break when Ricci's sister suggested that she step up to the microphone.

Though nervous, she got up and did her best to sing with the pianist's wonky efforts, noticing the large number of empty beer glasses atop the piano. Ricci's sister encouraged her to try again, this time playing the piano. "As I played the last notes and lifted my hands from the piano, the roar of the audience almost brought the house down!"

Around this time, Ricci sang loudly and proudly in the shower, and one day a neighbourhood parent asked Ricci to teach their children.

"I had no experience teaching - he said, 'just teach them to do what you do!" Ricci laughed.

Luckily, her talents in teaching were as extensive as her musical prowess. As a musician, Ricci was represented by several agents, with one encouraging her to attend an audition in Sydney's Kings Cross. There, Ricci was horrified to see some 300 other hopefuls in line for the same gig.

"Somehow, I got the job," Ricci says humbly. "I was about 20 years old the first time I performed for the troops in Vietnam in 1967."

Photos supplied by Ricci Carr.

Singing with big bands for American troops during the Vietnam War, Ricci has vivid memories of the time. In a demilitarised zone of Dong Ha, Vietnam, Ricci and her colleagues were waiting to be flown out as tensions in the region escalated. With mortars coming and going from their position, their regular aircraft, a Fairchild C-123 Provider, was unable to take off.

Instead, the group was ushered into a Bell UH-1 helicopter where they flew less than 20 feet above the Cua Viet River. They sustained enemy fire, and upon landing safely, it became apparent just how close their demise really came. Two AK-47 bullets had ripped gaping holes into the helicopter, missing the fuel tanks by mere centimetres. Amazingly, Ricci returned for a further two years in a row in 1968 and 1969.

Aside from New Zealand and Vietnam, Ricci has worked in Denmark, the United States, Hong Kong, Fiji, and Japan, any many others. Reminiscing on her time overseas, Ricci recalls one of her most fond memories.

"I was in Osaka, Japan with my two girls, Bridget and Michelle – they were only three and four," she explained. "The girls snuck on stage and sang a song called 'Me Too'. The bandmaster's teenage son played with them and the audio man caught it all on a cassette."

In 2017, Ricci moved to Melbourne for a new endeavour. Unsatisfied with being just a singer, teacher, actor, mother, nurse, and producer, she opted to work with an editor and add 'author' to her repertoire. 'I Can Sing! But Where Is My Voice?' is a guide to modern singing and part of Ricci's legacy - the amalgamation of 50 years of teachings, wisdom, and advice. Ricci looks back on her career and to where she is now - from meeting Rod Stewart and dancing with the late King Frederik IX of Denmark to losing much of her family and experiencing a devastating financial loss, Ricci found herself living in a shelter among Melbourne's over 55s female homeless population.

"I'll tell you what, I've been learning lots of life lessons," Ricci said.

Ricci credits her social worker with referring her to mecwacare, waiting mere weeks before accepting an apartment in mecwacare's affordable housing site in Sandringham. She has now called this place home for two years, and though she finds living alone difficult, Ricci is by no means ungrateful.

"I love living where I am," she smiled. "The light in the apartment, the sea breeze, it's wonderful, especially for writing and recording my songs!"

Having experienced homelessness and crises herself, Ricci gives back to the community by volunteering, whether it's cooking delicious meals or singing for vulnerable people. Ricci knows both the good and bad in the world, and has come to a firm conclusion.

"We need to look after those around us while we're here," she stated.

As an organisation, mecwacare is deeply honoured and profoundly proud to call residents such as Ricci our own.

Scan the QR Code to listen to Ricci's music, "Time for Life".





A big, beautiful gathering at Berwick Brae Gardens

The residents of Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Village held their annual fete on Saturday, November 11, 2023.

The event is proudly organised by the village residents. Members of the craft club, patchwork club, and social club all took a large amount of responsibility in planning and facilitating the success of the event.

From 10am to 1pm, residents welcomed visitors to the fete which was held on the village's beautiful garden grounds. Food stalls with cakes, sausages, scones with jam and cream, and a wonderful Devonshire tea and coffee were on offer. Other stalls sold books, crafts and carefully handmade Christmas decorations, second hand goods, raffle tickets and other interesting items.

A yarn spinning demonstration attracted a lot of visitor interest, while Village Manager Ann Olierook and her brother Paul were the day's musical duo. The pair sang some classic tunes accompanied by Paul's acoustic guitar to set the wonderful mood of the fete.

Berwick Brae Gardens residents have been running the fete for more than 10 years, and any profits raised on the day are donated to local charities.

The warm, welcoming buzz was a fantastic example of the beautiful sense of community at Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Village. The success of the fete is a testament to residents' hard work and dedication to supporting the wider community and to doing social good.

We thank our residents at Berwick Brae Gardens Retirement Village for their selfless efforts and commitment, and we look forward to 2024's event!

Photo: visitors at the 2023 Berwick Brae Gardens Fete browse the delightful wares.





Private tours are available now.

For all the latest information visit **www.mecwacare.org.au** or contact William Newman on **0420 536 075** or **william@amicum.com.au**



Music at Rositano House

As part of an initiative called Residence, delivered by a community notfor-profit arts program, mecwacare's Rositano House hosted musician Charlie Farmer who collaborated with residents to write songs together.

Created and facilitated by Embraced, an organisation specialising in intergenerational arts programs, Residence engaged four emerging and mid-career musicians. Aged under 35 and spanning various musical genres, these musicians spent five weeks getting to know those living in aged care homes as part of a full time creative musical residency.

Each artist ran collaborative music workshop sessions in four aged care facilities across north-east Melbourne. The musicians then took inspiration from their time with residents and wrote music derived from their experiences. At the end of the program, Embraced held a free concert at the Balwyn Community Centre where each of the four musicians performed their musical creations.

Rositano House was lucky enough to have musician Charlie Farmer join them for their creative residency. Charlie is a classically trained violinist, guitarist, and vocalist, with a degree in sociology and psychology.

Photo: Musician Charlie Farmer sings and plays guitar with Beryl from Rositano House. Image courtesy of Embraced. Charlie described the residency experience as "deeply rewarding, challenging, inspiring, heartbreaking and heartwarming in equal measure."

"My creative practice has always been about distilling experiences into sound and this was a beautifully immersive way to do this," Charlie said.

Having spent time exploring what love means to Rositano House residents and how it should sound in music, Charlie fed these thoughts into developing a new love song. At the final performance at the Balwyn Community Centre on Sunday December 17, Charlie performed four pieces, including the love song, that left tears in the eyes of the audience.

Rositano House residents were thrilled with Charlie and the time spent at the home, stating that the program and Charlie's presence was one of their highlights for 2023.

Thank you to Charlie and Embraced for brightening the lives of our Rositano House residents and opening doors to new creative pursuits!

Swinging for success at our 2024 Charity Golf Day

mecwacare's Annual Charity Golf Day was held on Monday February 12 at the Peninsula Kingswood Golf Club.

The event was an excellent opportunity for our supporters to enjoy an exclusive venue, to network with likeminded individuals and help to raise funds for our vital work.

Despite an early start, the mood was light on the crisp morning in Frankston. A total of 80 golfers in 20 teams enjoyed coffee and breakfast prior to heading to their greens for a few hours at one of the Sandbelt region's finest courses.

The sun was blazing, and the heat was on with fierce competition. While players brought their best to the friendly matches, the focus was on the ultimate result: raising money to support the care we provide for the elderly and people living with a disability.

After the golf tournament concluded, players freshened up and 30 additional guests joined us for a delicious two-course lunch.

The winners of the golf tournament, raffle and silent auction were held throughout the afternoon, with a variety of fantastic prizes awarded to happy guests.

Congratulations to this year's winning teams ElecFlight, who narrowly beat their competition by only half a point.

We enjoyed an entertaining speech from special guest Chris Rogers, a former Australian test cricketer who played in several Ashes series. mecwacare CEO Anne McCormack also gave an impassioned speech, explaining the traumatic effects of dementia on both patients and their loved ones. Anne announced that the funds raised from the 2024 Golf Day will be used to facilitate the services of a dementia care specialist, and to ensure further support for patients and their families.

We are thrilled to announce that thanks to the generosity of guests and sponsors, we have raised nearly \$100,000.

Thank you specifically to our Gold Sponsors, Recom Cleaning, Aidacare and Alltech Ent, our Silver Sponsors In2 Fire, Bidfood and United Physio Group, our Bronze Sponsors Accru Melbourne, LeasePLUS, Spectrol, Sheen Group, Total Construction and Majestic Aged Care Services, and our golf cart sponsor, Bunzl.

mecwacare deeply appreciates the generosity of our sponsors, many of whom have given generously across our events and programs over the years.

We wouldn't be able to do it without the selfless efforts of the strong community around us.

Photos: Anne McCormack (CEO) and Alister Pereira; Michael Parker, Alex Henderson, Colin Squires (Board Treasurer), Chris Rogers and Dean Stephen; pre-lunch mingling; Daniel Rodger (Manager Business Projects); putting competition; Samuel Sharma (Executive General Manager - Residential and Housing Services) and Linda Smart (Executive General Manager - Home and Community Services); Jason Naylor, Leigh Penberthy and Darren Crocker.

Our Charity Golf Day is just one of many ways you can support mecwacare. Visit **www.mecwacare.org.au** to explore further fundraising and volunteer options!



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member, Colin Squires.







Selfless young students support community seniors

For five weeks across August and September, four Year Nine students from the King David School in Armadale attended mecwacare's Trescowthick Centre as part of their student volunteer program.

Following an initial orientation of the Trescowthick Centre, students Asher, Tali, Sam, and Jacob enjoyed some one-on-one time with residents and got to know them a little better, under the guidance of teacher Lachlan.

From 11am to 3pm each Wednesday for the next five weeks, students and residents enjoyed brain training, word and board games, gardening, tech lessons, colouring, painting, carpet bowls and musical performances together.

These activities provided benefits to both students and clients. The Year Nine youngsters received intangible rewards in the form of emotional satisfaction, an increased sense of belonging in the community, improved social skills and a renewed sense of purpose.

While the Trescowthick Centre residents enjoyed the mental stimulation and entertainment of the students' presence, improving their socialisation and building relationships. Research has shown that young people benefit from spending time with their elders, often developing an appreciation of history, timelines and days gone by, while older people experience a myriad of positives.

Studies have suggested that older people will experience higher levels of conversation and enjoy an increased sense of purpose and value within their community.

Further benefits include mental and intellectual stimulation, improved mood, cognition and selfesteem, and there can even be a decrease in levels of physical pain.

Many residents also have their own children and may enjoy the sense of nostalgia they experience when spending time with the teenage students.

We are so glad to have welcomed the King David School's Year Nine student volunteer program, and we are thrilled to be welcoming them back to the Trescowthick Centre later this year.



Photos: Students from Swinburne University and the King David School enjoying activities with Trescowthick Centre residents.



Wordsearch

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AUTUMN CARE COMMUNITY CREATIVE FAMILY INDIVIDUAL MATTERS MECWACARE NURSE PROUD SERVICES STRONG SUPPORT UNITED VICTORIA

Wordsearch solutions on page 19

AMAZING



I act like a cat I look like a cat yet I am not a cat.

What am I?

Answer on page 19



Creative submission invitation: *Calling all* creatives!

Do you have an artistic hobby? Are you a painter, knitter, woodworker, quilter, or poet?

Whatever your talent, we invite you to submit your creative innovations to mecwacare Matters for publication.

We would love to celebrate your individuality and artistic talent, whether you are a retirement or aged care resident, home care service client, or community services recipient.

Feel free to take a photo holding up your creation, or send the artwork itself – be as innovative as you like in your submission. Please ensure that your image is of a high resolution, and that your email includes your name and your relationship with mecwacare.

SUBMISSIONS:

Send any submissions to: media@mecwacare.org.au.

Keep your eyes peeled for your handiwork in the next edition of mecwacare Matters!



mecwacare Malvern

by Mary Adamson

mecwacare Malvern is home to old people, so don't worry at all if you feel rather feeble.

You come for respite and find yourself there for life, but please never mind for the carers are kind.

There's Emma and Selina to ask for advice, they're all oh so helpful!

It's honestly nice.

There's help to get dressed, make your bed and what's best, you can press on your buzzer, and they'll do the rest!

You'll get out of the cooking, the dusting and more, and Kevin is there to mop up the floor.

It works very well for a husband and wife, and for those who are single you might find a mate for you never know what could happen before it's too late!

And then there is Michael, whose music is vital -he can play anything, and he makes us all sing!

If you would like to know more, you can knock on my door.





An in-room visit from the hairdresser at Gregory Lodge left Harold feeling fresh.



Nancy was delighted to spend her 90th birthday doing what she loves – strength training with our activity group!



Lunar New Year Trescowthick residents enjoyed performances by the Jasmine Senior Dance Group.

Social media spotlight

Join our #caringcommunity to learn more about the wonderful people of mecwacare, along with exciting activities across our aged care homes, retirement villages and community centres.

> A sense of Community



Vincent House's first high tea of the year became even more special with the warm welcome of a new resident.

Wordsearch solutions

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Riddle answer: a kitten.

There's nothing better than having wonderful conversations with friends under the sun.

Follow us on social media:

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A contemporary, luxurious aged care home in the heart of Mont Albert North.

The new Simon Price Centre features state-of-the-art facilities, including large, spacious bedrooms and suites, with balconies offering beautiful views across Melbourne.



Freecall **1800 163 292**

Proudly a not-for-profit, non-denominational charitable organisation

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mecwacare.org.au