

Care & Connect

WESLEY'S AGED CARE SERVICES NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2016

A new direction for Wesley

By Paul Linossier, Chief Executive Officer

An important change is happening at Wesley, with the decision that we will soon be joining with 17 other Uniting Church agencies, to form a new, single organisation.

Recently I wrote to all our clients, families and volunteers to let you know about this change, and I hope our letter made it safely to you. I also wanted to take the opportunity to re-cap on what's ahead in this edition of Care & Connect.

Australia's welfare sector is undergoing major change at the moment, and the decision for Wesley to participate in this merger opportunity arose from careful consideration of what we had to do to meet increasing and changing needs in the community. Joining together with many other like-minded organisations makes sense for Wesley and enables our work to continue for many years to come.

At the heart of the decision are the best interests of our clients and families. Being part of a bigger, stronger organisation means we can deliver even better support, as well as giving us access to more resources to meet your needs and a stronger voice on the issues that we all care so much about.

We want you to know that even though we're about to go through a period of change, our commitment to you will remain the same. We'll continue to work closely with our clients and families to offer the services that you need. And we'll continue to support our volunteers in the essential roles you play in delivering our programs.

We expect the new organisation to be in place in October this year, but the services and programs that you're involved with won't change. You'll still see the same people at the Wesley locations you visit now.

We really appreciate your support during this time of change, and look forward to continuing to support you to meet your goals and enjoy life to the fullest.

If you have any questions, please speak with your local service. You can also email us at change@wesley.org.au. We will also be posting updates to our website at wesley.org.au, so keep an eye out.

The perfect match

Meet Wesley's Aged Care Team Leader in Footscray Nikki Manalaros.

Tell us about your job. Wesley's social support program is about connecting older people, and people with disability, with volunteers to spend time together and enjoy activities in the local community. My role is about facilitating those 'matches' and making sure everything runs smoothly.

What do you love about your role?

I enjoy speaking with people from many walks of life, both clients and volunteers. I also love being part of empowering people and discovering what motivates them. What could be better than the opportunity to meet with people, talk about what they really want in life, and look at how Wesley can help create meaningful connections?

If you didn't do your current job, what else would you do?

In another life I would probably have entered politics! I love it and I'm a strong believer in the Australian democratic process. I'm also driven by social justice and a belief that we have to work from grass roots upwards to instigate any change.

Tell us about your travels. The most significant trip I've taken was to a small Greek island village where my parents were born. Being Australian, I could 'feel' my roots and understand my Greek heritage. It was the most revealing experience in my life.



Aged Care Team Leader, Nikki Manalaros.



Pictured above: 1. Inner-South volunteers enjoyed a visit to the impressive Black Rock House. 2. Social support volunteers from Monash enjoyed lunch at the Waverley RSL. 3. Volunteers from across Melbourne's North swapped stories in Moonee Ponds.

Celebrating our volunteers

Every year, Volunteer Week is an opportunity to celebrate the thousands of hours, stories and contributions that our volunteers give to Wesley Aged Care Services throughout the year.

As volunteers you play a pivotal role in supporting people to feel connected and valued. Whether it's spending time with someone in their home, or leading group activities out in the community, the difference you make to the lives of others is invaluable.

Volunteers were recognised for their contribution during Volunteer Week this year (9-15 May) with a range of events taking place – an opportunity to swap stories, share a laugh and be presented with a certificate of achievement.

Better support for carers: an update

You might know that there's been a significant review underway, led by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, to look at the roles and needs of carers in our community who are providing invaluable support to others.

In working with and supporting carers every day at Wesley, we know just how crucial your roles are. Whether you care for someone around the clock, or provide occasional care, it's so important that support and respite services are meeting your needs.

With around 2.7 million unpaid carers in Australia who need support and respite in order to be able to continue in their caring roles, the purpose of the review is to help

reduce caregiver strain, increase carer wellbeing and therefore reduce the risk of people needing to move into residential care.

Based on consultation with carers, the review identified gaps in services, difficulties experienced in finding services, and identified additional needs for support. The overarching recommendation was to introduce a better system with a preventative focus, which provides earlier support to carers in an accessible way.

There's been significant headway since the recommendations were announced. The Carer Gateway is now in place, and we hope you've had a chance to look at this. Wesley's services are highlighted on this and it's linked through to My Aged Care too.

The second part of the plan is now underway – the development of an integrated carer support service system. A draft of this is expected soon and we're looking forward to seeing continued improvements in outcomes for carers in the community.



Carer support at your fingertips

The new Carer Gateway is a national online and phone service that provides practical information and resources to support carers, as well as connecting you to local support services.

Visit: carergateway.gov.au or phone: **1800 422 737**

Changes in aged care: your questions answered

Our last newsletter provided an update on the Australian Government's reform of the aged care sector, and the work Wesley is doing to refine our services to offer even more choice and flexibility to our clients and families.

With lots of change underway, we've been hearing a number of questions from our clients, families and volunteers. We thought we'd take this opportunity to answer a few of these questions below, to continue to help you understand how the changes might affect you. Of course, if you have any questions about your specific circumstances and programs you're involved with, please contact your Team Leader or local service for a chat.

What is My Aged Care and how does it affect me?

My Aged Care provides a one-stop-shop for aged care services in Australia, for people over the age of 65, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 55. If you wish to access aged care services for the first time, or you'd like to enquire into additional services, you will need to contact My Aged Care first. The assessment team will discuss your goals, complete an assessment and refer you to relevant services. You may choose to look for a service provider yourself, such as Wesley, or the assessment team can recommend which services might suit your needs.

I already receive aged care services, through Wesley and/or another organisation. What does this mean for me?

The services you're already receiving won't be impacted by the changes. You will simply continue to receive services from Wesley and any other providers, as you do right now.

I wish to make a change to the current services I'm receiving from Wesley. How do I do this?

To make any changes to the services you're currently receiving, contact your local Wesley service directly in the first instance to discuss your needs and goals. We can support you to make any changes to your current services to make sure they are meeting your wishes.

What is the role of the new Intake and Recruitment Team at Wesley?

The team is responsible for all enquiries from new volunteers and clients, and provides information and support to people who are joining in with Wesley's programs and services for the first time. The team can be contacted on **13 73 94**.

If you require any new services, on top of what you currently receive, you'll need to go through My Aged Care. They will support you through the process. Contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit the website: **myagedcare.gov.au**

If you need any help understanding the system, you can also call Wesley on **13 73 94** or speak to your local Wesley service.



Have your say

Important survey enclosed

Every year, Wesley runs a survey with our clients, families and volunteers, to gather valuable feedback on the things we're doing well, and the things we could improve. Your views are very important to us, as they enable us to plan and improve for the year ahead. Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey and send it back to us in the self-addressed envelope provided, **by Friday 30 September**.

Many thanks in advance for participating in this important survey. We look forward to providing a summary of results in our next edition of Care & Connect.

Audit ahead

Every three years, we participate in an extensive audit process, run by an external quality agency appointed by government. This is an important process because it looks carefully at what we do, makes sure we're delivering against our funding targets, and most importantly confirms that we are meeting the needs of the people who use our services.

As well as reviewing our policies and procedures internally, auditors will also want to talk to clients, families and volunteers about your experiences in participating in our services.

Your contribution to this process would be valued and appreciated, and we'll be in touch closer to the time to see if you could make yourself available for a quick chat with the quality agency involved. Thanks so much in advance.

Upcoming events

September: Dementia Awareness Month

Dementia Awareness Month is coming up in September, with activities and events planned for the whole month. With a theme of 'you are not alone', the initiative aims to encourage our communities to become more dementia aware, particularly surrounding risk reduction and where to get help.

A major feature of the month is a speaking tour by internationally renowned expert in Alzheimer's disease and dementia, Dr Ronald Peterson. He's speaking in Melbourne on Thursday 22 September. The full list of events happening across Victoria is available at fightdementia.org.au or you can call the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**.



October: Victorian Seniors Festival

The 34th Victorian Seniors Festival will take place throughout October and aims to recognise and celebrate the valuable contribution older people make in our community, as well as highlighting themes of health and keeping active. There are a range of free and low cost events happening across Victoria.

The majority of the performers, artists, writers, community leaders and demonstration groups involved are older Victorians – demonstrating a rich depth of talent, a joyful participation in community life and a commitment to celebrating what they do. There will be heaps of opportunities to try new things. Eight days of free public transport will be on offer in early October for Victorian Seniors Card holders in metropolitan and regional Victoria, and five days of free V/Line travel.

Find out more at seniorsonline.vic.gov.au or call Seniors Information Victoria on **1300 135 090**. Wesley will also be running events during the Seniors Festival – speak to your local service to find out what's happening near you.



'The Glen Goldies' will be performing at the Warburton Senior Citizens Centre on Tuesday 4 October, hosted by Wesley's Melba Club. Call **5962 1033** for more information.



All about Eva

Meet Eva, a valued member of our program at Wesley St Mark's.

Eva was born in Hamburg as an only child. She attended school until she was 16, worked briefly in a kindergarten and then commenced studying nursing. She soon migrated to Australia, where she continued her nursing studies at the Mount Gambier Base Hospital. Two years after completing her studies, Eva commenced working as a psychiatric nurse at Larundel Hospital, Bundoora.

At 26, Eva married and had a daughter. Living in Clayton and Wheelers Hill, Eva worked with her husband in the family building business. The trio then moved to Seattle in USA for 10 years before returning to Melbourne. Eva speaks regularly with her husband's only sister in Italy and several cousins in Germany. Her niece travels to Melbourne every few years to visit her. Currently Eva is planning a trip with her daughter to Europe to fulfil a lifelong dream. To physically prepare for this trip, she walks and uses a rowing machine every day. She also is studying Italian and practices the language as much as she can.

Eva enjoys attending activities at Wesley St Mark's. She loves to meet new people and catch up with her friends. She also enjoys heading out with the ladies group for coffee and on full-day outings. They often talk about the past, future, families, current affairs and cooking tips.



Wellness starts with you

Looking after your mind and body is the foundation for life. Especially for those of us in a caring role, it's so important that we care for ourselves first so we are fit and well to look after others.

Here are some tips to stay on top of your health:

- 1 Eat mostly healthy, whole foods.** Incorporate more fruit, vegetables and unprocessed foods in your diet. Of course, enjoy a treat from time to time – just make sure the majority of the food you eat is kind to your body. Remember to drink plenty of water throughout the day too. A good way to remember is to make sure you drink a large glass of water every time you have a meal, including morning and afternoon tea.
- 2 Mind your mind.** Mindfulness is a great way to simultaneously de-clutter the mind and be more focused. Try sitting upright in a chair for ten minutes each day, breathing slowly and deeply, focusing on the different sensations in your body. When your mind wanders off, acknowledge it and try to bring your mind back to a sense of calm.
- 3 Keep as active as possible.** Increasing your heart rate and moving your joints has many benefits. Whether you daily walk around the block, participate in gentle exercise classes or use the stairs instead of the elevator, you just need to find what works for you.

For more tips on healthy eating and keeping active in older age, visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au or speak to your local Wesley service. For tips on keeping your brain active, visit yourbrainmatters.org.au or call the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**.



Wesley staff member Charlie McFadden takes Linlithgow Planned Activity Group clients through a series of exercises, to help promote good health and boost energy.



Getting crafty

Wesley volunteers have helped keep two craft groups going over the years, with participants enjoying learning new skills and making beautiful items for Wesley events.

Our Moonee Valley craft group was set up over 15 years ago with the help of Iris Andrews, volunteer group facilitator. Iris and the group originally set out to make door prizes and small gifts for guests at the annual Wesley Do Care Christmas party. They also raised money by selling items to program participants over the year, putting profits towards volunteer and client functions.

Since Iris retired in 2011, volunteer Alison Rickard has continued leading the dedicated group. A second craft group popped up in Altona during 2007, driven by volunteer facilitator Jennie Manic. The group has gone from strength to strength and now boasts 11 hard working members.

"It's a credit to both groups that all members are actively involved, no matter what their skill level, and that everyone greatly appreciates the companionship of others who share a love of craft," said Lisa Robertson, Wesley Aged Care Services Coordinator.

Both groups enjoy meeting regularly and sharing new crafting skills, as well as having a great laugh along the way. They continue to make wonderful items for Wesley functions.