



MiCare Magazine 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page No
Navigating the Future of Aged Care	Page 4
We are so proud of who we are, our people and what we do!	Page 5
MiCare's New Mission and Vision	Page 6
MiCare's MiStaff Initiative recognised for Supporting Migrants in the Workforce	Page 7
Theresia's Story	Page 9
The Garden Club	Page 10
The Power of Giving Back: Why Volunteering Matters	Page 11
MiCare's Staff-Elderly Buddy Program	Page 14
Enhancing Dining Experiences at MiCare: A Culinary Transformation	Page 16
Harry's Brushstrokes Through Time	Page 18
Learning Another Language: A Boost for the Mind	Page 19
Wednesday afternoons at Prins Willem Alexander Village	Page 20
Leadership - Conscious Leadership Workshop	Page 21
Introducing the MiAppreciation Awards: Celebrating Excellence at MiCare	Page 22
Stay Safe: A Simple Guide to Protect Against AI Cyber Attacks	Page 23
Finding Friendship and Fun in the Social Support Group	Page 25
My Journey with the Social Support Group	Page 26
Cultural Celebration Brings Community Together	Page 27
A Sense of Belonging	Page 28
Day in the Life at MiCare	Page 31
Life at MiCare: A Fulfilling and Enriching Experience	Page 33
The Importance of Staying Active at Every Age	Page 35
Understanding Intersectionality: A Path to Inclusivity	Page 38
Safeguarding: A Commitment to Protecting Those We Care For	Page 39
MiShop - MiCare's online store	Page 43
Future Aged Care Services: MiCare's Gap Analysis Project	Page 45
Recipe for Bak Kut Teh	Page 47
Recipe for approx. 85 Bitterballen	Page 48
A New Chapter for Aged Care: Understanding Australia's Reform	Page 50
Your Rights in Retirement: Understanding Victoria's New Retirement Village Act	Page 52
The Big Lap	Page 55
Preparedness and Resilience	Page 57
Beatrix Villagers' Magical Day Trip to Mira Mira!	Page 58
Crossword	Page 59

Navigating the Future of Aged Care: Challenges and MiCare's Commitment

Aged care has been under the spotlight in recent years, and this attention will continue. Our care homes are a clear example of the ongoing demand for aged care services. However, expanding to provide more care beds is challenging due to limited funds, changing loan conditions, and reduced government support.

For our independent residents, who may face declining health or require care in the future, we aim to make the transition to care easier within the home in which they reside, but it is becoming more difficult to guarantee places for everyone. We hope to see "assisted living" become a practical and caring option in the near future as this would allow our ageing residents to stay within their community while receiving the support they need.

MiCare's board and executive team are dedicated to our core values. Recently, we updated our vision and mission statement, not to change direction, but to better express what we aim to achieve as an organisation.

Our goal is to support people throughout their life and ensure that individuals from diverse communities can continue to have meaningful and dignified lives. The board and executive remain deeply committed to this promise and to the communities we serve.

Our villages are proud to be a welcoming community for people from many different cultures and languages. While we originally had a Dutch focus, we have grown to embrace diversity. Over time, the makeup of our residents will continue to change. Many of our current independent residents are migrants, but in the future, we expect more residents to have been born here in Australia.

What remains unchanged is that our villages will always include people from various cultural, vulnerable, or disadvantaged backgrounds. This is a core part of MiCare's values. As we look ahead, it's important to better understand the needs of the people who join our villages and the community life we create together. This will always align with our strategy and vision.



Jos van de Ven
President - MiCare

We are so proud of who we are, our people and what we do!

In the beginning of this year, MiCare experienced two significant climate events that are one in a 50 year occurrence, or there abouts. We first had Cyclone Alfred at our Prins Willem Alexandre site in Birkdale Queensland, and the following week, bushfires across the road from one of our Kilsyth villages. It was an event which brought out the best in our staff, elders, their families and staff's families. Everyone who could help, did so, it was exceptional to experience the level of support, good will and extraordinary care shown throughout these very trying times.

In this edition of MiCare you will read about these extraordinary efforts that showed who we are, the wonderful people in our MiCare family and what we are capable of doing!

The Magazine is a yearly publication and this year it is a bumper issue. You will find articles about the many services and programs we provide, introductions to the many staff, volunteers, helpers, elders and clients who are a part of who we are. You will read about personal stories showing people's commitment to help others as well as group activities which encourage connection and social wellbeing.

Articles in this issue will also provide a source of information about the changes in aged care which are just around the corner. We have been working hard to organise our programs and teams in preparation for these changes, especially in Support at Home programs or as you probably know them, as Home Care Packages. Our work regarding continuous improvements is endless and you will read a story of inspiration about our residential aged care home Buddy Program, the impact it has on elders and staff. It is a motivational piece which encourages us to do better. Enjoy reading this issue and as always, we love to hear your thoughts and ideas.



Penni Michael
CEO

MiCare's New Mission and Vision

Mission

To enable people from diverse communities to have dignified and meaningful lives.

Vision

Support people from diverse communities throughout their life.

Acknowledgment of the Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, MiCare pays our respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands. We acknowledge that diversity in this country started with our First Nation's people.





Left to Right: Richard Mendelsohn, Penni Michael, Despina Haralambopoulos, Jacqueline Aungminn, Warren Brewer (back) and Tess McGrath

MiCare's MiStaff Initiative recognised for Supporting Migrants in the Workforce

MiCare's MiStaff initiative has been highly commended by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, highlighting its success in helping new migrants build meaningful careers in Australia.

The recognition was celebrated at Government House, where MiCare Deputy Chair Richard Mendelson, CEO Penni Michael, and General Managers Despina Haralambopoulos and Tess McGrath accepted the award.

Bridging the Employment Gap for Migrants

MiCare is dedicated to supporting new migrants by equipping them with skills, training, and employment opportunities. MiStaff exemplifies this mission by working across MiCare's programs and services to place marginalised migrants into stable jobs. This initiative ensures that individuals, often excluded from the workforce, gain access to meaningful employment and economic independence.

Richard Mendelson emphasized the impact of the program, stating, "This is indeed a great achievement, and the award acknowledges the extensive work and support provided to our trainees by MiCare's dedicated staff. This program demonstrates what can be achieved through exceptional commitment."

Success in Employment and Training

In its first year, MiStaff recruited 61 trainees from various community networks and successfully secured employment for 54 individuals in roles such as personal care workers, gardeners, and cleaners. The initiative has been made possible through partnerships with The Management Edge (a registered training organisation), Sarina Russo (an apprenticeship provider), and Community Employment Connectors programs across Greater Melbourne's outer west, east, and southeast regions.

Beyond vocational training, MiCare's Settlement Services played a crucial role in removing barriers to employment. The program provided support in transport access, driving lessons, cultural orientation, childcare solutions, and career pathways, ensuring that trainees were fully equipped for success in the Australian workforce.

A Diverse and Inclusive Initiative

MiStaff has supported migrants from a range of cultural backgrounds, including Karen, Karenni, Hakha Chin, Burmese, Thai, Congolese, Tibetan, Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong, Filipino, Indian, Iranian, Malaysian, Eritrean, and Ethiopian communities. Approximately 50% of trainees had been in Australia for less than five years, with 87% being women. The program has assisted individuals aged between 20 and 63, demonstrating its inclusivity and broad reach.

By addressing employment challenges and fostering career opportunities, MiStaff continues to make a significant impact on the lives of new migrants. The recognition from the Victorian Multicultural Commission underscores MiCare's ongoing commitment to building a more inclusive and supportive workforce in Australia.

‘Beyond vocational training, MiCare’s Settlement Services played a crucial role in removing barriers to employment.’

Theresa's Story!

by Ingrid Brown
MiCare Volunteer

 Theresa is truly an inspiration; she carries on with grace, never uttering a complaint or a negative word.

Prins Willem Alexander Village boasts some of the most charming Dutch-style houses outside Holland. I became a volunteer to spend time with someone who enjoyed speaking in Dutch. Though she lived 154 km away, I thought, why not? She seemed lonely, and I knew she'd appreciate the company.

Theresa is a cheerful Indies-Dutch lady who spent her childhood in Indonesia, married life in Holland, and later settled in Australia. She was independent until last year when Covid left her unable to walk unassisted. Moving into care was difficult, but necessary.

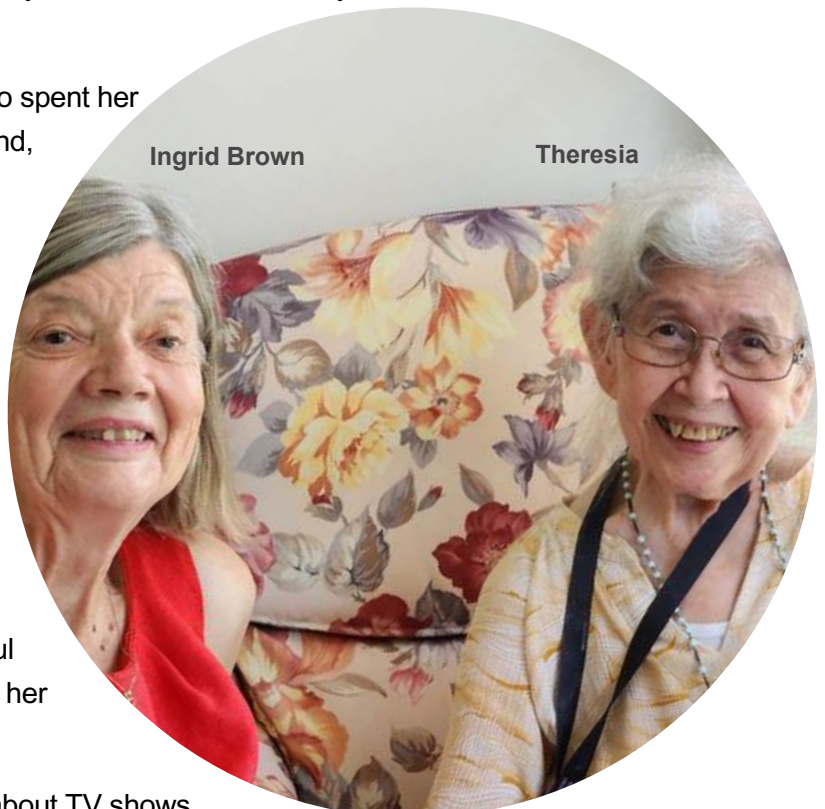
Her daughter, Bernie, visits when she can, despite her demanding job supporting the homeless. Theresa spends most of her time in an armchair, enjoying the view of a large tree outside her window. Every afternoon, rainbow lorikeets flock there, flashing their stunning plumage. A thoughtful staff member framed photos of the birds for her room, bringing her joy.

We often sit together over coffee, chatting about TV shows, world events, and cooking. She adores our rescue dog and reminisces about the pets she once had, still treasuring China figurines of them. Her zest for life is infectious, and our visits are filled with laughter. I always leave with mixed emotions—sad she remains seated there, yet uplifted by her warmth.

Theresa loves reading Libelle magazines, especially the puzzles and new recipes. The manager at Prins Willem receives them from Holland and passes them along.

With my mother's Dutch colonial upbringing in Indonesia, Theresa and I often compare stories, particularly about wartime experiences. I've traveled through Holland and tease her about seeing more of her homeland than she has! My Dutch hasn't improved much—she's too polite to correct me—but my dictionary gets plenty of use.

After retiring at 72, I thought I'd have spare time, yet I'd never miss a visit with Theresa. She's a joy to be around, and I'm already planning something special for her 90th birthday next year!



The Garden Club

by Cassie Foley
Allied Health Assistant – QLD



Jenny Firmin



Janice Russell and Tibby Anderson



Welcome to the Garden Club—a place where our elders can dig in, get their hands dirty, and enjoy the great outdoors! This initiative has created a fantastic opportunity for them to feel a sense of purpose and accomplishment while having fun in the fresh air.

Gardening is not just a great way to brighten up our surroundings; it's also an excellent work out! It engages all major muscle groups—legs, arms, shoulders, back, neck, and core—offering a fun and natural way to stay active. Activities like digging, lifting bags of mulch, and pulling out stubborn weeds help improve bone and joint health, burn calories, and build strength.

But the magic of gardening goes beyond the physical benefits. It brings people together, fostering friendships and a strong sense of community. There's something truly special about watching a garden flourish, knowing that you played a part in its growth. Plus, the joy of nurturing plants can be incredibly therapeutic, boosting mood and well-being.

Our dedicated elders have been hard at work transforming the garden, clearing away overgrown and dried-out plants to make space for new life. With vibrant flowers and lush greenery now in place, the garden has become a beautiful space to relax and enjoy. We've also planted a variety of herbs to add fresh flavours to the delicious meals prepared by our chefs. A standout favourite has been our thriving tomato plants, which have already produced a bountiful harvest—fresh, juicy, and perfect for sharing!

The Garden Club is more than just a hobby—it's a source of joy, friendship, and pride. We can't wait to see what our green-thumbed elders grow next!

The power of giving back : Why volunteering matters

by Yvonne Philips
Manager Volunteers



Seaford Volunteer meet



It's easy to get so caught up in the busyness of life that you forget to donate your time to a greater cause. Spending just a few hours a week helping others or advocating for meaningful causes is, by all accounts, well worth the effort.

The act of giving back enriches the lives of volunteers as well, allowing them to step outside of their daily routines and focus on something beyond their personal concerns. Volunteering is one of the most selfless contributions we can make to society.

The benefits of volunteering extend to both body and mind. Donating your time to others can increase happiness, build a sense of community, encourage personal growth, and even help you discover your purpose in life.

Benefits of Volunteering:

1. Connects you with new friends
2. Increases happiness
3. Reduces loneliness
4. Promotes physical health
5. Develops new job skills
6. Contributes to longevity
7. Encourages stepping outside of your comfort zone
8. Enhances cognitive health
9. Provides a sense of purpose

MiCare employs a unique and highly successful approach to recruiting, matching, training, and supporting volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities at MiCare

One of the ways MiCare provides care to elderly people in Victoria and Queensland is through its Visiting Programs:

- Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) (VIC and QLD) – formerly the CVS program, funded by the Australian Government.
- Friendly Visiting (VIC only)

These programs assist those living independently or in nursing homes by connecting them with volunteers who share their language and cultural background. The program aims to provide one-on-one contact, which often develops into a meaningful friendship. Additionally, MiCare organises group gatherings for elders and their visiting volunteers.

Volunteers can also support MiCare through:

- Residential and Kiosk Volunteering – within our homes in Victoria and Queensland
- Auxiliary Support
- Bus Driving Assistance

Migrant Services Volunteering

MiCare also recruits volunteers to support migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as they transition into their new lives in Australia. The Learning Support Program assists newly arrived young people from refugee backgrounds with schoolwork, including basic literacy and numeracy skills. This program also fosters confidence, helping them to engage socially and academically in a more meaningful way.

Training & Support

All volunteers must complete a training program before beginning their volunteer work at MiCare. This training is provided by MiCare. Additionally, all volunteers must undergo a police check, which will be conducted by MiCare as part of the recruitment process. Current COVID-19 and flu vaccinations are also mandatory.

Why is Volunteering Important?

Volunteering not only benefits others but also enhances your own well-being. It brings joy, fulfillment, and a sense of belonging to those who participate.

Volunteering plays a vital role in the social, economic, and environmental well-being of organisations like MiCare. At its core, volunteering means contributing to a not-for-profit organisation without monetary compensation. It offers an opportunity to become involved in a community in a way that is rewarding, engaging, and fun.

Volunteering can take many forms—formal or informal, full-time or part-time, occasional or even one-time. Whatever level of commitment suits you, we would love to welcome you to our team. At MiCare, volunteers support extended families, contribute to fundraising efforts, help build community connections, and strengthen social networks. These activities are an integral part of what makes our community thrive.

We would love for you to join our family! If you are interested in becoming a MiCare volunteer, please contact us at 0492 265 339 or email the Volunteer Coordination Team at Volunteering@micare.com.au.



Bendigo Volunteer meet



Footscray Volunteer meet



Bendigo Volunteer meet

MiCare's Staff-Elder Buddy Program

by Gladys Maseko
General Manager Residential Services



Elder Bonnie with Peach



Left to right: Jaskirat, Margaret and Afaf



Left to right: Mandeep, Sharon and Heather



MiCare explored the Strengthened Standards, embracing new aspects and enhancements, and launched Best Practice Projects to exceed expected outcomes. One such initiative, the Staff-Elder Buddy Program, was designed to enhance Person-Centered Care.

While care was already tailored to individual needs through consultations with elders and substitute decision-makers, MiCare sought further improvements. The team continuously pursues innovation, encouraging staff to think creatively and challenge norms for better outcomes.

Person-Centered Care extends beyond capturing medical history, family details, and lifestyle preferences. With the introduction of Trauma-Informed Practice, a deeper understanding of each elder's life story became essential to improving engagement and outcomes.

To achieve this, staff needed support to build trusting relationships, gather key insights, and provide truly individualised care.

Challenges were identified:

- Registered Nurses compile care plans focusing mainly on clinical aspects and lifestyle.
- Not all staff have time to review these plans and rely on handovers for information.
- Staff may not always have the opportunity to engage deeply with elders unless providing one-on-one support.

Recognising these barriers, MiCare implemented the Staff-Elder Buddy Program. Each staff member was paired with an elder for 4-6 weeks to foster informal, meaningful interactions. They documented insights through case studies, gradually building therapeutic relationships.

The program culminated in Staff-Elder Buddy presentation days, where staff shared their findings with colleagues, elders, and families. Some elders co-presented, demonstrating the strong bonds formed. Staff passionately advocated for their buddy elders, suggesting improvements and sharing personal insights. Management valued the deeper understanding gained, and staff grew more confident in providing truly Person-Centred Care.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Staff recommended making the program a regular practice to support new team members and stay updated on new elders. Highlights included:

- An elder, after two years in the home, confided in her buddy staff about her preferred name, which was then adopted by all staff, significantly boosting her happiness.
- A staff member discovered their buddy elder's lifelong passion for Ferrari and dream of attending the Grand Prix. The team worked together to arrange a showroom visit and secure attendance at the Grand Prix in March 2025.

The Staff-Elder Buddy Program has created a vibrant environment where elders look forward to seeing their buddy staff. The deeper connections formed have ensured that their needs are truly understood and met, enhancing their overall well-being.



Peter and Shane at Grand Prix



Enhancing Dining Experiences at MiCare: A Culinary Transformation

by Binu Krishnan
Manager Food Services



At MiCare, we are committed to providing our residents with exceptional dining experiences that prioritize nutrition, taste, and satisfaction. In line with this commitment, we undertook a comprehensive revamp of our kitchen operations, culminating in the launch of a new menu on January 6, 2025.



Our new menu was shaped by valuable resident feedback across all sites. Their input helped create meals that reflect their tastes while meeting nutritional needs. In collaboration with dietitians, we designed a menu rich in protein, energy, calcium, fibre, and essential micronutrients to enhance well-being.

Regular Food & Nutrition meetings are being reinstated at each home to refine offerings based on resident feedback and evolving nutritional standards.

We have partnered with premium suppliers to source high-quality ingredients, elevating our dining experience. Our kitchen team is also incorporating seasonal produce to keep meals fresh and diverse.

We're excited to introduce a special Valentine's Day menu across all sites, featuring exquisite dishes to celebrate the occasion

This transformation wouldn't be possible without our dedicated kitchen team, food supervisors, and universal workers. Their hard work ensures every meal meets high standards of quality, presentation, and service.

At MiCare, we recognise the importance of dining in residents' overall well-being. We are proud of our team's efforts and remain committed to providing nourishing, enjoyable meals that enrich our residents' lives.



Henry



Harry's Brushstrokes Through Time

by Kellie Vernon

Lifestyle Coordinator – Overbeek Lodge



Harry's passion for painting began in his early teenage years. He was close friends with Roger, the son of Ernest Buckmaster—an accomplished Australian artist born in Victoria. Ernest won the prestigious Archibald Prize in 1932 for his portrait of Sir William Irvine.

Whenever Harry visited Roger, he often saw Ernest deeply focused at his easel, working day and night. Harry thought to himself, "I'd love to do that one day". Ernest, being a supportive figure, allowed Harry to sit nearby and observe. At the time, Harry was experimenting with charcoal.

By the age of 16, Harry purchased his first set of oil paints—and as they say, the rest is history. His artistic focus was mainly on landscapes, with the occasional seascape, and the beautiful Yarra Valley became his primary muse.

For 30 years, Harry worked at Dupont Fabric Makers in Bayswater, balancing his job with his passion for art. After work, he would head straight to his art studio. His pieces were framed by a local business in Lilydale, and word of mouth quickly helped him start selling his work.

Initially, Harry showcased his art at community markets, eventually moving to the St Kilda Market in the heart of town. As interest grew, his artwork attracted international buyers, and soon he began receiving calls from as far away as England and the United States.

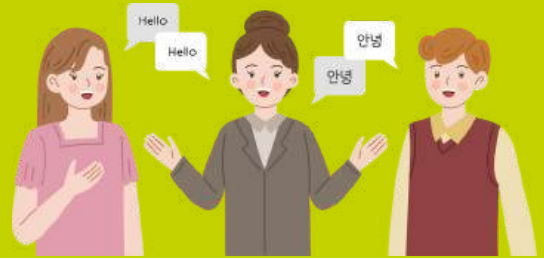
In his early 70s, Harry had to stop painting due to age-related hand tremors, but to this day, he still receives numerous inquiries about his work.

A selection of Harry's favourite pieces can be found hanging in his wife's room at Overbeek Lodge, including a remarkable artwork painted on timber. If you ever have the chance to visit Overbeek Lodge, be sure to stop by and say hello.

Learning Another Language: A Boost for the Mind

07

by Devyani Shirke
Marketing and Social media coordinator



 Learning a new language is more than just a valuable skill—it's a powerful way to enhance cognitive abilities and improve overall brain function. Research has shown that being multilingual benefits individuals across all age groups. It helps sharpen memory, improving focus, and even delaying cognitive decline. From academic advantages to workplace benefits and social enrichment, learning another language is an investment in both mental agility and personal growth.

Studies indicate that learning a second language strengthens the brain by forming new neural pathways, enhancing problem-solving skills, and improving multitasking abilities. A study by York University found that bilingual individuals exhibit better cognitive flexibility, meaning they can switch between tasks more efficiently. The mental challenge of learning a new language can increase brain activity, keeping the mind sharp and engaged.

Language learning improves memory retention and recall. According to a study by the University of Edinburgh, bilingual individuals have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's and dementia. The constant mental exercise required to learn and use multiple languages strengthens the brain's ability to store and retrieve information.

Being multilingual is an asset in today's global job market. Many employers seek employees who can communicate with international clients and colleagues. Language skills also brings in cultural awareness and builds social connections thus making multilingual employees more adaptable and effective in diverse work environments. As more companies trade internationally, employees who are multilingual have advantage over the others.

In a social set up, studies have shown that bilingual individuals exhibit greater empathy and open-mindedness, as they are exposed to different perspectives and cultural nuances. You also tend to learn the history, politics of new places and understand the heritage better.

Whether for cognitive health, career advancement, or social enrichment, learning another language offers lifelong benefits. It keeps the brain active, improves communication skills, and fosters meaningful connections across cultures. Investing time in language learning is truly an investment in a sharper, healthier mind.

Wednesday afternoons at Prins Willem Alexander Village

by Monica Turnbull



No, it's not just afternoon tea or afternoon drinks—it's something much more exciting!

A group of independent residents gathers in De Soos for an hour-long class focused on balance, strength, and coordination.

The group size varies, but we usually have around 12 participants, ranging in age from 70 to 99. They come in all shapes and sizes, with varying levels of agility, but they all share the same goal—to improve their physical strength, coordination, and mental well-being.

Social interaction plays a crucial role in maintaining good mental health. Most of us prefer not to exercise alone, so coming together in a group makes staying active more enjoyable. Some participants use wheelie walkers, and others even join in from their wheelchairs.



Residents group

Everyone decides for themselves how much they want to do, and there's no judgment if someone can't manage a particular exercise. Trying something new keeps our minds open to fresh opportunities.

We always start our class with five deep breaths to clear our minds of outside worries and focus on the present moment. Most of our exercises are done while seated, using resistance bands. Some participants opt for light weights to build strength. For flexibility, we incorporate simple stretches for the hands, arms, shoulders, legs, and feet—all done from a seated position. For those who are able, we include standing balance exercises with one hand on a chair and a bit of marching on the spot. Improving balance is key to preventing falls.

We also work on hand-eye coordination by bouncing a ball to each other, trying to use alternate hands. This exercise helps strengthen brain pathways. We always wrap up with the ball bounce—it never fails to make us laugh, and as they say, "Laughter is the best medicine!"



Residents group

Leadership – Conscious Leadership Workshop

by Tess McGrath
General Manager People Services



The Leadership Team came together for the first time at the end of November for an insightful workshop focused on the principles of conscious leadership.

This concept is designed to help leaders cultivate self-awareness, accountability, and authenticity in their leadership approach, fostering a more engaged and high-performing workplace culture.

A key highlight of the workshop was a deep dive into the concept of operating "Above the Line" versus "Below the Line." This framework challenges leaders to recognise when they are leading with openness, curiosity, and responsibility (Above the Line) versus when they may be reactive, defensive, or operating from a mindset of blame and avoidance (Below the Line).

Through interactive activities and thought-provoking discussions, the Leadership Team reflected on positive leadership behaviours observed at MiCare and identified opportunities for growth.

"The presentation was both engaging and enlightening, and I feel much more informed as a result. I look forward to applying some of the key takeaways," said Maya Jahanbakhsh, Team Leader – Humanitarian Settlement Program.

Tess McGrath, General Manager of People Services, led the session and shared, "By committing to conscious leadership, we are not only improving ourselves but also fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and accountability within our teams."

As MiCare continues to evolve, the Leadership Team remains committed to embedding these principles into everyday decision-making and interactions, ensuring a workplace that thrives on positive leadership and meaningful engagement.

‘Through interactive activities and thought-provoking discussions, the Leadership Team reflected on positive leadership behaviors observed at MiCare and identified opportunities for growth.’

Introducing the MiAppreciation Awards: Celebrating Excellence at MiCare

by Tess McGrath
General Manager People Services



At MiCare, our people are the centre of our success and we want to recognise their contribution, big or small. Every day, our employees bring passion, dedication, and integrity to their work, making a difference for our elders, clients, communities, and co-workers. To honour and celebrate these outstanding contributions, we are thrilled to introduce the MiAppreciation Awards – MiCare's first all-employee recognition program, designed to spotlight those who embody our workplace values.

What Are the MiAppreciation Awards?

The MiAppreciation Awards are a company-wide initiative to recognise and reward employees who go above and beyond in demonstrating MiCare's five core values.

Our Five Core Values

Our values are the foundation of our culture and success. The MiAppreciation Awards will highlight employees who exemplify:

1. Trust - We believe in the mutual expectation of acceptance, respect and fair treatment
2. Empowerment - We provide each other with the means and knowledge to make our own decisions
3. Flexibility - We accept the need for change to adapt to different conditions and circumstances as they occur
4. Harmony - We encourage staff, elders and family to work together to build meaningful relationships
5. Empathy - We recognise the power of understanding and imaginatively stepping into another person's shoes, we acknowledge their feelings towards an object or person and in doing so share their happiness or sadness.

How It Works

Nominations for the MiAppreciation Awards are open to all employees, allowing peers, managers, and teams to recognise one another. Employees can submit nominations by sharing stories of how a colleague has demonstrated one of our core values. The Executive will review submissions quarterly and select a winner from each category.

Why It Matters

Recognition is a vital part of our culture at MiCare. By celebrating our coworkers' hard work and dedication, we strengthen our sense of community and reinforce the values that drive our success.

The MiAppreciation Awards are more than just workplace recognition; it's a commitment to fostering a workplace where contributions are valued, and achievements are celebrated. We know we have some amazing talent who go above and beyond every day, and we want to take this opportunity to highlight their amazing work.

Stay Safe: A Simple Guide to Protect Against AI Cyber Attacks

By Jamie Neeleman
IT Manager



With the Advent of AI technology scammers are getting even more sophisticated with their attacks, and one of their main targets are older persons.

A Special Note: Why This Guide Matters

With the advent of AI technology, scammers now have new tools to trick, deceive, and impersonate others more convincingly than ever before.

These scams might include:

- Phone calls that sound like your family members (using AI-generated voices).
- Emails and texts that look real, even copying official company logos and language.
- Messages that use personal information found online to build trust.

Why are older adults being targeted?

- Older people often have savings, good credit, and trust in others.
- Some may be less familiar with new technology, making scams harder to spot.
- Scammers believe older individuals are less likely to report fraud due to embarrassment or confusion.

So here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Use Strong Passwords

- Use long passwords with letters, numbers, and symbols.
Or even better use a passphrase
(a string of words as a password).
 - Avoid using names, birth dates, or simple words.
 - Try a password manager if remembering is hard.
- Tip: Write them down and store safely at home(in a safe).

2. Be Careful with Emails

- Don't click on links from unknown people.
- Watch for fake messages that sound urgent.
- Look out for spelling mistakes and strange addresses.

3. Watch Out for Fake Calls or Messages

- Scammers can sound like family using AI.
- Hang up and call the person directly to confirm.
- Never send money or gift cards unless you're sure.

4. Use Trusted Websites

- Only enter info on sites starting with https://
- Don't click on ads or deals that seem too good.

5. Keep Devices Updated

- Keep your phone, tablet, and computer updated.
- Updates help block hackers.

Tip: Ask someone you trust to help you if unsure.

6. Be Careful on Social Media

- Don't overshare personal details.
- Be cautious with new friend requests.

7. Trust Your Gut

- If it feels wrong or suspicious, it probably is.
- Don't let anyone pressure you into quick decisions.

8. Get Help When in Doubt

- Ask family, friends, or neighbours.
- Report scams to your bank or authorities if needed.

Final Tip Stay curious and ask questions. You're never too old to learn and protect yourself.

‘With the Advent of AI technology scammers are getting even more sophisticated with their attacks, and one of their main targets are older persons.’



Finding Friendship and Fun in the Social Support Group

by Emma Pegoli
MiCare client

Emma Pegoli



It was through word of mouth from a friend that I joined the group. Since then, I have felt welcomed and well-supported.

The program is structured, providing opportunities to choose which activities to participate in. Some of my favourite activities include group exercises, playing bingo, listening to guest speakers, attending lunch outings, and celebrating cultural events. Most of all, I enjoy having fun, participating in activities I love, and sharing lots of laughs together.

I look forward to coming each week as I find it relaxing and a great opportunity to share information with others. Our group has a strong sense of togetherness, where everyone feels connected and supportive of one another.

Since joining the Social Support Group (SSG), I have made many new friendships that make life more enjoyable. We share laughter, and I always go home happy, relaxed, and looking forward to the next week.



Emma with her social support group

My Journey with the Social Support Group

by Wilhelmina Van Den Heuvel
MiCare client



I was born in Holland and emigrated to Australia in 1961 with my husband and our five children.

I have been part of MiCare's Social Support Group since 2009, and it has been such an important part of my life. I joined after my husband passed away, looking for a place where I could connect with others, and I found exactly that.

There are so many reasons why I love coming to the group:

- **Companionship:** The friendships I have made here mean the world to me. I love the conversations, the laughter, and the support we give each other.
- **Activities:** I enjoy taking part in all sorts of activities, from ball games and history quizzes to Rummikub and craft.
- **Well-being:** Being part of the group keeps me active, both physically and mentally. It gives me a reason to get out and be involved.
- **Delicious Meals:** The hot meals we share are always something to look forward to.
- **Outings:** The group outings and bus trips have taken me to places I might not have gone on my own. It has truly enriched my life.

For me, this group is about more than just activities—it's about connection, conversation, and having a wonderful day out. I always keep my Wednesdays free from appointments so I can come along to Kilsyth. It's a day I never want to miss!



Wilhelmina



Wilhelmina with Helena De Vries

Cultural Celebration Brings Community Together



Jenny, Zarah & Nilofer



Sajdah & Shinaz



Sonia, Emma, Nilofar, Eh Klel Ler Poe & Anita



Runway participants



The Wyndham Youth Resource Centre in Hoppers Crossing came alive with colour, culture, and community spirit during a lively Cultural Celebration attended by over 200 young people and their families.

Organised as a respectful alternative to the postponed Harmony Day—moved to accommodate the Muslim community during Ramadan—the event aimed to foster inclusion, connection, and cultural pride.

The celebration began with a formal welcome from a Wyndham City Councillor, followed by a traditional Smoking Ceremony led by an Elder from the Bunurong Land Council, grounding the event in cultural acknowledgement and respect.

Guests enjoyed a dynamic program of performances, music, and a multicultural runway that saw enthusiastic participation from young community members proudly showcasing traditional dress and cultural heritage.

An Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) awareness stall, delivered in partnership between the Wyndham Ambassadors for Multicultural Youth and placement students from the Laverton Youth Foundation, engaged attendees through interactive Q&A sessions and educational resources.

This successful event was the result of strong collaboration between MiCare and its valued partners: Wyndham Youth Services, Laverton Youth Foundation, and Werribee Football Club. The celebration served as a powerful reminder of the strength found in diversity and community connection.



Jacqueline Aungminn

A sense of belonging

by Jacqueline Aungminn
Cultural Advisor

“I no longer felt I belonged in my own country, nor did it feel like the home I once knew. Instead, it had become a hostile place for me and my family.”



No one chooses to be a refugee—it is a fate thrust upon them by circumstance, whether due to war, disaster, politics, ethnic or religious persecution, or discrimination. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be forced to flee my home country of Burma. Since 1988, over one million people have been displaced due to persecution and government oppression, often seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, predominantly Thailand.

I was forced to flee in 1974, driven by growing uncertainty, anxiety, grief, and loss. I no longer felt I belonged in my own country, nor did it feel like the home I once knew. Instead, it had become a hostile place for me and my family. Throughout this journey, I experienced anxiety, depression, loneliness, and a profound lack of social support. But above all, I longed for a place where I truly belonged.



I spent over 31 years in various refugee camps across Thailand. The first few years were incredibly difficult—I had lost my sense of purpose, my family, and my community, and I was sinking deeper into depression and anxiety. Yet, I refused to succumb to despair. I found opportunities to rebuild a part of myself, working as a secondary school teacher and helping fellow refugees in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, English, and Burmese.

I was also approached by the UNHCR to assist in health programs, including gender-based violence prevention, Medecins sans frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) "Train the Trainer" initiatives, and community engagement efforts focused on public health issues such as HIV, Hepatitis C, and infectious disease prevention and control.

“I felt like a student again, learning an entirely new way of life.”



After what felt like an eternity, I was finally given the opportunity to resettle in Australia in 2015. As I prepared for this new chapter, a flood of emotions returned—fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, but also optimism. Upon arrival, everything felt unfamiliar and overwhelming. While Thailand and Burma share cultural similarities, Australia was vastly different—the food, transportation (Myki), animals, climate, government systems, digital processes, and technology. I felt like a student again, learning an entirely new way of life.

Despite these challenges, I was determined to rebuild myself. I sought out connections within the Burmese community, joined church groups, and reunited with past colleagues and former students. I also formed friendships with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

My first job in Australia was as a volunteer Multicultural Education Aide (MEA) at the Western English Language School (WELS). Within two months, I became a staff member and attended professional development sessions on mental health and Australian curriculum teaching methodologies. This experience introduced me to Australia's education system and helped me adapt to local teaching methods, rules, and regulations. While I valued working with students in a primary and secondary learning environment, my true passion lay in engaging with people and communities.

I began volunteering at the New Hope Foundation (now MiCare) and, after a few months, was employed as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in 2018. Teaching migrants, many of whom had minimal access to education, became incredibly fulfilling. Simultaneously, I worked closely with individuals who needed assistance with daily living and essential services. This role brought me immense joy, as I found purpose in supporting refugees and migrants.

As the secretary of the Western Karen Elder Group, I had the privilege of supporting Karen elders in our community, focusing on reducing social isolation and enhancing their well-being. I engaged with them in meaningful conversations, listened to their stories, and understood their experiences. I also organised excursions to Melbourne's parks, gardens, and attractions, and facilitated activities that allowed them to express their cultural heritage—such as weaving traditional garments and performing songs and dances. These initiatives strengthened their sense of belonging, improved their overall health, and motivated them to live longer, healthier lives.

In 2021, we launched an initiative to support over 40 learners from multicultural communities through an Apprenticeship and Training program with MiCare. This program was unlike any other, providing academic support, in-language translation and interpretation, mentorship, and work placements that mainstream educational providers often overlooked. I take great pride in the success of this initiative and was honoured to receive a VMC Excellence Award—Highly Commended—for our work. Today, I have found my sense of belonging in Australia. My identity has expanded, and my purpose is clear—to help refugees and migrants find their own sense of home and belonging, just as I have.

“I worked closely with individuals who needed assistance with daily living and essential services. This role brought me immense joy, as I found purpose in supporting refugees and migrants.”

Day in the Life at MiCare

by Elizabeth Gunn
Universal Worker



As I tumble out of bed and stumble to the kitchen, I pour myself a cup of ambition. I yawn. I Stretch. Off to Avondrust Lodge I go. Arriving at work I am greeted by my fellow colleagues. Women and men who have the same outlook. Our jobs allow us to make a positive impact on other people's lives and build meaningful relationships.

The home is inviting with plants and pictures on walls, corners and nooks filled with couches, books and cushions makes it feel homely. Sometimes when we are lucky enough staff bring their fur friends with them.

Staff are all assigned a household to work in for the day. Small households with 12 elders in their own rooms. A chance to read a hand over. Check any additional information from nurses and doctors, families and other team members before we start helping and assisting our elders.

When I enter an elder's room I'm greeted with a big smile and a chirpy Good Morning. It is a subtle change, only less than an hour ago I was waking my teen and getting a vastly different response on a school morning. Elders jump in the shower. Assisting to their personal needs ensuring they feel safe and making it a relaxing experience. I am able to create opportunities to see how the elder wants to spend their day. Offering suggestions on what activities are happening within the home.

'I am incredibly lucky to be welcomed into their home that is shared with their loved ones. Listening to their stories and memories of the life they have lived.'



Elizabeth with an elder Margo Gonzalez

Medication is administered and documentation is updated. After getting elders ready for the day, I help with getting breakfast. The living space holds a kitchenette with a fridge and pantry stocked with an array of different foods that make for a nutritional breakfast. Morning tea is made and served. Muffins and danishes, cookies and scones are served throughout the week. Morning time people are coming and going. Visitors old and young. Pets, neighbours, brothers and sisters, and nieces and nephews. More people I get to talk to. Listening to stories and memories, suggestions, and insights. Then elders have an opportunity to participate in some of the homes morning activities including exercise which gets their blood start pumping.

Tables are dressed and set for all elders to dine in the dining area of the household together. Elders are encouraged to help staff with setting the experience. Lunch time elders are offered two nutritional meals. And a scrumptious desert created by our Chef. Afternoons are spent in lots of many ways to cater to all our elders. Some elders enjoy an afternoon movie. A nap in their own room. An activity within the home run by one of the lifestyle team members. Some enjoy a walk or a game of bingo. Friday afternoons elders spend time at happy hour. An opportunity to spend time with friends with appetising snacks and a couple glasses of their favourite drinks.

In the same boat with a lot of my friends. I am incredibly lucky to be welcomed into their home that is shared with their loved ones. Listening to their stories and memories of the life they have lived.

Working in aged care is so much more than just a job. It is becoming their advocate in their most vulnerable times. Making sure they never feel alone or forgotten. They have taught me resilience and to be grateful for the opportunities I have been given. Working 7 till 3 at Avondrust Lodge, what a way to make a living!



Elizabeth with an elder Alan and Cherly Rogers



Phumzile with elder Margaret Nutter

Life at MiCare: A Fulfilling and Enriching Experience

by Phumzile Ndlovu
Universal Worker



Working at MiCare as a Universal Worker is more than just a job—it's a chance to grow personally and professionally in a caring, community-focused environment. Over the past 15 months, I've gained valuable skills, built meaningful connections, and found purpose in making a difference in the lives of our elders.

Diverse Skills and Career Growth

A key benefit of this role is the opportunity to develop a broad skill set. Rather than being confined to one area, Universal Workers receive training across multiple domains, making us adaptable and well-rounded.

Key skills include:

- Kitchen Hand Skills – Preparing meals, catering to dietary needs, and maintaining hygiene, skills that are also beneficial at home.
- Medication Training – Assisting with medications under supervision, enhancing professional growth in healthcare.
- Housekeeping & Personal Care – Maintaining clean living spaces and supporting elders' daily needs.

These experiences not only strengthen our capabilities in aged care but also pave the way for careers in healthcare, hospitality, and allied fields.

Exceptional Staff-to-Resident Ratio

MiCare stands out for its excellent staff-to-resident ratio. While other homes often struggle with high workloads, MiCare recently improved from a 1:6 to a 1:4 ratio by introducing shorter shifts. This ensures:

- More personalised care for each elder
- Less stress and greater job satisfaction for staff
- Stronger connections between staff and elders

This approach reflects MiCare's commitment to both quality care and staff well-being.

Deep Bonds Through the Elder Buddy Program Care

MiCare goes beyond physical assistance. The Elder Buddy Program pairs staff with the same elders, fostering trust and continuity. This consistency allows us to:

- Understand elders' routines, preferences, and stories
- Build meaningful, trusting relationships
- Deliver personalized, compassionate care

This structure makes caregiving deeply rewarding and strengthens our role in elders' lives.

A Supportive and Positive Environment

What truly sets MiCare apart is its inclusive and supportive culture. Teamwork, respect, and camaraderie are central to our daily work. The household allocation system enhances this by allowing us to:

- Become familiar with residents and their needs
- Work in a stable, low-stress environment
- Take pride and ownership in our contributions and responsibility in caregiving

More Than a Job

At MiCare, we're part of a community built on compassion, respect, and dignity. The experience shapes us not just as professionals, but as people. It's a rare and fulfilling place to work—one that offers lasting skills, human connection, and genuine purpose. MiCare is truly a rewarding place to be.



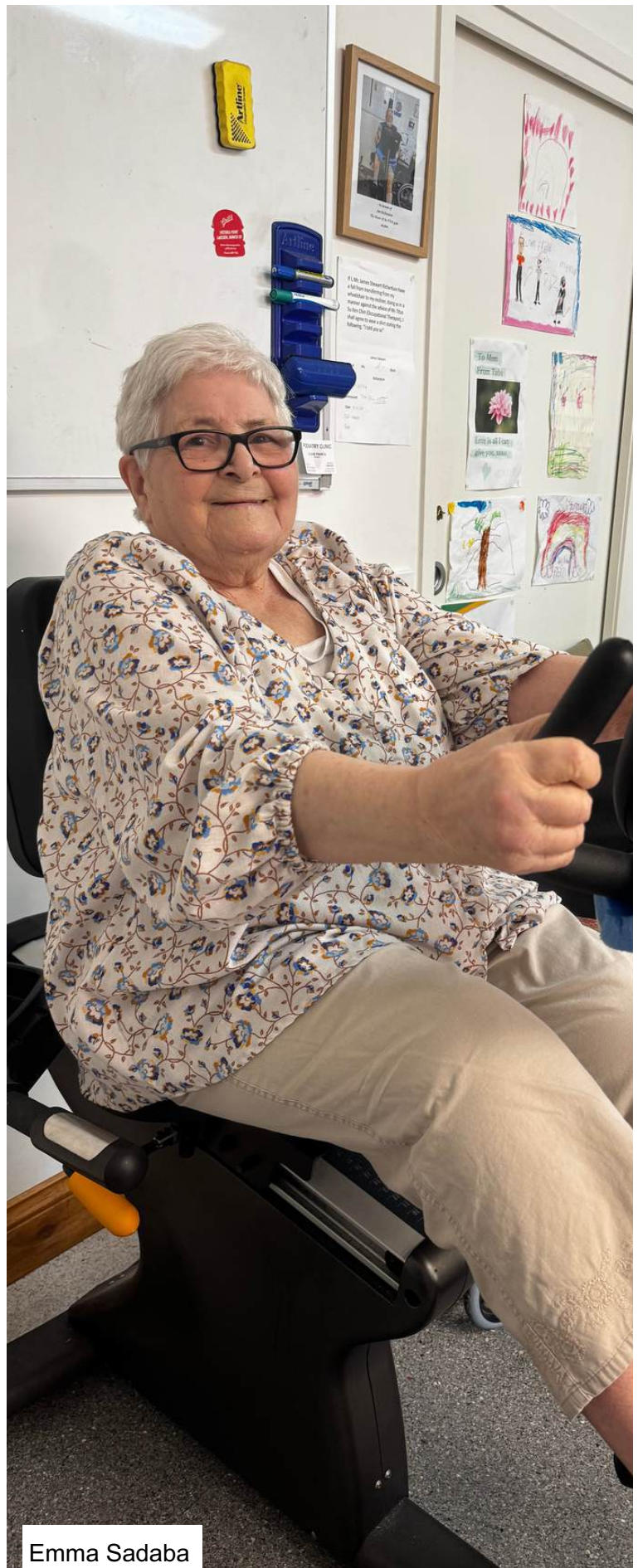
The Importance of Staying Active at Every Age

by Devyani Shirke

Marketing and Social media coordinator



Staying active is crucial at every stage of life, but it becomes even more important as we age. Regular physical and mental activity helps maintain overall well-being, enhances mobility, and prevents numerous health conditions. Developing an active lifestyle at a young age lays the foundation for better health in later years, making it easier to stay independent and enjoy a high quality of life as we grow older.



Emma Sadaba

The Importance of Staying Active as We Age

As we age, our bodies naturally lose muscle mass, bone density, and flexibility. However, staying active can slow down these effects, reducing the risk of falls, fractures, and chronic diseases. Regular movement keeps joints flexible, muscles strong, and the heart healthy. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), older adults who engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week have a significantly lower risk of developing mobility-related issues.

Exercise also plays a vital role in mental health. Physical activity releases hormones, which help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Studies show that active older adults experience better cognitive function and have a lower risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Keeping the mind engaged through physical movement, puzzles, reading, or learning new skills can further boost brain health.

Why Start Exercising at a Young Age?

Developing a habit of regular exercise early in life is one of the best ways to ensure long-term health. Young individuals who stay active build strong bones, improve cardiovascular health, and develop better coordination and endurance. Establishing an exercise routine from a young age increases the likelihood that physical activity will remain a part of one's lifestyle in later years. Moreover, early exercise helps prevent obesity, high blood pressure, and other lifestyle-related diseases that can lead to complications in old age.

Limiting screen time whether it is mobile, TV or laptop especially for a long stretch can go a long way in maintaining good health.



Emily Teh



Left to right: (Back) - Cassie Foley, Ria Von Oven and Harry Blankenstein. (Front) - Titus Chin along with elders Arch Shaw and Margaret Richardson

Different Ways to Stay Active

Staying active doesn't mean doing high-intensity workouts. There are many ways to keep the body moving, depending on individual preferences and physical abilities:

- Walking: Just stroll in the park or a brisk walk strengthens the heart, improves circulation, and helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Strength Training: Using resistance bands or light weights can help maintain muscle mass and bone strength.
- Yoga and Stretching: Improves flexibility, balance, and relaxation, reducing the risk of falls.
- Swimming: A full-body, joint-friendly exercise that improves cardiovascular health and endurance.
- Dancing: A fun way to enhance coordination, memory, and cardiovascular health.
- Gardening: Provides moderate physical activity while engaging the mind.
- Cycling: Helps improve heart health, leg strength, and coordination.

Balancing Mental and Physical Activity

Staying active is not just about physical movement; mental activity is equally important. Engaging in mentally stimulating activities such as reading, solving puzzles, playing musical instruments, or socialising helps keep the brain sharp and reduces the risk of cognitive decline. Social activities such as joining clubs, volunteering, or learning new skills also promote emotional well-being and prevent feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Conclusion

Staying active is essential for maintaining both physical and mental health as we age. Whether through walking, strength training, yoga, or engaging in mental exercises, an active lifestyle helps prevent diseases, improves mood, and enhances overall well-being. Starting early and staying consistent with exercise ensures a healthier and more fulfilling life. No matter your age, it's never too late to adopt an active lifestyle and enjoy the countless benefits it brings.



Elders at Prins Willem Aelxander Village

Understanding Intersectionality: A Path to Inclusivity

by Mercedes Sepulveda
Diversity and Inclusion Service Advisor



This article aims to help us better understand and familiarise ourselves with the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality acknowledges that individuals hold multiple identities and that the interconnection of social categories—such as race, gender, age, class, sexuality, ability, disability, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, cultural background/ethnicity, and appearance—shapes a person's experiences with opportunities, discrimination, and privileges in society.

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Kimberl  Crenshaw (1989) while examining the unique experiences of individuals marginalised by multiple factors simultaneously. For example, a woman facing age, racial, and gender-based discrimination experiences a combination of ageism, racism, and sexism. These overlapping identities result in compounded discrimination, oppression, and social exclusion.

According to academic literature, the term gained prominence in legal and scholarly discussions, emphasising the need to consider multiple dimensions of identity and power dynamics simultaneously. The application of intersectionality can be observed in two key settings:

Intersectionality in Healthcare: In healthcare, intersectionality recognises that individuals with various intersecting identities may experience different health outcomes and disparities in access to medical care. Healthcare providers who prioritise an intersectional approach can better identify and address these inequities, ensuring that all individuals receive equitable and culturally sensitive treatment.

Intersectionality in the Workplace: In the workplace, intersectionality is crucial for understanding organisational dynamics and addressing issues such as discrimination, pay gaps, and career progression. By considering employees' intersecting identities, employers can create inclusive policies, foster diversity, and provide equal opportunities for career development.

Reflection and Application: Integrating intersectionality into our personal and professional lives is essential for creating a more equitable society. Take a moment to self-reflect—look at the social categories listed above. How many of them do you identify with? How has the interconnectedness of these identities shaped your personal and professional experiences—whether through opportunities, discrimination, or privileges?

Understanding intersectionality is fundamental to fostering inclusivity and equality. recognising how single or multiple identity factors influence power dynamics—placing individuals in either privileged or marginalized positions—is critical to dismantling systemic inequalities. Through daily conscious actions, we can work toward a fairer and more just society.

Safeguarding: A Commitment to Protecting Those We Care For

by Despina Haralambopoulos
General Manager Aged and Migrant Services



Elder Johanna Van Der Walt with Mansooreh



At MiCare, safeguarding is at the core of everything we do. It's about more than just protecting individuals from harm—it's about creating a safe, welcoming environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered.

‘We have a primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of residents, implementing the right safeguards, and fostering a culture of respect.’

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of providing high-quality care and services. It means protecting individuals' well-being and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm. This responsibility extends to all those we care for and support—children, young people, adults, and elders—and requires a collective approach to ensure safety and dignity for everyone.

In simple terms, safeguarding encompasses all the actions taken to prevent harm and address issues when they arise. This includes ensuring vulnerable adults (those at risk) and children (under 18 years old) are safe from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

Key Principles of Safeguarding

- Promoting Safety and Well-being: Creating safe, supportive spaces for everyone.
- Taking Action: Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns quickly and effectively.
- Collaboration: Safeguarding often requires teamwork between individuals, organisations, and authorities to ensure comprehensive protection.
- Respecting Rights: Safeguarding is not just about protection; it's about respecting and upholding the dignity and human rights of every individual.
- Providing Ongoing Support: Supporting individuals who have experienced harm or abuse, helping them recover and rebuild their lives.

What Safeguarding Means at MiCare

- Protecting Vulnerable People: Safeguarding ensures the welfare and human rights of our elders are upheld, especially those who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- A Duty of Care: Safeguarding is integral to our duty of care as an aged care provider. We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of those under our care.
- Prevention Focused: Safeguarding aims to prevent incidents of abuse and neglect by recognising potential risks and proactively implementing safeguards to mitigate them.
- Continuous Improvement: Safeguarding is an ongoing process. We continually review and improve our policies, practices, and risk management strategies to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Key Practices of Safeguarding

To ensure a safe environment, we focus on the following safeguarding practices:

- **Clear Policies and Procedures:** Guidelines to ensure safety and reporting concerns effectively.
- **Education and Awareness:** Training to help recognise the signs of abuse and exploitation.
- **Background Checks:** Thorough screenings for those working with vulnerable adults and children.
- **Safe Environments:** Creating spaces where everyone feels secure.
- **Risk Management:** Implementing effective systems to identify and address potential risks before harm occurs.
- **Incident Reporting:** Ensuring that all incidents of abuse or neglect are reported immediately, with thorough investigations conducted to determine the cause and prevent future occurrences.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** Open dialogue between staff, elders, clients, families, and stakeholders to ensure concerns are heard and addressed promptly.
- **Advocacy:** Supporting elders and clients to have their voices heard, ensuring they are involved in decisions about their care and have access to advocacy services.
- **Quality Standards:** MiCare adheres to the Aged Care Quality Standards, providing a framework for delivering safe, high-quality care to all those we serve.

Who is Involved in Safeguarding?

Safeguarding in aged care is a collective responsibility and involves:

- **MiCare:** We have a primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of elders, implementing the right safeguards, and fostering a culture of respect.
- **Staff Members:** All our staff play a crucial role in safeguarding, including recognising potential signs of abuse and neglect and knowing how to report concerns.
- **Families:** Families are vital partners in safeguarding, supporting their loved ones and advocating for their rights.
- **Elders/Clients:** Elders and clients have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. They must be actively involved in decisions about their care.
- **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC):** The ACQSC oversees the safety and quality of aged care services, ensuring that providers meet their obligations to residents.
- **Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN):** OPAN offers independent, confidential advocacy services to aged care clients, supporting their right to make decisions about their care.

‘Safeguarding is not just about protection; it’s about respecting and upholding the dignity and human rights of every individual.’



Denise - Princess Margriet Manor Resident

Where to Report Concerns

If you have concerns about the safety and well-being of your loved one or any other elder or client in our care, you may, in the first instance, contact the relevant Manager or General Manager of the service to raise your concerns.

Alternatively, you may contact the following:

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC): Report concerns directly to the ACQSC.

Elder Abuse Phone Line: Call 1800 ELDER Help (1800 353 374) for assistance with elder abuse concerns.

My Aged Care: Call 1800 200 422 for assistance with aged care issues.

OPAN: For advocacy support, contact OPAN at 1800 700 600.

At MiCare, we are committed to providing care that is safe, respectful, and empowering for every individual we serve. Together, we can make a difference in creating environments where people feel valued, heard, and protected.

MiShop – MiCare's online store

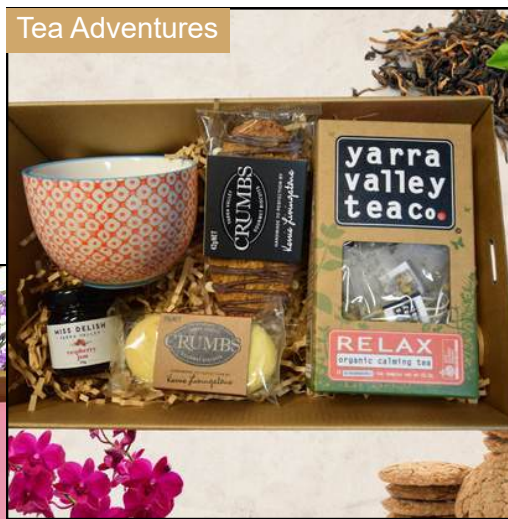


MiShop is MiCare's gift giving online store. The purpose is to provide a 'feel good' shopping experience. We have perfectly curated boxes that take the guessing out of gift giving for you.

Our gift hampers are eco-friendly and re-usable. We love supporting Australian made products and small businesses and are always looking for their products. Everything is locally made or ethically sourced and is cruelty free. Our hampers are budget friendly too.

We find products that are well made and meaningful so that everyone who shops and receives our products know that they have not been harmful to people, animals, or the environment. Say hello to effortless gift giving from the comfort of your home.

Tea Adventures



Rejuvenate & Pamper



‘We have perfectly curated boxes that take the guessing out of gift giving for you.’



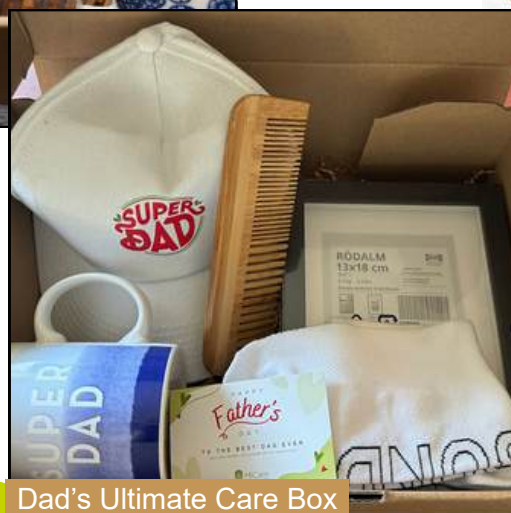
Foodie's Delight



Scan the QR code and start shopping!



Unwind your day



Dad's Ultimate Care Box



Snack Time

Future Aged Care Services: MiCare's Gap Analysis Project

by Despina Haralambopoulos
General Manager Aged and Migrant Services



Ineke Broekman, Henk Mollee and Dave Godby



In alignment with the 2023 Aged Care Taskforce Report—which advocates that older Australians deserve to live well and receive appropriate care—MiCare undertook a gap analysis to explore how aged care services can better meet the evolving needs and expectations of an ageing population.

The 2023 report highlights the importance of developing aged care systems that prioritise the health, dignity, and well-being of older individuals. As Australia's demographics shift, aged care services must adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing society.

MiCare's Future Aged Care Services gap analysis project responds directly to this call for reform, with a focus on:

- Gaining insights into future needs and expectations for aged care services
- Understanding age-related concerns, preferred care settings, and the types of services valued by elders and their families
- Identifying gaps in current practices and aligning future services with the evolving expectations and well-being of older adults

A Collaborative Effort

The project was led by MiCare's Diversity and Inclusion Service Advisor, Mercedes Sepulveda, and supported by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Social Work student Ravnazdeep Kaur. It ran from 15 July to 29 October 2024.

The project engaged current elders and family members from MiCare's Independent Living Units and Residential Aged Care services in Queensland.

Using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods—including surveys and interviews—MiCare gained meaningful insights into what quality aged care should look like. These contributions helped identify not only existing service gaps but also potential solutions to bridge them.

Key Areas of Exploration

MiCare's Future Aged Care Services project examined several essential areas for system improvement:

- Preferred Models of Service: Understanding how elders and their families prefer care to be delivered and where
- Best Practices: Identifying industry-wide approaches that prioritise safety, respect, and holistic care—addressing physical, emotional, and social needs
- Affordability: Ensuring aged care remains accessible regardless of financial status, amid rising service costs
- Cultural Sensitivity: Meeting the needs of Australia's diverse population by providing culturally respectful and inclusive care

Findings

The project revealed a clear demand for flexible, person-centred aged care services that prioritise independence, dignity, and a holistic approach to well-being. Respondents envisioned a system that integrates engaging activities, meaningful social connections, and cultural relevance with access to essential services and emergency care.

They also emphasised the importance of compassionate, well-trained staff capable of forming genuine relationships with the elders they support.

To meet these expectations, future services must strike a balance between providing support and maintaining personal autonomy—empowering older individuals to age with dignity and comfort.

These findings offer valuable direction for care providers and policymakers designing aged care models for Australia's diverse ageing population.

Shaping the Future of Aged Care

Insights from the gap analysis will inform MiCare's broader organisational strategy and contribute to the development of future aged care policies and practices. This project not only identifies what is lacking in current systems but also provides a roadmap for progress—guiding aged care services toward greater inclusivity, adaptability, and compassion.

As the population continues to age, the need for innovative, responsive aged care becomes increasingly urgent. MiCare's Gap Analysis Project is a vital step in ensuring that aged care services not only meet but exceed the expectations of older Australians—now and into the future.



Recipe for Bak Kut Teh (Pork Rib soup)

by Angela NG
Program Development Manager

This is now the favourite dish for everyone in my family. With pork simmered in garlic, pepper and other herbs, serving hot, everyone loves the peppery soup and the tender ribs, soooo yummy!

Ingredients :

1 kg of pork ribs
20-25 gloves of Garlic
1 pack of Bak Kut The soup pack
1.8 Litre of water

Cooking Method:

- Clean the pork ribs and cook in a high pressure cooker with 1 litre of water, garlic and 2-3 teaspoons of salt.
- Skim off the fat from the top of the cooked pork ribs soup . Keep the soup and garlic.
- Add the Bak Kut The soup pack into 0.8 litre of water, boil it. Add the cooked pork soup with garlic into it.
- Simmer it for 15 minutes. Serve hot.
- Can add soya sauce according to personal preference.

Recipe for approx. 85 Bitterballen

by John Van Dijk JP,
Prins Willem Alexander village resident



Hilda Van Dijk

Ingredients for Ragout:

- 750 gms of beef chuck steak
- Vegetables - Onion, carrot, leek, celery to enhance the flavour of the stock
- 250 gms of salted butter
- 1 medium brown onion finely chopped
- 300 gms of plain flour
- Reserved stock from the chuck steak - Approx. 2 litres
- Small bunch of parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 1-2 teaspoons of Maggi seasoning
- 1 teaspoon of mild curry (optional)
- 2 teaspoons ground pepper
- 1-2 teaspoons salt

Ingredients for rolling the bitterballen:

- 5-6 eggs
- 550 gms of Panko breadcrumbs (not fine breadcrumbs)

Ingredients for deep - frying the bitterballen:

- Sunflower oil - enough to cover the bitterballen in deep fryer
- Mustard to serve

Prepare the stock:

- Place the steak in a pan with approx. 2.5 - 3 litres of water.
- Add 2 teaspoons of salt and the vegetables (onion, carrot, leek, celery).
- Bring to a boil then simmer gently for 2-3 hrs.
- Allow to cool, then remove the meat and discard the vegetables. Trim any fat from the meat, then finely chop about 400g of the cooked beef. Set aside.

Make the Roux:

- In a large pan, melt the butter over medium heat.
- Add the finely chopped onion and cook until soft and lightly browned.
- Reduce the heat to low and stir in the flour, cooking for 1 minute.

Prepare the Ragout:

- Gradually add the reserved stock to the flour mixture, one ladle at the time, making sure to dissolve the paste into the stock before adding the next ladle, stir constantly to avoid lumps.
- Continue adding the stock before adding and cooking until the mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon.
- Stir in the chopped parsley, Maggi seasoning, curry powder (if using), black pepper and salt. Adjust seasoning to taste.
- Add the finely chopped meat and mix well.
- Allow the ragout to cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours or until firm.

Methodology for Rolling the Bitterballen:**Prepare for Rolling:**

- Set up two shallow trays: one with the whisked eggs mixed with 3 tablespoons of water and the other with Panko breadcrumbs.

Shape the Bitterballen:

- Using a small amount of ragout, roll it into a ball (approx. 3.5 - 4.0 cm in diameter) between your fingers.
- Roll the ball into the Panko breadcrumbs, then into the egg mixture, and finally again into the Panko breadcrumbs for a second coating.
- Repeat until all the ragout is used up.

Methodology for Deep-Frying the Bitterballen:

- Preheat the sunflower oil in the deep fryer to 180 degrees C.
- Fry the bitterballen in small batches, taking care when placing them in the hot oil.
- Cook until they are golden brown and heated through, about 3-5 minutes depending on their size.

Eet smakelijk!



A New Chapter for Aged Care: Understanding Australia's Reform

by Graeme Wickenden
Chief Financial Officer



Lorraine Burke



Australia's aged care system is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the new Aged Care Act. This landmark legislation aims to address systemic issues highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, promising a more person-centred and equitable approach. For many Australians, this means a potential shift in how they or their loved ones experience aged care services.

At the heart of the new Act is a focus on rights-based care. This means that older Australians will have clearer rights, including the right to dignity, respect, and autonomy. The Act aims to empower individuals to make informed choices about their care and support, ensuring their preferences are heard and respected.

One of the key changes is a move towards greater transparency and accountability. The government is committed to improving the quality and safety of aged care services by strengthening regulatory oversight. This includes stricter standards for providers, increased monitoring, and a more robust complaints process. This is designed to build trust in the system and ensure that providers are held accountable for the care they deliver.

Another crucial aspect of the reform is a focus on workforce development. The government recognises that a skilled and valued workforce is essential for delivering high-quality care. Initiatives are being implemented to attract and retain aged care workers, including improved training, better pay, and more secure employment conditions. This will help to address workforce shortages and ensure that older Australians receive consistent and reliable care.

The new Act also emphasises improved access and equity. This means ensuring that all older Australians, regardless of their location or circumstances, have access to the care they need. This includes specific measures to support people from diverse backgrounds, such as those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those living in rural and remote areas.

Latest updates and government policies:

- **Increased Funding :** The government has committed significant funding to support the implementation of the new Act, including investments in workforce development, infrastructure, and improved service delivery.
- **Strengthened Standards:** New quality standards are being introduced to ensure that aged care providers meet higher expectations for care and support. These standards will focus on person-centred care, dignity, and respect.
- **New Regulatory Framework:** The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will play a crucial role in overseeing the new regulatory framework, ensuring providers comply with the Act and quality standards.
- **Home Care Reforms:** The government is also implementing reforms to home care, aiming to provide more flexible and responsive services that enable older Australians to live independently in their own homes for longer. This includes a focus on increasing the availability of home care packages and simplifying the assessment process.

Information and Support: The government is committed to providing clear and accessible information to older Australians and their families about the new Act and their rights. This includes resources and support services to help people navigate the aged care system.

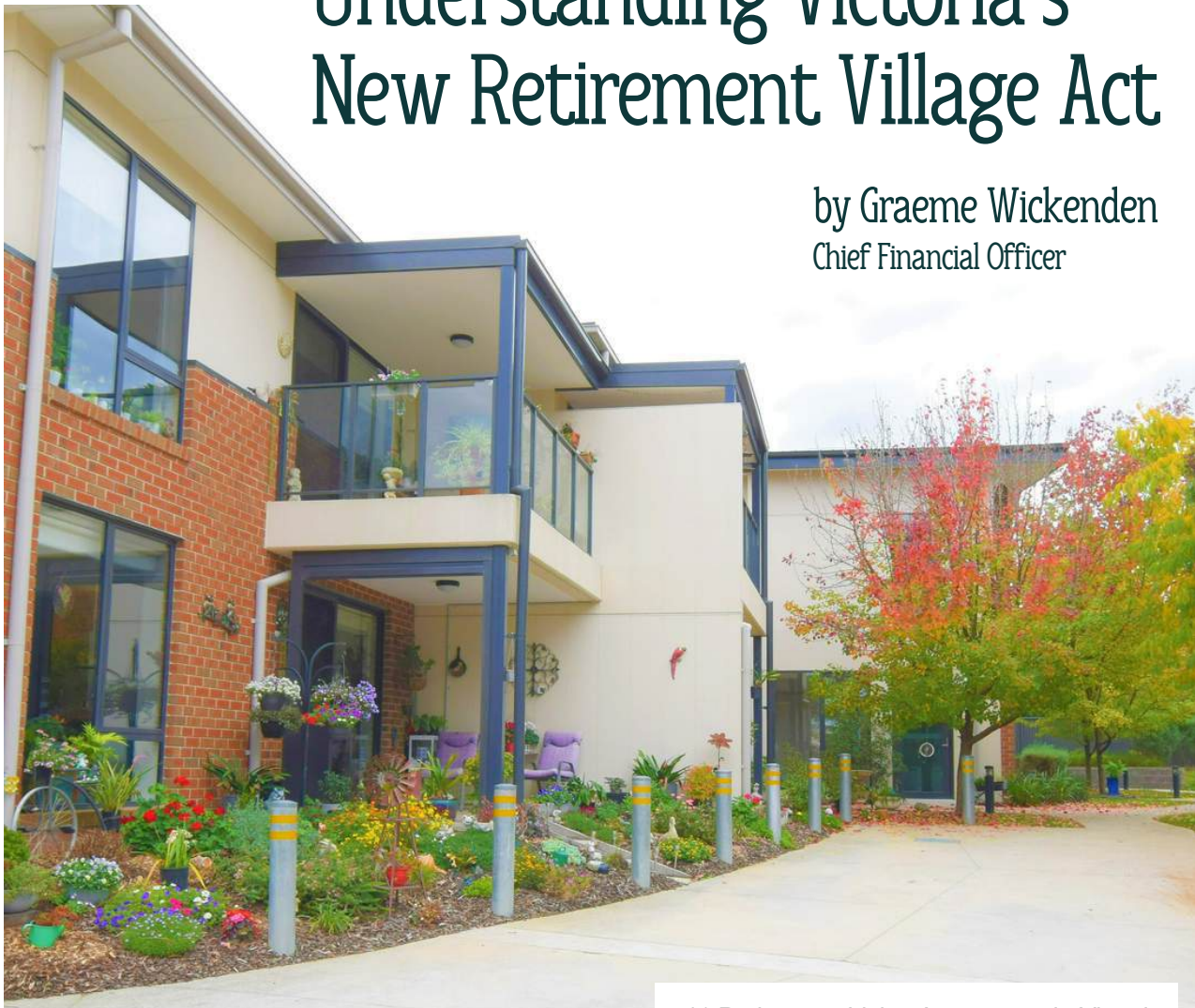
While the full implementation of the new Aged Care Act will take time, these reforms represent a significant step towards creating a more sustainable, equitable, and person-centred aged care system for all Australians.

As the system continues to evolve, staying informed about the latest updates and policies will be crucial and we will keep you informed as more details become available.

‘The new Act also emphasises improved access and equity. This means ensuring that all older Australians, regardless of their location or circumstances, have access to the care they need.’

Your Rights in Retirement: Understanding Victoria's New Retirement Village Act

by Graeme Wickenden
Chief Financial Officer



741 Retirement Living Apartments in Victoria



Retirement villages offer a lifestyle choice for many Australians, promising a sense of community and security.

However, navigating the complexities of contracts and regulations can be daunting. In Victoria, the current Retirement Villages Act was drafted in 1986 and has long been recognised as needing an update. To address this, Victoria is introducing a new Retirement Villages Act this year, designed to better protect the rights of residents and ensure greater transparency.



Key Changes and What They Mean for You:

- **Clearer Contracts:** The new Act mandates simpler and more transparent contracts, making it easier for residents to understand their rights and obligations. This includes detailed information about fees, charges, and the process for leaving the village. No more fine print surprises!
- **Improved Dispute Resolution:** When disagreements arise, the Act encourages quicker and fairer resolution. This means better access to mediation and dispute resolution services, reducing the stress and cost associated with resolving conflicts.
- **Enhanced Financial Transparency:** The Act requires operators to provide more detailed financial information, including how fees are calculated and how resident funds are managed. This helps residents understand where their money is going and ensures accountability.
- **Stronger Protection Against Unfair Practices:** The new rules aim to prevent unfair practices, such as unreasonable fee increases or sudden changes to services. Residents will have greater protection against arbitrary decisions by village operators.
- **Better Information for Prospective Residents:** Before signing any contract, prospective residents will receive comprehensive information about the village, including its homes, services, and fees. This allows them to make informed decisions and avoid unexpected costs.
- **Exit Entitlement Clarity:** The Act also provides clearer rules around exit entitlements, the amount of money a resident is entitled to when they leave a village. This helps to reduce disputes and provides greater financial certainty.

Latest Updates and Government Policies:

The Victorian Government has recently focused on the implementation of the new Act, with a focus on education for both residents and operators. This ensures that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities.

Consumer Affairs Victoria plays a vital role in enforcing the new Act and providing information and support to residents. They have released resources and guidelines to help residents understand their rights.

The government has also been working to ensure that there is a robust dispute resolution system in place. This includes funding for mediation services and improving access to legal advice. Ongoing monitoring and review of the act will continue, to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to the needs of Victorian retirement village residents.

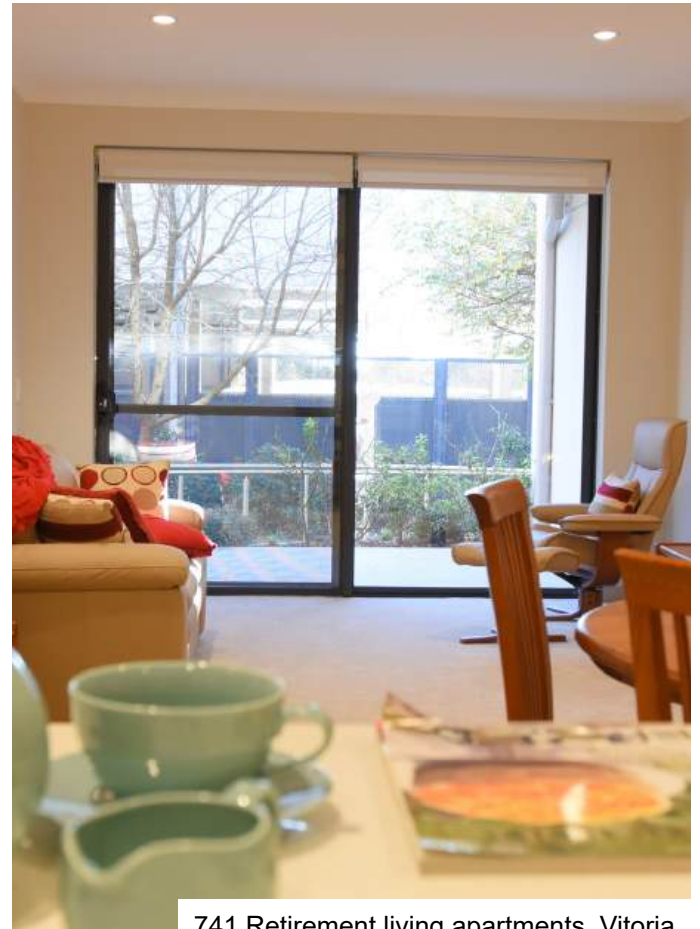
In essence, the new Retirement Villages Act is about empowering residents and creating a more equitable system. By understanding their rights, residents can feel more confident and secure in their retirement village experience.

At MiCare, we have always prided ourselves on transparency and working collaboratively with our retirement village residents, so we very much welcome this new Act.

If you are considering moving into a retirement village, we would welcome your enquiry and our Retirement Living Manager in Victoria, Michelle Stanley, would be happy to assist you. Michelle can be contacted on 0433 997 338.



Beatrix Village, Victoria



741 Retirement living apartments, Victoria



Prins Willem Alexander Village, QLD

‘...the new Retirement Villages Act is about empowering residents and creating a more equitable system. By understanding their rights, residents can feel more confident and secure in their retirement village experience.’

The Big Lap

by Cassie Foley
Allied Health Assistant



Elder Yvonne Griffith along with staff member Cassie Foley and Physiotherapist Justin Ho



The Big Lap was started in 2023 by our Occupational Therapist Titus Chin, this was a way to track the progress of kilometres cycled by the elders in the gym. What began as a small initiative of metaphorically cycling around Australia, soon grew into something far larger than anticipated attracting a significant following. Its success lies in its ability to connect with people, offering a tangible measure of progress and improvement for elders while also encouraging a sense of community and motivation. What was once a small, personal project has now become a movement that continues to inspire and engage our elders and staff at Prins Willem Alexander Lodge.

Every kilometre cycled is carefully recorded on the whiteboard, serving as a constant reminder of the incredible progress made. This initiative has now grown to such a demand that three bikes are needed to accommodate all the elders eager to take part in the challenge.



Tibby Anderson and Cedric Thompson

This milestone is not just a number it represents perseverance, dedication, and the collective spirit of everyone involved. With every pedal they prove that no goal is too far to reach when we support each other. On Wednesday the 2nd of April we successfully completed "the big lap. Yvonne Griffith, one of our cherished elders, who has been cycling with us since the very beginning had the honour of cycling the final kilometre of this incredible journey. This is a huge achievement by all the elders at Prins Willem Alexander Lodge – a moment of pride and celebration for everyone involved!

The next "big lap" has begun, and our challenge is to cycle the circumference of the Earth which is 40074km. All the elders and staff are excited to achieve this next goal!

“The challenge makes me work a bit harder and motivates me to keep going”- Yvonne G

“The big lap gives me a target to aim for” -Michael F

“I find the big lap very encouraging, and it gives me something to aim for”- Jill B

“It’s a great idea which makes me feel fitter and better about myself”- Ian B



Leila Farr

Preparedness and Resilience

by Vicky Kowaltzke

Retirement Living Manager – PWA



Anticipating the arrival of Cyclone Alfred in Brisbane, with forecasts indicating the potential for significant high winds and heavy rainfall, MiCare Birkdale staff proactively initiated comprehensive preparedness measures. By Friday, March 7th, 2025, the team convened to secure the home, strategically deploying sandbags, assembling emergency provisions, and establishing satellite communication as a contingency against potential disruptions to internet and telephone services. At this juncture, Cyclone Alfred was situated over 800 kilometers offshore, tracking down the Queensland coast.

By Saturday, March 8th, 2025, Cyclone Alfred made landfall on Moreton Island, bringing with it strong winds, torrential rainfall, and ultimately causing widespread flooding across numerous communities in South-East Queensland.

Throughout this challenging period, MiCare staff demonstrated exceptional teamwork and commitment, with many willingly undertaking additional hours to provide essential support. Despite significant logistical hurdles, including road closures due to fallen trees, floodwaters, and high winds that prevented some staff from reaching the home, the remaining team persevered. As nightfall descended, the persistent high winds and heavy rain severely limited visibility. However, this did not deter staff and village residents from actively assisting where needed. Saturday night brought a power outage, but the timely activation of the backup generator ensured a continuous power supply sufficient to maintain the well-being of the residents.

Demonstrating remarkable dedication, MiCare staff members volunteered to stay overnight in available rooms within the Lodge and even in the chapel to ensure adequate support. By Sunday, March 9th, MiCare Birkdale had weathered Cyclone Alfred, sustaining only minor damage to the village. This included a few fallen trees and some displaced branches, issues well within the capabilities of the groundskeeping team to address.

The dedication and proactive measures undertaken by our staff in the days leading up to Cyclone Alfred have been truly commendable. I extend my sincere gratitude for their exceptional cooperation and unwavering support, which made a significant positive impact during this event.

The strength of our team is undeniable.





Beatrix Villagers' Magical Day Trip to Mira Mira!

by Brigette Prowse,
Beatrix Village resident



Guess what our wonderful Beatrix Villagers got up to recently? They hopped on a bus and went on a delightful adventure to "Mira Mira" Accommodation, a special place nestled near Warragul. The journey itself was a treat! Starting from Montrose, the scenic drive through Neerim was just beautiful. Imagine winding roads and lovely views – what a perfect start to the day!

When they arrived at Mira Mira, the group was welcomed with a lovely morning tea in the Castle. Now, this isn't just any castle – it's actually the home of the property owner, Nicole Tate! And get this, the ceiling is adorned with amazing paintings of historical figures. How fascinating!

Next up was a tour with Nicole, and oh boy, were the cottages something else! Mira Mira boasts four unique, themed bed and breakfast cottages, and each one was an absolute wonder. They explored a tranquil Japanese zen cottage built right over a lake – so peaceful! Then there was a gorgeous fairy-themed cottage that looked like it came straight out of a storybook.

But wait, there's more! They also peeked inside a cool cave house, complete with its own stalagmites, lights twinkling in the rock walls, and even a bed built right into the stone! Finally, they visited a charming English cottage that felt like stepping into the English countryside.

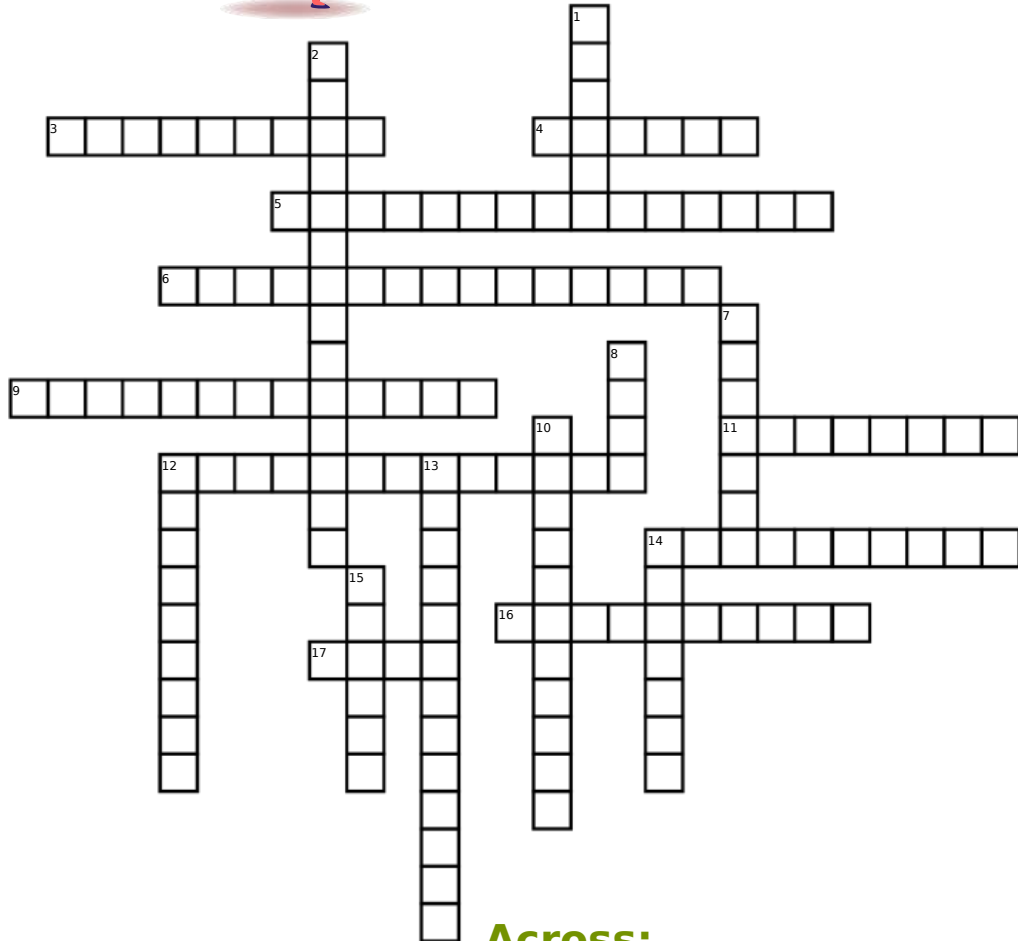
After all that exploring, it was time to head back to the Castle. Everyone gathered together to enjoy a yummy lunch and chat about their favourite cottages. There were definitely a few "oohs" and "aahs" being shared!

Before they knew it, the day had flown by, and it was time to hop back on the bus for the journey home. It sounds like everyone had a truly marvelous day out together, filled with wonder and good company.

A big shout-out and thank you to the wonderful Jaap De Wit for being our fantastic bus driver for the day! We really appreciate you getting everyone there and back safely.



Left to Right - Alie, Betsie and Ria



Down:

1. Capital of Canada
2. Reserve Bank Chair
7. Fred and Wilma Flintstone's daughter
8. The number of retirement villages operated by MiCare
10. Road Prins Willem Alexander is located on and AFL team
12. Australia's current Governor General
13. First Governor of Australia
14. King of United Kingdom
15. John, Paul, Ringo and ?

Across:

3. Donald Duck's wife
4. Taylor Swift's nickname
5. 2024 NFL Premiers
6. King of the Netherlands
9. 2024 AFL Premiers
11. Betty and Barney Rubble's son
12. New name for Home Care
14. Film starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman
16. Minister for Aged Care
17. The number of aged care homes operated by MiCare



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