

Annual Report

2023–2024

VMCH



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Cover: Star of the Sea resident June, alongside PCA, Anil.

Right: The Green Team employee, Rajan.





“ Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

– Matthew 5:16



Our Mission

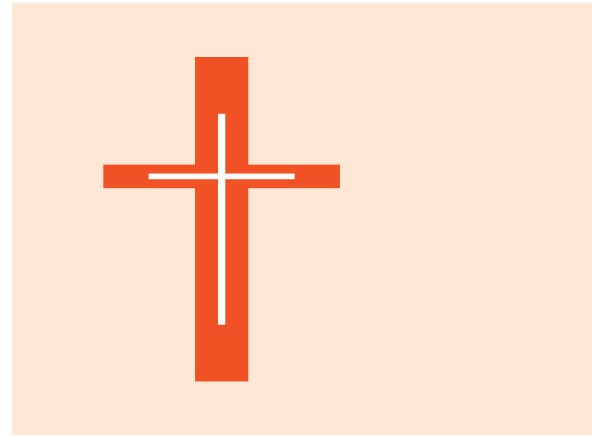
Fulfilling the caring ministry of Jesus, we are committed to creating genuine places of belonging, through service and compassion for all aged, disadvantaged and people with disability.

Our Vision

To be recognised as a transformative leader in the provision of exceptional care, services and accommodation.

Our Values

As a Catholic organisation we celebrate the sacredness of each life by:



bringing **Love**

We foster connections and show compassion for one another with kindness and respect.

creating **Joy**

We create a culture of happiness and positivity, celebrating life and the uniqueness of all.

embracing **Hospitality**

We welcome all to our community, bringing comfort and a sense of belonging.

showing **Courage**

We do what is right, regardless of our fears, the challenges or consequences.

Message from our Chief Mission Officer



Our Mission lights the way for many, bringing our Values of Love, Joy, Hospitality and Courage to life through the support and care given across our VMCH community.

This past year we have embraced our Values by taking time to reflect on what they mean for us. It's been wonderful to learn just how much they resonate with people from all walks of life. Many have shared the Value that speaks to them, and how it shines a light on what motivates them in their own personal journeys with VMCH.

We are a proudly Catholic organisation that invests in creating genuine places of belonging, where people can be themselves, knowing that they are valued. This has continued throughout the past year, as we welcomed new communities to our family, including Corpus Christi Community Greenvale, a second Cre8 Shed in Shepparton and our Ready to Launch House in Wangaratta.

Three important services delivered as part of our Mission include palliative care, (provided within our aged care residences and end-of-life home O'Neill House), our disability housing and our affordable homes offering.

Supporting people to die with love and compassion, and offering older people on low incomes and those living with a disability safe, secure and affordable homes is not something we do for financial gain, but to ensure they feel a deep sense of belonging and security. Moreover, these Mission-based services are largely unfunded by government, so we rely on donations from our generous community, and reinvested funds from projects such as our retirement living developments, to help us ensure their future.

Our dedicated Pastoral Care team, fully-funded by VMCH, plays an integral role in the organisation, providing spiritual and emotional support which is at the heart of VMCH's holistic care. We respect that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God and listen to the needs of each person. Daily accompaniment is valued by residents as they transition into care. Spiritual gatherings, rituals, and ongoing palliative, end-of-life, grief and loss support is also offered.

Over the past year, Pastoral Care Practitioners made 35,079 visits, a fantastic achievement that has no doubt enriched the lives of many.

The Mission of VMCH also shines through our strong Volunteer team. We are blessed that people choose to share their time and talents with us to enrich the lives of those in our community, through one-on-one companionship, working in our op shops, arts and crafts, music therapy and driving, and more. Our Volunteer team now consists of more than 400 people, a number that has grown from the year prior following a dip during COVID.

Each year in May we gather to acknowledge and give thanks to our volunteers, and this year we were honoured to celebrate Carol Pickering, who has volunteered with us for 45 years, an amazing achievement. Volunteers like Carol truly are the backbone of our organisation, and we are all the richer for their care and compassion.

Every Christmas, the Mission team takes the lead in creating Christmas hampers for residents and clients in need across our VMCH services.

A strong team made up of staff, volunteers, local schools, retirement living and aged care residents all work together to create the hampers, which would be impossible without the support from our donors and staff giving program. This past hamper drive was our biggest yet, with 800 hampers created and delivered with love. We extend our gratitude to all who are part of this special program which highlights the true meaning of Christmas and brings together many teams across our community.

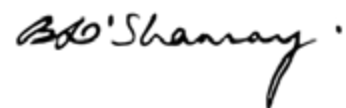
As a large organisation, it's important to ensure all our staff feel welcome and familiar with what VMCH stands for. This is achieved partly through our Staff Orientation program, including an introduction to the VMCH Way. The VMCH Way is a culture underpinned by our Catholic values that ensures our 3,400-plus staff share the same ethos and Mission. We welcome all to our community, with the understanding that everyone respects our Values and is willing to do their best, hopefully finding VMCH a great place to be.

Our Formation program, including seven modules, also covers sharing the knowledge

of our Catholic tradition and what it means to work for a Catholic organisation.

Of our current staff, 3,287 people have completed one or more of these modules, developing a greater understanding of our Mission and Values, as well as our proud heritage and founding stories.

I, along with the Mission team, am proud to work for an organisation that continues to light the way for so many vulnerable people in our community. We sincerely thank the thousands who have put their trust in us to do so over the past year, and we look forward to the year ahead.



Bridget O'Shannassy
Chief Mission Officer

Message from our Chairman and Chief Executive Officer



Julien O'Connell AO,
Chairman



Sonya Smart,
Chief Executive Officer

Whilst this has been an extraordinary year of challenges we have achieved much and held true to caring for those who entrust themselves to us for support in fulfilling their needs.

To belong is a fundamental human need. When people have a sense of belonging, they feel safe, respected and valued.

Here at VMCH, our Mission is to ensure those we serve feel they belong in whatever way is meaningful to them. Be it through their home, community or faith. As a diverse organisation, this is a challenge. As a for-purpose organisation, more so.

It is impossible to put a price on the impact our Mission has on people's lives, but it does cost money. We must be smart, strategic and sustainable in our operations, particularly as we face ever-changing government funding models, heightened consumer scrutiny and tighter compliance requirements.

Over the past year we embarked on a transformational journey with our Information Technology, Quality and Clinical Excellence and Operational teams to focus on our operational efficiency to meet new legislative requirements, including Star Ratings and Care Minutes. This also included an ongoing educational piece on cyber safety for staff and stakeholders, recognising the ongoing and

serious threat cybercrime poses to our business and those we support.

The shift to the individualisation of plans under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continues to negatively impact some of our supports, including allied health at St Paul's College. The change in funding also threatens our ability to provide critical 24/7 registered nursing at Austin Street, our home for young people with acquired brain injury. It is extremely concerning that, if forced to close, residents may end up living in aged care homes, contrary to the very reason Austin Street was created in 2010. We will continue to lobby decision-makers to help secure the future of Austin Street.

Thankfully, our wider disability accommodation options continue to thrive and expand. Housemates settled into our new SDA (Specialist Disability Accommodation) in Dixon St, Croydon and our first Supported Independent Living (SIL) home in regional Victoria, Kialla House.

Our job skills and employment pathways programs continue to grow, and it's been incredibly exciting to witness is how our

cafes and garden maintenance programs have brought together clients living with a disability and residents from aged care, retirement living and affordable homes. The new connections and relationships bring much joy to many.

In April we were honoured to celebrate the blessing of our new Ready to Launch House in Wangaratta, a home for young people to learn the practical skills they need to move out of home independently for the first time. We thank Bishop Shane MacKinlay and Monsignor Cris Manongas for being our celebrants at this special occasion.

In another expansion of our service offering, we were thrilled to officially welcome Corpus Christi Community Greenvale (CCCG) to VMCH, with a mass celebrated by Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli. CCCG is home to around 90 men with a history of homelessness, complex health needs or addiction, and we are honoured – following our merge in January – to ensure the future of this vital service for years to come.

CCCG becomes part of our residential aged care portfolio, which now provides a home to more than 1,000 older Victorians. We thank our dedicated teams within aged care for their tireless work in keeping our residents safe and well, particularly as community infection transmissions persist.

Construction of our latest retirement living community

St. Clare is progressing well, as are sales, breaking industry records. We thank the Catholic Development Fund for its support of this development, from which profits generated will be fully reinvested to support the core Mission of VMCH.

We recognise that our people are our most important asset, enabling us to continue to support our Mission. With this in mind, we are proud to share VMCH's employee retention sits at 89%, the highest since reporting began in 2020. This is a testament to our strength of culture, boosted by various initiatives from our People Services team and our managers on the ground, who lead with compassion and care. We've continued our commitment to psychosocial safety, including through our fifth Leadership Summit focused on developing a 'speak up' safety culture, and proactive measures around Respect@ Work legislation, including the introduction of a Stopleveler whistleblower service.

Our valued volunteers are an incredibly important part of our workforce, and it was a pleasure to host them at our annual Volunteer Celebration and Service Recognition event in May.

Financially, VMCH reported a total comprehensive surplus for FY24 of \$22.7m compared to a comprehensive surplus of \$0.3m for FY23.

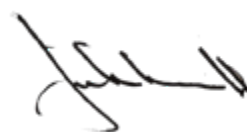
We wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Archbishop Peter Comensoli for his continued support and

guidance, along with staff from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Thank you to our Executive team, who has led our organisation with innovation, dedication and strength, and to all staff and volunteers for their commitment to the welfare of our residents, clients, students and their families.

Over the last 12 months, we were pleased to welcome Garry Thompson to the VMCH Board, as a member of the Strategic Projects Committee. We also welcomed Tom Barry, former Chair of CCCG, to the Board. We are grateful for Tom's continued guidance as he supports the merge of VMCH and CCCG as Chair of the Transition Committee.

In closing, we believe our success lies in the stories of the people we serve, and the Joy, Love, Hospitality and Courage shown by the employees of VMCH. We hope you enjoy reading about their respective journeys in this report, as we prepare to deliver more life-changing opportunities in the year ahead.



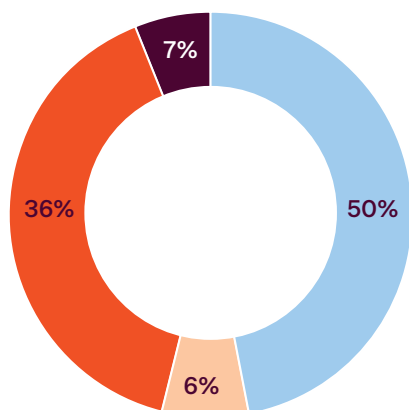
Julien O'Connell AO
Chairman



Sonya Smart
Chief Executive Officer

Financial performance

Revenue by business unit



- Residential Aged Care (**\$154.9m**)
- Retirement Living (**\$18.3m**)
- Community Services - Disability Accommodation, Disability Services, Home Care & St Paul's (**\$113.7m**)
- Business Services - interest, fundraising (**\$22.7m**)

Total revenue in FY24 was **\$309.6**, an increase of **\$58.6m** over FY23. Contributions to this from our business were:

- Residential Aged Care \$154.9m, Community Services \$113.7m, and Retirement Living \$18.3m, with \$22.7m from other activities including interest income, fundraising and other sundry income.
- Our main source of funding remains the Australian Government through funding of aged care places, home care packages, and disability services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- This funding increased by \$45.5m due to occupancy and indexation increases across the year, supplement increases due to refurbishments and to cover outbreak costs, and due to the merger with Corpus Christi Greenvale Community.
- State Government funding decreased by \$0.9m.

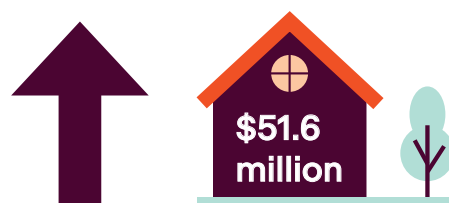
Total revenue:

FY24 **\$309.6m**
FY23 **\$251.0m**

Expenditure by source

\$205.6m	Employee benefits expense
\$42.0m	Service delivery expense
\$28.7m	Depreciation
\$18.9m	Finance costs
\$15.7m	General and administrative expenses
\$11.7m	Repairs maintenance and property expense
\$6.6m	Utilities
\$329.2m	Total

Net assets



Our net asset position increased in FY24 to \$469.5m (FY23 \$417.9m).

Our total assets at 30 June were \$1,118.4m (or \$1.1b), which include Property plant and equipment (\$608m), and Investment Properties (\$396m).

Our total liabilities at 30 June were \$648.9m, which include Accommodation Bonds and Refundable Accommodation Deposits (\$229.5m), and Lease Premiums (\$310.4m).

Capital works program

► Investment in capital works:

\$32.9 million

\$20.1m

St. Clare Development

\$7.4m

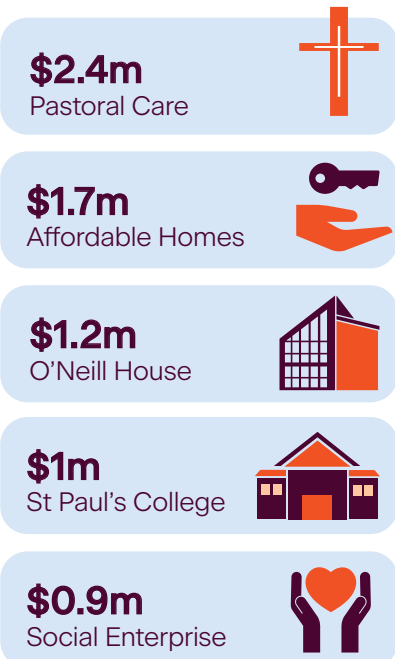
RAC Refurbishments

\$5.4m

Maintenance of current facilities

Mission

Financial contribution



VMCH remains committed to funding its mission-based services that presently run at a financial loss, rather than pursuing commercial opportunities solely for profit. During FY24, VMCH allocated \$7.2m towards these activities, which include:

- Over 35,000 visits made by our Pastoral Care team to residents and clients, ensuring vital emotional and spiritual support.
- Affordable Homes (371 units) for disadvantaged members of the community at discounted rental rates. VMCH estimates foregone rent of \$1.7m being the difference between commercial rent and the affordable rent received.
- O'Neill House, a specialist 22 bed end-of-life palliative care service, within the Residential Aged Care portfolio.
- St Paul's College, a Catholic specialist school supporting children with a wide range of disabilities.
- Social Enterprise and Employment Pathways including skills development programs such as Where Is My Coffee, Star Café and the VMCH Coffee Van, Green Team, Hospitality, Retail and Op Shops.

Comprehensive income



VMCH reported a total comprehensive surplus for FY24 of \$22.7m compared to a comprehensive surplus of \$0.3m for FY23.

Expenditure	2024	2023
Employee Benefits Expense	205,644	170,577
Service Delivery	41,970	37,015
Repairs and Maintenance, Utilities and Property expenses	18,255	16,667
Depreciation and Amortisation	28,720	25,542
Other	34,634	25,184
Total Expenditure	329,223	274,985
Net Operating Deficit	(19,585)	(23,945)
Net Gain (Loss) on fair value of investment property & lease premiums	1,129	(1,596)
Net Deficit	(18,456)	(25,541)
Revaluations of land & buildings	41,182	25,839
Total Comprehensive Income	22,726	298

Balance Sheet	2024	2023
Total Assets	1,118,409	993,006
Total Liabilities	648,919	575,129
Net Assets	469,490	417,877

Revenue	2024	2023
Australian Government funding	222,058	176,608
State Government funding	6,933	7,882
Fees and Other Income for rendering of services	33,498	29,890
Deferred Management Fees, Maintenance Fees and other Property Income	21,590	20,997
Fundraising and Bequests	487	743
Other (including imputed income on RADs in 2020 under new accounting standard)	25,072	14,920
Total Revenue	309,638	251,040



Our community

Pastoral Care

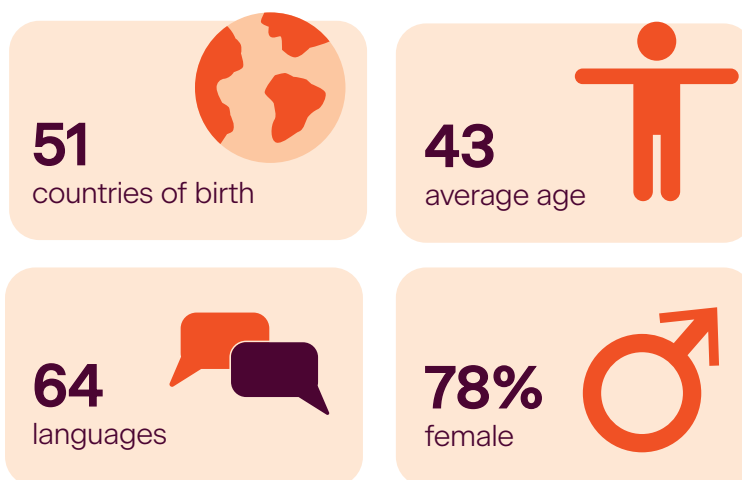


Our people

VMCH is proud to work in partnership with people of all ages and abilities to achieve their individual goals and dreams, remain connected to their communities and enjoy their independence.

Our 3,400-plus staff members are dedicated to supporting 10,000 people across metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and southern New South Wales.

Here is a snapshot of our diverse workforce.

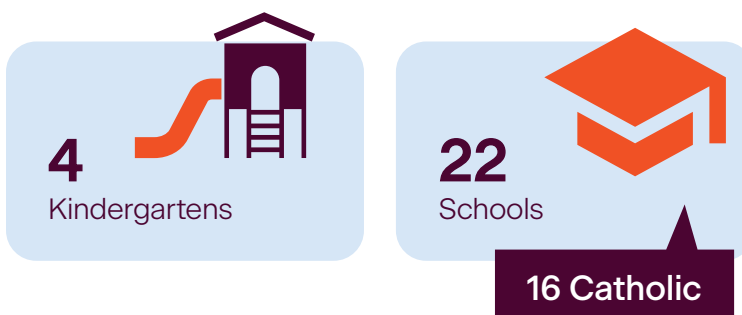


Volunteering

Volunteers are often described as the backbone of an organisation – VMCH is no different.

Our 440-strong volunteer team is highly valued, and we are pleased to have expanded our intergenerational programs over the past year, bringing joy to people of all ages.

We are proud to offer intergenerational volunteer programs with:



Belonging at home



Dan

Dan admits his favourite part of living at Ready to Launch is “uninterrupted sleep”, away from his three younger sisters. Humour aside, Dan says living at the Wangaratta house and learning new skills like budgeting, household tasks, cooking and laundry are boosting his confidence to move out on his own.

“I have learnt to be more careful with buying things, trying to reduce food wastage and everything that my money needs to cover each week,” Daniel says. “I would like to get a better paying job, find a home in town or just out of town within my budget to move into. I’m also working hard to get my P’s.”

Dan is proud to have recently begun studying his Certificate III in Civil Construction, which he hopes might lead to future employment opportunities.

VMCH's origins are deeply rooted in offering safe and comfortable spaces for people to live. Our homes surpass bricks and mortar, they are places of community and belonging, and we are privileged to provide this to more than 2,000 people through our disability accommodation, residential aged care, retirement living and affordable homes.

Over the past year, new housemates settled into our new Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) in Dixon Street, Croydon and our first Supported Independent Living (SIL) home in regional Victoria, Kialla House.

We invested over \$6.8m into ensuring our residential aged care homes remain modern, comfortable and vibrant through ongoing refurbishments, and we were

thrilled to receive a 'Highly Commended' citation in the 2023 Future of Ageing awards (Property & Design) for Trinity Lane, our newest affordable homes development.

We celebrated a milestone in our \$250m retirement precinct St. Clare, with a Turning of the Sod event in November. In April 2023 we opened a new service offering in Wangaratta called Ready to Launch, a place for young people to learn the skills they need to move out of home for the first time.

We are also proud to support people living in their traditional family homes, with a little extra help, through our at-home aged care services. We are one of the largest home care package providers in Victoria, supporting more than 1,700 people over the past year.

Jean

Jean is a keen line dancer who likes to keep fit and healthy. However, a slip on the train a few years back saw the 87-year-old suffer a serious shoulder injury, which has affected her ability to manage many everyday tasks.

Thanks to support from VMCH Community Support Assistant Dani Craig, Jean is able to continue to live at home and keep up with the activities she loves. The pair has formed a lovely bond, born mainly from the personal care Dani provides.



"I can ask Dani anything and she'll help me," Jean says. "We look forward to her coming. It's wonderful."

Belonging in a community



Ella and Evie

Community spirit is building at our affordable homes site, Trinity Lane, since it opened in March 2023. Residents are enjoying regular catch ups including BBQs and meditation classes. A special connection has come from nearby Our Lady of Mercy College, with students visiting for various activities over the past year.

Student Ella says: "I made many unexpected friends who have formed memories that will last a lifetime. My highlight of this experience was meeting Mary, who taught me how to communicate and be respectful, among other life advice. My time at Trinity Lane was wonderful, and I will cherish it forever."

Evie says: "I enjoyed hearing and learning about the lives of many of the residents. Each resident had a unique experience and an extremely interesting story to tell."

Belonging involves a feeling of connectedness to others – somewhere people can be their authentic selves and build relationships with others. VMCH is humbled to have witnessed many genuine connections form with people from all walks of life, and across generations, in many of our newer communities over the past year.

Participants from our job skills program, the Green Team, have cultivated new friendships, along with practical skills, providing garden maintenance for our disability group homes and 38 Home Care Package clients and 20 affordable housing sites.

Team Leader Adrian Lewis says he receives regular phone calls from customers who have bonded well with the participants, and are impressed with their work. “Requests are often made for the same staff members to return for the next service,” Adrian says. “These relationships should continue to grow in a positive direction over time.”

From cafes, to homes, to gymnasiums, the settings create the opportunity, but the people create the life-changing outcomes.



Lisa

Star Café has had a very positive impact on Lisa. Staff are so kind, have lots of fun and teach Lisa things in the kitchen. Lisa has become more confident in speaking to strangers at the café, and is very proud of telling people that she works there. Last year, Lisa seemed to have bad anxiety and was so supported and cared for while she was at the café. Staff were determined to get her through this hard time. Thankfully, she is now back to her happy self. **(Anne – Lisa’s mother)**



Lorna

Mum loved nothing more than to sit at the café and enjoy her favourite chocolate fudge slice with cream. A warm smile and loving service from Cathy and her team made the morning tea moment very special. It warmed my heart to watch. In the final stages of mum’s life, my brother and I had a welcoming place in which to retreat and have some reprieve from our bedside vigil. Mum has since passed, and Star Café remains a beautiful and lasting memory. **(Wendy, daughter of Lorna)**

Belonging in belief

Order of Malta

VMCH would like to sincerely thank the Order of Malta who has helped facilitate regular Lourdes Masses at our aged care residences over the past year. During Mass, residents receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, knowing that God continues to give them strength at this stage of their life's journey. We are also grateful to Bishop Tony Ireland, Bishop Terry Curtin and other Clergy who help celebrate the Eucharist. The Masses are prayerfully celebrated and enjoyed by residents, who gratefully receive gifts of Lourdes water and Rosary beads at each gathering.

At VMCH, we hold dear the Catholic traditions of our heritage, while extending a warm welcome to individuals from all faiths. Our 27-person strong Pastoral Care team recognises the significance of spirituality in people's lives and is passionate about providing emotional and spiritual support to residents and families throughout their journey with VMCH.

Providing palliative care is an important part of the work of our Pastoral Care team. Margaret's friend, Leonie, lived at our end-of-life care home O'Neill House for

12 months before she died in March 2024, aged 95. Fiercely independent, the former nurse had worked at O'Neill when it was an aged care residence many years ago. And although she would have preferred to live at home, Leonie's health prevented it. So, O'Neill House was the next best thing.

"She was very grateful for the Pastoral Care staff bringing her Communion," Margaret said. "Overall, I not only felt that Leonie was being supported, but I also personally felt great support for myself from the staff at O'Neill."

John

John was Corpus Christi Community Greenvale's longest residing person before he passed away in April this year.

"I was in Sydney basically living in a gutter before here. My sister, who was a Catholic nun, got me in here. It saved my life. When my sister passed on recently, the support the staff gave me was wonderful. I also got my Catholic faith back being here. We have a chapel on-site. I know that I will die here, and I am happy with that."

So, when John's time of death arrived, the CCCG community was there.

"We followed John's wishes, which included arranging his funeral at our chapel with a full Mass," said CCCG Residential Services



Manager Donela Perry. "The residents sat with him, and staff spent extra time with John, engaging in pastoral care and activities. Right up until the end, John enjoyed people being with him. He died surrounded by his friends."

Belonging in the workplace



Hygenia

I've been teaching at St Paul's College in Balwyn for 25 years and have learnt so much from my students over that time; they've taught me to see the world through their eyes and nothing gives me more joy than to celebrate all their achievements, be it big or small.

I work with an amazing group of people, especially our learning support staff who are dedicated and want the best for our students. As professionals we are headstrong for our students and constantly advocate for them.

I enjoy working at a Catholic school because I am surrounded by plenty of goodwill, understanding and compassion. I am reminded and given the opportunity every day to practice and live my faith. I love the fact it allows me to keep my spiritual connection constant.

VMCH is passionate about fostering a sense of belonging in the workplace. We recognise that our people are our most important asset, enabling us to continue to support our Mission.

With this in mind, we are proud to share VMCH's employee retention sits at 89%, the highest since reporting began in 2020. This is a testament to our strength of culture, boosted by various initiatives from our People Services team and our managers on the ground, who lead with compassion and care. Our 2023 Service Award event at the Park Hyatt on July 20 was a special occasion and opportunity to celebrate our staff who've served 10 to 35 years.

Psychosocial safety has also been a huge focus for VMCH across the past year. Initiatives, including our fifth Leadership Summit, focused on developing a 'speak up' safety culture, and proactive measures around Respect@Work legislation helped solidify this commitment.

There were 554 safety incidents reported in 2023/2024, a 14% increase on the year prior. This reflects greater staff awareness on the importance of reporting. We also had a 33% reduction in lost time injuries (any injury that results in a fatality, permanent disability or time lost from work) in 2023/2024, which was great to see.

Sanath

Not all heroes wear capes... some of them wear chef's hats!

Our Head Chef Manager, Sanath Wanniarachchi, was thrilled to be named a Hospitality and Lifestyle Aged Care (HLAC) Hero in October 2023. The awards recognise 10 Australians who provide quality and superior catering, cleaning, laundry and lifestyle services within aged care.

Sanath, a 30-year hospitality veteran, supports chefs across our 14 aged care residences to enhance culinary initiatives, the dining room experience, food presentation and new menu ideas.



Sanath says receiving the HLAC award brought him "immense joy and a sense of fulfilment."

Belonging with a shared purpose



Geoff

Geoff is a member of our Cre8 Shed in Wangaratta and joined our Disability Consumer Advisory group to represent the voices of his client peers and to help create positive change.

“I want to make a difference, I want to help people,” says Geoff, who lives with Parkinson’s. “I know how difficult life with a disability can be. People with disability deserve the best services and that’s something I think I can help with. I have a background in engineering, and I’ve been on many boards and committees so I know how they operate – how to get things done.

“So far, I’ve found it very rewarding. It feels great to help people and provide my five cents’ worth. I’m already feeling a bond between the clients, it feels like I’ve made new friends. I love it.”

Feeling as though you're part of something bigger than yourself is a huge part of belonging. Helping others can give life meaning, and self-advocating can create a strong sense of independence and self-worth.

This past year has seen some great strides within our Residential Aged Care, Disability Services and Volunteering Consumer Advisory groups, informing our service delivery from a lived experience perspective.

Some positive outcomes include the formation of a working group focused on food in aged care, a volunteer buddy system, and app introductions for residents.

Clients from our Community Connections programs also joined together over the past year in their shared desire to earn money and learn new skills through their own mini recycling and car wash businesses.

Carol

We all know time is precious.

So, the fact that Carol Pickering has spent more than half of her life volunteering with VMCH speaks volumes of her character.

Carol joined our organisation as a volunteer at the age of 35.

This year, she received her 45-year service award, one of our longest serving awards ever given.

Carol volunteered within VMCH's Disability Services for some time, before returning to aged care at our Berwick residence six years ago.

"There are so many people out there who don't have anybody," Carol says.



"Sometimes people need someone to be able to give them encouragement or a bit of warmth. I've gotten so much happiness from volunteering. It's been a great experience."

Thank you for
your support



What sustains VMCH as an organisation, and allows us to achieve our Mission, is the engagement and contribution of our staff, our volunteers and our community supporters.

Our donors, volunteers, sponsors, corporate partners and philanthropic community have enabled so many of our projects and programs to flourish this year.

Christmas hampers

Our 2023 Christmas hamper drive was our biggest one yet, with an incredible 800 hampers packed and delivered! Each year this important initiative grows, with more people who may be struggling financially or socially isolated in need of some extra festive cheer. The hampers would not be possible without support from the community. Donations totaling \$17,000 were gratefully received and ensured nobody missed out.

Affordable homes resident Bobbie Bartkus, aged 78, described her hamper as a “generous and thoughtful gift. Given how expensive everything is these days,

We are grateful to those who have remembered VMCH in their Will, and to all those who have graciously supported us, we thank you.



it certainly means you don't have to purchase several items on your Christmas list, which is a big help. I especially like that the aged care residents create some of the hamper items; that's really special.”

Build a Shed

Thanks to an incredible \$69,890 in donations for our 2023 Build a Shed appeal, we were thrilled to open a second Cre8 Shed in Shepparton in 2023. The Cre8 program, originally started in Wangaratta, gives around 45 people with disability the opportunity to learn new skills, build confidence, socialise, gain work experience, express creativity and have fun. VMCH is also planning to open a third shed in Melbourne, thanks to donations. We would also sincerely like to thank Ascot Group and Kovstruct for donating \$7,000 worth of tools and resources. We also launched our online



shop in late 2023, featuring handmade goods made by our Cre8 and Community Connections teams. Proceeds are reinvested into our social enterprises.



Sarah

In mid-2024 we launched our latest fundraising appeal, aimed to support young people with disabilities to get into the workforce and begin their journey to independence. Work It! hopes to raise \$80,000 to fund a unique, new retail space in Melbourne's east.

Sarah, aged 23, is a client at our Community Connections program. For the last few months, she's been undertaking job skills at our Op Shop Warehouse, sorting clothes, toys, puzzles and forming bonds with staff and volunteers. Chatting and socialising are Sarah's favourite activities.

"I like to ask my op shop friends what they have for lunch and if they need help – that boosts my confidence."

In the future, Sarah hopes to work independently. She also hopes Work It! is successful, so she can build on her current experience on a bigger and more exciting scale. "Working in the op shop is a great opportunity and great fun!"

If you would like to support this appeal, please visit our website's donation page or scan the QR code.



Gifts in Wills

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Estate of Valma Mary Cox
Estate of Mary Mortensen
Estate of Frank Magree

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SAJ Fruit Supply Pty Ltd
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In Memory

**Thank you to the families
who made donations in
memory of their late loved
ones.**

Judith Aquino
Donald Anderson
Katie Durkin
Evelyn Denny
Heather and Neil Kenshole

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Join the conversation



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