

# Home Care Connection

## Newsletter

March 2025

VMCH

## Specialist dementia care unit changing lives

Bernie Desormeaux, aged 74, was diagnosed with dementia 10 years ago. From the beginning, his loving family – partner Amelia, daughters Lilly and Olivia, and mother-in-law Mary – struggled to find the support he and the family needed.

“It was a difficult journey. Not just the financial constraints and administrative burdens of navigating a very complicated system, but also the emotional toll,” says his daughter Lilly.

After numerous stays in aged care homes that didn’t suit Bernie’s needs, his health suffered.

Things turned around with Dementia Australia’s support and their recommendation to VMCH’s award-winning specialised dementia unit, Lady Lourdes House, part of our St Bernadette’s Aged Care Residence in Sunshine North.

The home is funded by the Australian Government’s Specialist Dementia Care Program (SDCP) and is purpose-designed by VMCH for residents who experience very severe symptoms of dementia. Since it opened in 2020, the team has cared for



21 residents and successfully transitioned 11 to its mainstream residence, including Bernie.

“The relief you see on family’s faces when they come to Lady Lourdes House is palpable,” says Amelia. “The relationships staff build with the families, is just extraordinary.”

Bernie was a passionate reader with a keen interest in people and music before dementia took hold. Lady Lourdes harnessed this love of music with music therapy, and this, with visits from family, have helped improve Bernie’s wellbeing.

Visit [vmch.com.au/stbernadettes](https://vmch.com.au/stbernadettes) to find out more about Lady Lourdes House.

## How My Health Record can support you

My Health Record regularly makes changes to give you better access to your health records and to connect you with valuable information. Being able to add your My Aged Care support plan to My Health Record is one such change.

Since December, health care professionals have been able to access your support plan if you have given permission for it to be shared there.

Your support plan lists the care and services you and your case manager decided best suited your needs in your aged care assessment.

As such, it is a valuable tool for healthcare providers in an emergency that allows them to give you the care you need.

Call the My Aged Care contact centre on **1800 200 422** to update your My Health Record or access it through myGov.

Sourced from the Department of Health and Aged Care.



# Planning ahead in case you need to self isolate



Despite life returning to normal, COVID-19 and influenza infections are still a concern as they continue to spread throughout our communities.

Here are some steps you can take to prepare if you or someone living with you become sick with COVID-19 or the flu.

- **Plan ahead** and think about the services that you regularly receive, e.g., personal care, nursing, shopping, home care, medication support, meal preparation, and so forth. For each service, make note of which you can do without while you're unwell and which are essential.
- **Share your plan** with others involved in your care, including your case manager.
- **Contact us** and make sure you and your family/carers advise us as soon as possible if you contract COVID-19 or the flu so we can put your plan into immediate action.

We're here to help, and to support you to stay safe and well at home, so don't hesitate to call **1300 650 615** if you have any concerns or questions.

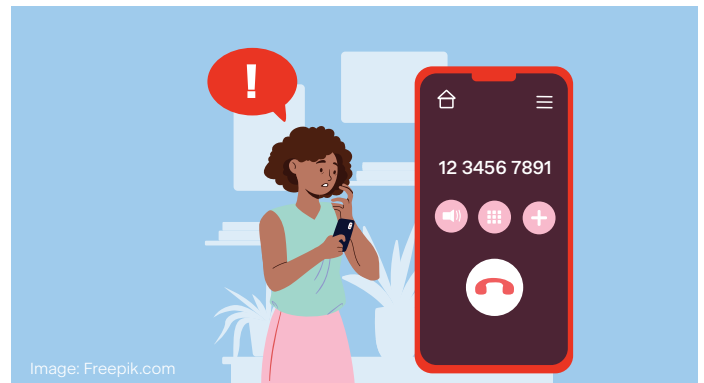


Image: Freepik.com

**At VMCH, your care and safety is our priority.** Help us keep your information private and secure by not sharing contact information with attending staff. If they need to contact you, they can reach out through VMCH communication channels.

## Have your say

Help us ensure your VMCH experience is the best it can be. Share your insights by scanning the QR code or by visiting us at [vmch.com.au/feedback](https://vmch.com.au/feedback).

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