

STAY

SUPPORT TAILORED AROUND YOU

ISSUE 01

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STAY IS A NEW VMCH MAGAZINE PROFILING PROGRAMS, PEOPLE AND NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY SERVICES AREA

We welcome your content ideas and feedback to STAY.

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EXTENDING AND ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITY SERVICES

AN INTERVIEW WITH HEATHER CATHERWOOD, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICES, VMCH

In February 2017, the way people select and access aged and community care changed. Can you outline the key changes?

HC: The Commonwealth Government recognises that most people want to remain living independently. They are therefore increasing their funding for more people to access Home Care Packages (HCPs). The process of confirming your eligibility for a HCP is through the government's aged care centre known as myagedcare. Contact can be made either through their on-line portal or by ringing 1800 200 422. Navigating the aged care system can be daunting, so VMCH has established an access and intake team who can assist.

From February 2017, HCPs are no longer allocated to service providers, but directly to the consumer. This means that consumers can transfer service providers if they wish and their unspent HCP funds will follow them. This new model of service delivery is referred to as Customer Directed Care (CDC).

What prompted the move to Customer Directed Care and how will it benefit the care recipient?

HC: Consumer Directed Care was introduced for all people on Home Care Packages in July 2015. Based on learnings from other countries such as Canada and the UK, CDC gives people more control of the services they receive and who provides those services. Case Managers are still an integral part of care planning and customer oversight, but the process of developing a care plan and organising services is linked to each person's goals and preferences.



Since the introduction of CDC we have found that each customer's priorities are different. Some people want a regular massage to alleviate joint pain, and some want social activities. There are government restrictions on how HCP funds can be spent, but if it helps keep you independent, active and connected to the community it should meet the set requirements.

How do the services VMCH offer differ from other providers?

HC: VMCH is one of the largest and most diverse providers of community services in Victoria and southern NSW. Our commitment to deliver high quality services to customers, and our recognition that our staff are our most important asset, attracts great people to work with us.

Under our community umbrella, we have a Home Care Package team, a Carer Support team, and Therapy Services including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, massage, speech therapy and dietetics. We also have our own Direct Care team who provide personal care, domestic help, gardening, meal preparation, transport and shopping. Our integrated approach means that these teams work together to provide services that match individual needs.



To gain a better understanding of local communities, VMCH is committed to establishing and maintaining office bases in the all communities we serve. Unless we involve ourselves in regional as well as metropolitan communities, we cannot understand the needs of that community. Although our staff are equipped with mobile technology, we are expanding our physical footprint in Victoria so that we have staff at sites to provide information and assist clients.

VMCH has partnered with several organisations in the hospital and health sector to deliver better care to specific groups, such as people with dementia. Can you detail these initiatives?

HC: Although VMCH has developed a broad range of community services, we are not experts in everything and don't seek to be. There are organisations that are experts in their field and we have sought to partner with them to ensure our clients have access to the best care available.

One such partnership is with Cabrini Health. VMCH has worked with Cabrini for several years developing programs and pathways to prevent premature admission into residential care and offer a specialist dementia service. We are now leaders in the provision of dementia management and consultancy services and are recognised by the Commonwealth Government with funding to support primary carers. We deliver programs with Cabrini Health that address medication management, environment, behavioural strategies and education.

Another recent partnership is with Vision Australia. Recognising their expertise in the provision of equipment for people who are visually impaired, this partnership will improve access to visual aids and entertainment for VMCH customers who are vision impaired.

In 2016, VMCH established Victoria's first Multicultural Wellness Centre in Wantirna. How has this centre been received by the local community?

HC: Responding to an identified need in the Chinese and Filipino speaking communities in the Knox area, the Multicultural Wellness Centre was established with bilingual staff and programs specific to these cultural groups. Following the success of this service, which is supported by our physiotherapy team, this centre will be replicated in other areas where there is an unmet need for particular cultural groups.

As one of Victoria's leading providers of community services, there are various ways for people to access our services in Victoria and southern NSW. What options are available to people and are there plans to expand our regional services?

HC: VMCH has had a long presence in regional Victoria and the Riverina district in NSW. Home Care Packages and Carer Support Programs have been offered in these areas from bases in Shepparton, Wangaratta, Ballarat and Ararat. VMCH will soon open offices in Echuca and Bendigo. This is consistent with our commitment to support communities in regional Victoria.

VMCH will also be launching a mobile therapy service for regional Victoria in May. The 'STAY' bus will be fully fitted with equipment to enable physiotherapy, remedial massage and podiatry services. An occupational therapist will be available to provide advice on safety issues in the home and recommend equipment to assist with mobility or support independence.

Is the VMCH suite of community and allied health services competitively priced?

HC: Many of the services offered by VMCH are funded by the Commonwealth Government with some requiring a small consumer contribution. The government has been reviewing aged care and has introduced some reforms over the past few years. Certain programs are now means tested, such as the Home Care Package Program. However, there is a cap on the fees paid.

VMCH is committed to growing our health support team's capacity to enable services to be delivered by our own staff. This means that we can ensure the quality of our care and support and keep our costs contained so that for private services savings can be passed on to the customer. If the allied health service doesn't fall into a government-funded program the fee for the service may be claimed against private health insurance. As a not-for-profit organisation, VMCH is committed to reinvesting into services to support people, particularly those who are disadvantaged.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on VMCH community services visit:

www.vmch.com.au/services/community-services or call **1300 919 850**



VMCH EXPANDS ITS SERVICES IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH), the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's leading provider of disability, specialist education, aged care and retirement living services, has supported regional Victorians for over 100 years.

This autumn, VMCH opens its newest regional office in Bendigo. This follows the recent establishment of our offices in Ballarat and reflects VMCH's commitment to delivering exceptional care to communities beyond metropolitan centres.

"We believe that unless we involve ourselves in local communities, we cannot expect to understand the challenges and needs of that community," says Heather Catherwood, General Manager of Community Services, VMCH. "We are expanding our physical footprint so that we have staff at local sites to provide information and assist clients."

One of our key services is **Home Care Packages (HCP)**: a tailored suite of services and support to help people to remain in their homes as they age. Every HCP is designed to suit each client's specific needs and lifestyle. Assistance can be in the form of personal care, meal preparation, social engagement, pastoral care, dementia support, respite or exercise programs. VMCH

works with allied health professionals to ensure the best support is delivered to each person.

Case Managers coordinate the clients' home care packages and often develop a strong connection with them.

"WE BUILD RAPPORT BY LISTENING TO OUR CLIENT'S REQUESTS," SAYS VMCH CASE MANAGER KATE CHARLESON. "WE GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO ENSURE EACH PACKAGE IS SET UP TO SUIT OUR CLIENTS CHANGING CARE NEEDS."

Following a recent government health grant, VMCH will also be delivering **Short Term Restorative Care (STRC)** to people in the northern region of Victoria. These STRC packages will support people in centres such as Shepparton and Mooroopna giving them a range of services to improve their wellbeing and ability to complete everyday tasks. The aim is to delay or avoid the need to enter long-term care. A STRC package can be provided for up to eight weeks depending on the customer's needs.

For more information about Home Care Packages or Short Term Restorative Care, call **1300 650 615** or visit: www.vmch.com.au/services/community-services/home-care-packages/

RESPITE A TONIC FOR CARERS AND CLIENTS

There are over 2.8 million carers across Australia who provide unpaid care and support to a loved one with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, or who are frail aged.

Villa Maria Catholic Homes recognises the valuable work carers do and offers both carers and care recipients a range of respite and lifestyle services.

South East Flexible Respite Services (SEFRS) in Pakenham provides respite and social opportunities to seniors in a warm, friendly environment. The programs are designed to give both the carer, and the person in their care, valuable 'time out'.

Sited at VMCH Shanagolden Retirement Village, the centre opened in March 2015 and is already having a positive impact in the local community.

Lydia Chan is the centre's Lifestyle and Respite Coordinator and has a passion for the work she does and the people the service supports.

"We currently have 23 clients who attend our centre, which operates Monday to Thursday, and run a monthly 'out and about' group," says Lydia.

"We are here for both the care recipient and their carer. For the seniors, most of whom have a cognitive impairment, we provide day respite and a range of fun, stimulating activities."

"We welcome people from all cultural backgrounds who live in the southern metropolitan region and have programs designed specifically for the non-English speaking groups," says Lydia. "Our staff here are amazing. Their experience and passion makes the program exceptional. And we treat all our clients as part of our family."

Carer, Bernadette Chandler agrees.

"My mum, Elizabeth, who has Alzheimer's, comes to the centre every Tuesday and Thursday."

"The staff here have so much compassion, and respect for the clients. They gently encourage them to try activities, but it's also fine if you just want to relax. And, of course, the fact mum can access this respite means I get some quality time for me."

Rhonda Watson is another carer who accesses the Pakenham centre and thinks highly of the service and the staff.

"I've been my dad, Henry's, full-time carer for over three years, since he had a terrible fall," says Rhonda. "He's been coming to the centre since it opened. It has helped us both. It gives me peace of mind knowing dad is cared for and he gets some social stimulation. I can work in my volunteer job all day and know dad is safe."



LOOKING FOR RESPITE SERVICES?

If you are a carer or care recipient in Melbourne's southern metropolitan region and need some respite or support, get in touch with South East Flexible Respite Services on **(03) 5945 3838**.

In the eastern regions, contact Carinya Dementia Specific Services at Lysterfield **(03 9752 7700)** or White Road Lifestyle and Respite Services in Wantirna South **(03 9800 7210)**.

ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES GO MOBILE



In a Victorian first, Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) will launch its ‘STAY’ bus this May.

This unique mobile initiative will support seniors in regional Victoria by bringing allied health and therapeutic services directly to them. The service aims to assist clients who are housebound, frail, or in pain and are unable to visit a clinic or therapist.

“We know in some regional areas timely access to a range of allied health services can be a challenge,” says Jo-Ann Petersen, VMCH Operations Manager of Allied Health and Nursing for Community Services.

“The mobile service is an innovative way to address this need. The services delivered from the bus can be tailored to address the needs of the particular client group.”

The STAY bus has been fully fitted with equipment to enable physiotherapy, remedial massage and podiatry services. A team of professional therapists will travel with the bus and deliver their particular service to pre-booked clients with the appropriate equipment.

The STAY bus is an extension of the VMCH Rehabilitation Program (Day Therapy Centre) - a highly respected service that has been operating in Melbourne’s east since 1979. The centre offers a variety of allied health services including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, dietetics, remedial massage and podiatry. Allied health services are also delivered to some of VMCH’s residential and retirement living facilities.

“The STAY mobile bus is one more example of our organisation’s commitment to meeting the health needs of clients not just in Melbourne but in regional centres around Victoria,” says Heather Catherwood, VMCH General Manager of Community Services.

“IT WILL BRING PROFESSIONAL ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES TO THE CLIENT’S ‘DOORSTEP’, WHETHER THAT IS IN THEIR HOME, A RETIREMENT VILLAGE, AGED CARE FACILITY, COMMUNITY CENTRE OR CHURCH HALL. WE WANT TO DELIVER FLEXIBLE, PERSON-CENTRED SERVICES WHICH FOCUS ON WELLNESS AND REABLEMENT.”

The STAY bus will also offer information and advice to clients on how to manage their health conditions and improve their overall health and wellbeing. Solutions for safe and independent living at home and the provision of assistive equipment will also be part of the service.

The bus will hit the road this autumn. Shepparton will be its first stop, and other regions will follow as client need and community interest is identified.

LEARN MORE

For more details on the new allied health bus call **1300 919 850**



STAFF PROFILE: NARIDA VELLA

Narida Vella recently joined VMCH as a **Community Engagement Officer** in the Carer Services team, based in Shepparton. With a professional background in Aboriginal health and wellbeing, Narida is uniquely placed to connect local Aboriginal communities with culturally sensitive support and information. Her role is key to ensuring VMCH reaches a broader consumer base in the Hume region in a way that is culturally sensitive and effective.

What attracted you to the role and to joining VMCH?

NV: Previously, I worked for Rights Information and Advocacy Centre (RIAC) in Shepparton, and we shared office space with VMCH. While at RIAC, I approached staff at VMCH for client support. I was impressed by the quality of VMCH's service delivery and the support they gave to community members. Having been a carer myself, I was aware of some of VMCH's services, but I was also aware that many people in the local community did not know what VMCH offers. I wanted to support the organisation to share what we do with more people.

What do you hope to achieve within the community in 2017?

NV: I hope to raise awareness in the Koorie community and the multicultural communities of what VMCH does and how we can help them care for their loved ones. Being a carer isn't an easy role. Having been a carer myself of three people simultaneously, all of whom had chronic illnesses, was extremely draining. Working fulltime and raising seven children (not all mine), I understand the demands of the carer role. I hope I can assist VMCH in getting the message 'out there' that there is support available for carers.

You have a background in family violence prevention. Can you outline one of your or the community's achievements in this area?

NV: Having worked for the Department of Human Services as the Indigenous Family

Violence Regional Coordinator for Hume, I found there was a lot of hard work being done in the background to assist families, women and men who are victims of family violence. There are amazing people working tirelessly to change the lives, and sometimes save the lives, of families living in crisis. Physical abuse is easily identified. However, emotional abuse leaves scars that people can't see. The Shepparton police have put programs in place over the last 10 years to link people with support services in relation to family violence. Significant progress has been made since Superintendent Michael Sayers moved to our region. Sgt Ken O'Connor, who was the Family Violence Advisor, was also a legend.

Supporting women who were living in, or have left, family violence situations was a highlight for me. I have supported women who have survived trauma, and it was an honour to be trusted by these women and to support them on their journey of healing.

You have also worked in the area of Aboriginal health and wellbeing.

NV: I worked at GV Health (Community Interlink) as the Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the aged and disability services program raising awareness of services available and linking them with appropriate support. I was also Maroondah Hospital's first Aboriginal Liaison Officer. My role was to support patients and raise awareness of the services available, link patients with these services and encourage ongoing participation in programs/clinics.



CARER PROFILE: GRAEME BROUGH

Retired engineer Graeme Brough shares his experience of being a full-time carer to his wife, Maxine, who has Posterior Cortical Atrophy.

What circumstances led to you becoming a carer?

GB: I have been my wife's carer for five years, since she was diagnosed with Posterior Cortical Atrophy (a form of Alzheimer's Disease) at the age of 52. Needless to say, it wasn't a matter of volunteering to become a carer, as there were no other options.

What challenges are there caring for a loved one with younger onset dementia?

GB: As the traditional view of dementia is that of older-age (and later stage), one of the big challenges for people with younger onset dementia is that there are not many services available. In addition, the few services that are available are not always suitable or accessible.

What does an average week involve for you as your wife's carer?

GB: Maxine likes to keep as active and involved in the community as possible. We have a very full week which involves a lot of travelling for drop-offs and pick-ups. The week's activities include a walking group at the local Neighbourhood House, a couple of outing groups, a choir and a dance group.

How does VMCH support you as a carer?

GB: VMCH runs a Dementia Carer Support Group in the Eastern Metro Health Region, and provides Home Care on a monthly basis.

VMCH also participates in a Community Group, Eastern Younger Onset Dementia Alliance, whose aim is to raise the profile of younger onset dementia and canvas the needs for more services and programs for this sector.

Is there more the government or community services could do to support carers and, in particular, those caring for people with younger onset dementia?

GB: As mentioned, there are few services for people with younger onset dementia in the community. Consequently, carers have to fill this void off their own bat. In particular, it would be very helpful if the government could provide more on-the-ground practical services involving meaningful activities on a much broader scale.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about the important role unpaid carers play in our communities?

GB: It would be useful if the role carers have could be more actively supported by government funded community services and programs. While carers volunteer their time without question, they also save the government a considerable amount of money. It would be widely appreciated if there was a more balanced approach to providing more direct assistance proactively to carers and families of people with younger onset dementia.



CARERS EVENT

VMCH YOD PUBLIC FORUM – EASTERN REGION

Expressions of interest:
Call 1300 971 720

JUNE
01

VMCH is hosting a Public Forum to identify the needs of people living with younger onset dementia (YOD), and the supports available to them. According to Alzheimer's Victoria there are more than 7,000 Victorians living in the community with a YOD diagnosis.

The impact of a dementia diagnosis at a younger age (before the age of 65) has a significant impact on both the person and their family carers. This forum aims to address the service gaps and promote service improvement for these people.

Advocate and activist for dementia care, Kate Swaffer (pictured), will join the forum to share her personal experiences since being diagnosed with younger onset dementia.

VICTORIAN CARER STATEMENT

The Victorian Government is developing a *Victorian Carer Statement*, to be launched in National Carers Week in October.

This statement will be the voice of carers, outlining what services and supports work for carers, what could be improved or added.

Carers Victoria has begun the consultations with carers, peak and other organisations supporting carers, and relevant service providers. The consultations include:

- an online survey for carers
- carer focus groups around the state, eg: mental health, disability, autism, dementia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultural and linguistic diversity, LGBTIQ and young carers
- consultation forums around the state with peak and other organisations supporting carers and service providers
- an email address for further input.

The survey and details about the consultations from March to May 2017 are at www.carersvictoria.org.au

The department, with input from Carers Victoria, has developed a consultation paper to encourage people's thinking and input to the consultation processes.



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vmch.com.au



YOUNG CARER MENTOR PROGRAM

THE ROLE OF MENTORING IS SIMPLE, BUT ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG CARERS IS IMMEASURABLE

The Young Carer Mentor Program (YCMP) is an initiative that transforms the lives of young people. The program connects carers between the ages of 8 and 25, in northern Victoria, with mentors who give them emotional support, life skills and social opportunities.

For children and teenagers, caring for a loved one with a disability, mental illness or health issue can be isolating and challenging. It can mean they don't have the same opportunities as other children to study, play sport, see friends or relax. There are often other emotional and economic pressures on them as well. That is why the support of an adult outside their family unit is valuable and can often open up a world of possibilities for them.

The Young Carer Mentor Program was the focus of the VMCH 2016 Christmas appeal. We are delighted that due to the generosity of our supporters, we have raised enough funds to secure the program's survival in 2017 and possibly beyond.

"I am thrilled that the YCMP can continue this year," says Marion Rak, the program's Wangaratta-based coordinator. "Carers who are currently matched with mentors will benefit from their ongoing support and go on outings with other young carers. In addition, the program's continuance will allow those on the waiting list to be matched with suitable mentors."



Cobram teenager Kaitlin and her mentor Marion share a laugh

DONATE

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Use our donation coupon or go online to donate: www.vmch.com.au