

Issue 49 Spring 2015

# Seasons

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

Emotive speech helps  
raise profile – and funds

Generations unite

Consumer Directed  
Care is here

Meet our new  
Out & About  
Ambassador

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**VMCH**  
Villa Maria Catholic Homes



# CEO's Message

Welcome to the first edition of Seasons – our inaugural Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) newsletter. We look forward to continuing to deliver the latest news and stories from across our newly-merged organisation but with a fresh, new look, reflecting our bright and vibrant future.

The future is something we have been very focussed on over the past few months. And as the old saying goes, failing to plan is planning to fail.

Strategic planning is a vital process that sets a clear direction to help us meet the challenges of change. It acts as a blueprint to secure the long-term future of our organisation and ensures we continue to engage with our community and successfully grow and progress the services we provide.

On July 30 the Board and Executive of Villa Maria Catholic Homes met to begin planning for the next five years at the inaugural VMCH strategic planning day. Facilitated by Dr Heather Wellington, the gathering was also addressed by

His Grace, Archbishop Denis Hart, the CEO of Catholic Care Fr Joe Caddy and the Executive Director, Administration for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Francis Moore. Monsignor Tony Ireland, the Episcopal Bishop for Health, Aged and Disability Care, also participated in the day.

A strategic plan usually includes key objective areas with specific goals (such as 'construct Shared Supported Accommodation in Craigieburn') as well as the person responsible for attainment and a due date. The Board will then require a regular report on progress, which has the effect of keeping those accountable very focussed!

Prior to the event, a series of papers on issues such as demographics and the new aged care, community and disability funding systems were distributed to participants. General Managers supplemented this information on the day with their own goals for the future. Disability is an area that is likely to become a strategic priority, however with plans to spend around \$500 million over the next five years, every service area will feel the benefit.

As a result of the deliberations, a revised Vision, Mission and Values document has been prepared, and strategic objectives and key result areas refined. The aim is to have the VMCH Strategic Projects Committee finesse the document in conjunction with staff, with a view to having it formally adopted by the Board in late October. There is still work to be done between now and then, but the direction has been set.

There was unanimous agreement by participants that the merger of the two organisations offered a unique opportunity to develop an integrated service model comprising the full gamut of residential, community and disability services. Now that our services are across the full care spectrum, we will be able to offer our clients unprecedented support and coverage. Such a mantle of seamless support will also give VMCH a real competitive advantage over those providers who are unable to offer the same coverage. Here at VMCH, we truly aim to care for life.

Kind regards

**Greg Pullen**  
CEO

Our Values: Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Courage, Person Centred.



## Special thanks to:

Catherine Fitzgerald  
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 Mecure Portsea  
 Mulgrave Country Club  
 Pete Smith  
 Peter Davey Toyota  
 Tassel's  
 The Meat & Wine Co  
 Tim's Bookshop  
 Victorian Building Authority  
 Wendy Davis  
 Western Bulldogs Football Club  
 Your Tea

An emotional speech from a St Paul's College parent about the importance of the school's chaperoned bus service barely left a dry eye in the house at Dinner & Art with Heart on August 7.

It also inspired the 170 guests to dig deep for the auction of amazing artwork and silent auction items donated to the fundraising event at Fenix in Richmond.

An incredible \$40,000 was raised on the night, all of which will go to the St Paul's College Build a Bus program to help more children get to and from school.

Danielle Burnet's two sons, Sebastian and Charlie, take the bus each day.


The boys have a debilitating condition which means they have a shortened life and require full-time care.

Danielle told guests the school had made a huge difference to the boys' lives, but to wave them off on the bus each morning was like watching them stand on their own two feet.

Comedian Jean Kittson was a wonderful MC for the night and had guests in stitches with her humorous take on political travel expenses.

Guest speaker Tim Fischer spoke about his own experiences as a parent of a child with autism, and some of the amazing people he met during his time as Ambassador to the Holy See.

The crooning voice of Dan Hamill soothed the crowd, while caricaturist Paul Harvey captured the likeness of many guests in his unique way.

Thanks to all the guests for supporting this wonderful annual event, and to the many artists and sponsors for helping us to raise much-needed funds towards our Build a Bus program. 

# Generations unite

An aged care residence is not your typical hang-out place for teenage boys. However for Parade College student Chris Hides, spending time with seniors at Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) aged care in Bundoora is the highlight of his school week.

Chris, aged 16, is one of hundreds of Parade College students who have volunteered their time to make a positive difference to the lives of seniors at VMCH for over 20 years.

Their efforts were celebrated as part of National Student Volunteer Week (August 3-9).

The aged care setting was an unfamiliar one for Chris before he began volunteering last term. "I didn't really know what I was going into," Chris admits, "but it was a really great experience. I couldn't have asked for a better place to do it at. The staff and residents were so nice and welcoming."

Chris (pictured) said spending time with residents during arts and crafts, completing the quiz in the paper, playing bocce and just having a chat about the footy over a cup of tea had been a "special experience".

"It was a good opportunity to connect with the older community and gain a different perspective and see how they live on a daily basis. We spoke about their past, which was sometimes sad, but it was nice to hear their stories. I think going there made them happier, and me happy too actually."

Parade College teacher Darrell Cruse said the intergenerational




experience gave the boys a "healthy respect for the older generation".

"The boys also get the opportunity to use their skills in areas such as music, magic and storytelling to entertain residents. They really do grow up from their time working with the residents. The sense of responsibility is something they take very seriously."

VMCH Volunteer Services Manager Bronwyn Summers said National Student Volunteer Week was a great time to acknowledge the positive difference made by students who regularly visit VMCH sites.

"It gives students an appreciation of the values of the older generation and they learn that ageing is a natural part of life. The visits also allow the residents to relate to another generation, learn about new technology, current trends and even the latest news of the day such as what football team is on top of the ladder," Bronwyn said.

Bundoora resident Barry Smith said: "I'm happy to see the students come in to help. They're really good kids." 

Keith Banks had an upbringing unlike any other. A lighthouse keeper's son, he was raised in some of Victoria's most rugged, beautiful and isolated coastline areas.

Now aged 82, the ocean has called Keith back home as he and his wife of 62 years, Betty, settle at Star of the Sea Village in Torquay. The boutique retirement village – operated by Villa Maria Catholic Homes – is proving popular with seniors like Keith and Betty who want to live independently while remaining connected to their community.

Keith was aged just five when his Dad was first posted to Point Hicks lighthouse in East Gippsland in 1937. Over the next 14 years, Keith recalls a quiet childhood spent studying by correspondence, learning the ropes from his Dad, tending to pet sheep, and of course, gazing out at the ocean.

After Point Hicks, Keith and his parents served on Gabo Island during WWII where some "interesting things happened".

"It was very controlled in terms of what ship passed and what ship didn't pass. One day a worker spotted what he thought was four whales on the reef at Cape Powell. Dad said 'whales don't beach themselves on rocks' and reported it. We found out later they were most likely midget submarines laying on the rocks to recharge their batteries. Midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour just three days after our observation."

The family's last posting was at Wilson's Promontory. They were on duty when the infamous bushfire raged through the national park for three days in 1951. Keith, his parents and



other workers were lucky to escape with their lives.

"It was a different kind of life that is hard to describe," Keith recalls of his upbringing. "It was much the same as growing up on a farm. You never saw anyone much, other than the man who would bring your mail once a fortnight. But I was very close to my parents and enjoyed that part of it."


Keith's life quickened in pace when he met Betty. They married in 1953 and had two children. Fast forward six decades and it was their ties to family and the ocean which saw them settle at Star of the Sea.

"My son lives in Torquay and we had a holiday unit here so when it came time to downsize it made sense to make this our home."

Keith and Betty have embraced the village lifestyle and become connected to the local community. Keith is a member of the Torquay Bowling Club and Betty enjoys happy hour with village residents every Friday night.

"I really love the friendliness and the companionship of living at Star of the Sea," Betty said. "Like Keith, I love the ocean and I can go swimming here whenever I like. A group of us also go to the pictures on a Tuesday and this month the village has organised a caterer to come in and make us a nice dinner."

For Keith, Star of the Sea's proximity to the ocean (one kilometre) was its selling point. "I'm still very much connected with the sea. It becomes a part of you."

And of course, Keith can name the closest lighthouses. "Point Lonsdale and then the 'White Lady' at Aireys Inlet, followed by Cape Otway," he said. 

# Greater choice and control for seniors with CDC



Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) is at the forefront of delivering a new model of care designed to give seniors greater choice and control.

July 1, 2015 marked the official start of the full implementation of Consumer Directed Care (CDC) in Australia, which sees individuals determine the level of involvement they would like in managing their own Home Care Package.

VMCH has been fine tuning its CDC model to suit consumer needs and preferences since 2010, when it was one of a select number of organisations chosen by the Australian Government to trial the model.


Andrew Webb is one of 1066 Victorians accessing CDC through VMCH. Each week he receives a three-hour visit from Direct Care Worker Dianne Arter, who helps with household chores and prepares a week's worth of meals. Once a month he is also visited by a gardener to help tidy his yard.

Andrew was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 11 years ago. Then two years back a stroke left him "looking down the barrel of moving to a nursing home".

"It left me physically and emotionally in a pretty bad way. But through the care package I realised I could continue to live independently, with a bit of help.

"One of the things that causes a lot of fear in older people is losing control. However I feel like I have

far more input now (with CDC) in terms of what I feel I need. It's empowering and makes me feel like I'm not just a recipient (of care), but rather a participant. Having Dianne visit to prepare my meals in particular is a huge help... she's like part of my family!"

Villa Maria General Manager Community Services Heather Catherwood said seniors like Andrew are supported by a team of 25 Care Advisers and Care Support Officers who, together with the consumer, develop a plan and engage supports to ensure they continue living comfortably at home and remain connected to their community. 

Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) is thrilled to announce Young Victorian of the Year Luba Josevski as an Out & About Ambassador.

The Australian wheelchair tennis champion and 2015 Young Victorian of the Year said choosing to support VMCH and promote accessibility was an easy one.

"Accessibility is a concern that can unfortunately become somewhat of a main focus for people with disabilities," Luba said.

Luba (pictured) will be attending the third annual Out & About Fun Day at Albert Park on November 29, which aims to enable people with disabilities and mobility limitations to experience life as it should be – 100 per cent accessible.

"Rather than being excited about the event ahead, you can instead be focused on if you are able to get there okay, whether the venue is accessible, and whether you will be able to enjoy it," she said.

"The Out & About Fun Day takes all this away... it's already been considered and accounted for and all you need to focus on is the fun you'll have!"

Proudly supported by CityLink, the Out & About Fun Day will include all-abilities sports and activities at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, a pop-up sensory garden designed by Swinburne University, live music, animal farm, roving entertainers, face painting and a great Aussie sausage sizzle.



The day also promotes VMCH's Australian-first accessibility app, Out & About – Accessing your community, which lists accessible venues and events across Melbourne. The Out & About App and Fun Day won the 2014 Victorian Disability Sector Award for Excellence in Improving Participation.

Having the opportunity to participate in sport is something Luba is extremely passionate about.


Following the amputation of both her legs at age 15, Luba had to re-learn to walk using prosthetics. Always an active person, she became frustrated by a lack of sports offered to people with a disability who didn't use a wheelchair.

"It just never came to mind that I could take up wheelchair sports," she said. "I do not want another Australian child to ever again feel they are unable to participate due to lack of inclusion options."

Since picking up a tennis racquet, Luba hasn't looked back. She has now represented Australia around the world in more than 16 countries and says access to tennis and inclusion "completely changed my life".

Luba said she was excited to use my title as Young Victorian of the Year to promote inclusion and create awareness about the importance of accessibility.

She added that while Australia had made "great progress" in addressing accessibility, more work was needed to change perceptions and attitudes.

"People need to realise that we can all aspire to be our best and achieve our goals and dreams. A disability does not change our ability to achieve, our attitude does, as do the attitudes of those around us. This is again why I really value the work VMCH are doing to support inclusion and accessibility." 

# Opportunity knocks

Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) is putting the 'opportunity' back into op shops.

August 23-30 was National Op Shop Week – aimed to create awareness of and boost donations for op shops.

VMCH Retail Manager Paul Goggin says while the term 'opportunity' has long been synonymous with bagging a bargain, it also reflected the inclusion of more vulnerable people in the local community.

"Not only do the shops play an integral role in raising vital funds for our services, they also give people the chance to connect socially, improve their confidence and skill set, and make meaningful use of their time," Paul said.

Last month, six people with disabilities supported by VMCH's Gateway Service began volunteering weekly for the op shop warehouse in Wantirna to help sort through items and get them ready for sale.

"It's great to be able to provide an inclusive environment for people from all walks of life to interact and be part of a team. On the business side of things, the support increases our capacity to efficiently sort, store and distribute fashion and homewares to our four op shops."

Gateway Coordinator Sharon Browne said the partnership had many positive outcomes.

"The aim was to give people the opportunity to contribute to others and gain insight into what it means in practise to be a volunteer, while developing self-confidence and work readiness skills," she said.

Monique Sime, 22, (pictured) said she enjoyed her weekly sorting sessions with her friend Katie Ferrer.

"My favourite part is cleaning the shoes and putting the clothes on



the hook," adding she hoped the experience would be beneficial for job hunting.

Paul said he looked forward to building the op shop community both in-house and within the wider population.

"We also have local volunteers who use their passion for knitting and craft to support our shops. A group of ladies create one-of-a-kind, handmade blankets, cushions, mittens, tea cosies and greeting cards, which we have a really high demand for," Paul said.

"And we plan to invite men who are living with dementia, have experienced a stroke or have an age-related illness from our Men's Shed in Wantirna to try their handyman skills recycling broken or unwanted items."

## Villa op shop fast facts:

- The four op shops and warehouse are staffed by more than 125 volunteers and supported by part-time managers in each.
- 1,000 garments are despatched from the warehouse to our four shops each week.
- During summer, 250 bags of donated clothing are received through our shops and donation bins each week. 



Imagine a world without your favourite charities and all of the good work they do... Did you know that a gift left in your will leaves a lasting legacy?

Without these legacies our impact would not be as far-reaching and we would struggle to continue our work. That's why we are one of over 100 charities working together as part of the Include a Charity campaign.

This Include a Charity Week (September 7-13), we ask you to consider, when the time is right, and you have taken care of your family and friends, leaving a gift in your will that will have a lasting impact and help our work live on.

Villa Maria Catholic Homes uses the gifts it receives in our supporter's wills to provide programs and deliver services, as well as investing in vital capital



developments to enable us to expand our capacity to care for more people.


Gifts in wills are not used for administrative or operational expenses. For example, they do not fund mail that we send to our supporters, nor are they used to meet the costs of our twice yearly Fawkner Fellowship lunches.

A small but important example of the way in which gifts in wills have made a genuine difference to the lives of those we support is the recent purchase of 30

comfortable chairs with arm rests for the chapel at our Berwick aged care residence (pictured).

Residents and staff have commented on what a lovely difference they have made to their everyday living.

To find out more about how you can help and leave a lasting legacy visit:

[www.villamaria.com.au/get-involved/leave-gift-in-your-will](http://www.villamaria.com.au/get-involved/leave-gift-in-your-will) 



## Swing into action



Get your golf clubs ready... the inaugural Villa Maria Catholic Homes Charity Golf Day is fast approaching.

Enjoy a round of ambrose golf as you network with customers, showcase your company's services or products and promote your commitment to community development.

All funds raised will go towards the development of a dementia-specific lifestyle program to assist the people we support in our aged care residences.

A range of sponsorship and support opportunities are available but are limited for this popular event so please act quickly to secure your space.

When: Monday, October 19

Where: Southern Golf Club, Keysborough

Details: Narrelle Paige on 9412 8412 

# Celebrating the century of a special lady



Roma Bratby is a survivor.

The Villa Maria Catholic Homes' Shanagolden aged care resident has been through more than her fair share of loss and heartbreak over the years. But on August 12 Roma enjoyed some much-deserved love and attention as she celebrated her 100th birthday.

Born in Tasmania, Roma was the youngest of four children but spent most of her childhood around nuns instead of her siblings.

Due to an ongoing and expensive medical condition, Roma lived at St Joseph's Convent in Morwell after her family moved to Broken Hill from age 7 to 15.

"I used to tease the other boarders," Roma recalled. "I could hear the nuns coming along the corridor with their Rosary beads rattling and I would run and they chased me every night. I know now I must have been a difficult child."

When Roma turned 15 she secured a job waitressing at the Yallourn Hotel, where she met air force pilot Francis (Frank) Bratby.

A year later their son Frances Leonard Bratby was born. The following year Roma delivered three "lovely" daughters, who sadly died eight hours after their birth.

Heartbreak came back to haunt Roma when he husband died suddenly, aged 46.

"I was shocked when my husband Frank died. I had everything I wanted and needed; a six-roomed house, two cars, holidays..."


Times were tough for Roma following the death of her husband (who supported the family as an industrial chemist) so she moved in with her parents in Richmond and supported Frances working at the local Jex Steel Wool Factory.

"It was the best place I ever was and they were good to me," she recalled.

Roma later lived in Coburg and Hawthorn before settling at Shanagolden in January 2013.

Taking stock of her life, Roma remains pragmatic.

"I had a good childhood, and a very difficult adulthood. My son was a good son and supported me until he died in 2014, aged 82."


Roma says her "very strong devotion to the Virgin Mary" has helped her throughout her lifetime and hardships. So it was only fitting that a mass was held in her honour on her birthday by the Bishop of Sale, Patrick O'Regan. The mass culminated in the presentation of a Papal Blessing signed by the Pope, and a rendition of Roma's favourite tune, the Collingwood Football Club theme song. 



Villa Maria Catholic Homes was delighted to welcome Bishop Vincent Long to its St Bernadette's aged care residence in Sunshine North on July 22.

Bishop Long – an auxiliary bishop to the Western Region of Victoria – conducted the residence's weekly Mass and took time to visit seniors in their rooms to give them a blessing.

"It was a really fantastic day," said Lifestyle Coordinator Shantell Kemp.

"About 80 of our 95 residents are devout Catholics, so the Bishop coming along to visit is a really big thing for them. Some get emotional... they just really look forward to it." 

The amazing work of St Paul's College and its pupils is inspiring people across the globe.

On September 12, New York couple Lisa Buxton and Ariel Lakman are heading up the NY Lap4Life to raise funds for St Paul's Build a Bus appeal, supporting children with disabilities to get to and from the specialist school.

More than 50 people have signed up to the transnational challenge to walk a 51.5km 'lap' of Manhattan.

Lisa, whose cousins attend St Paul's College, said supporting VMCH was an easy choice.

"The original idea for the walk came from how easy it was for us to wake up one morning and walk 200 blocks through New York. We really wanted to support

people who were challenged to even walk one block, so a bus that helps students get to and from school and allowing them to attend really resonated with us," she said.

Lisa estimates the walk will take around 12 hours.

"We expect it to be pretty hard. It's a long walk and September weather in NYC is very temperamental. We will however have lots of support from both our sponsors and other walkers which will get us through."

An incredible \$5,700 has been raised so far with Lisa and Ariel hoping to hit the \$10,000 mark.

Meanwhile, St Paul's Dad Scott Butterworth is in training to run the New York City Marathon on November 1 to raise funds for St Paul's College. We'll feature Scott's story in the next edition of Seasons.



General Manager Special Education & Disability Services Maureen Willson said the school community was "extremely grateful" for Lisa, Ariel and Scott's efforts. 



## Seniors hit the track

Studying the form guide each day keeps Denis Quinn's "old brain ticking".

The 87-year-old, who lives at Shanagolden Village in Pakenham, has been a passionate horseman all his life.

On July 28 Denis (pictured) was among 22 Shanagolden residents cheering on winners at Pakenham Racing Club Senior's Race Day. The event – of which VMCH is a sponsor – was held at the newly relocated, world-class course near Tynong.

Irish-born Denis says he's "always loved horses".

He and his wife Therese raced greyhounds before moving into thoroughbred breeding and training.

"We had a few successes including winning the Grand National Steeplechase at Flemington some years ago," he said.

While Denis admits he's "not a big punter" he does love to put on a quinella here and there. 

# Eucharistic celebration



The iconic and beautiful St Patrick's Cathedral in East Melbourne played perfect host for the Villa Maria Catholic Homes Merger Eucharistic Celebration on September 1.

The first day of Spring didn't disappoint, with the sun streaming through the church's intricate and colourful stained glass windows. The uplifting voices of the Burke Hall Cantors and St Paul's College Choir filled the historical cathedral as around 600 members of the VMCH community joined to witness a special Mass conducted by the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Reverend Denis J Hart.

VMCH CEO Greg Pullen welcomed guests, before individuals supported by the organisation, staff and volunteers representing each service area

made their way in procession down the cathedral's aisle.

Archbishop Hart spoke of the great opportunity now open to VMCH to "embrace whole of life care", from children supported through our specialist education services to those living in our aged care residences.

"Where there are people who need care, there are people who give care," he said.

"You (people we support) provide us with joy and hope for the future," he said.

VMCH Board Chair, Bill Scales AO, said as a proudly Catholic organisation, it was only fitting that any commemoration of our organisation was within the celebration of the Eucharist.

"It is indeed pleasing to see so many groups that we serve present with us today and I thank you for your effort to be here," he said.

Mr Scales also thanked staff for their patience and commitment over the past nine months and made special mention of Archbishop Hart, the patron of VMCH, for presiding and for his ongoing interest and support of the organisation.

Mr Scales also thanked Reverend Monsignors Anthony Ireland EV and Gregory Bennet VG for their involvement, and all other clergy who put time aside to join the celebration.

Following the Mass, around 200 people gathered at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne for refreshments and to view a video giving a brief history of both organisations and a glimpse into its shared future. [VM](#)



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