

# Southern Star



2024 Winter Edition

**Honouring our  
devoted volunteers**

Read more page 6

**Discover the benefits of  
Cognitive Stimulation  
Therapy for people  
living with dementia**

Read more page 10

**Moisturise, protect  
and check: five tips  
to protect aging skin**

Read more page 26

**Southern  
CrossCare<sup>+</sup>** (WA) Inc.



# Contents

## NEWS

Collaborating with our Consumer Advisory Committee	3
Honouring our devoted volunteers	6
Supporting resident choices in menu planning	8
Launching the No One Dies Alone program	9
Cognitive Stimulation Therapy boosts memory and happiness for people living with dementia	10
Celebrating the spirit of nursing on International Nurses Day	12
Cockburn's Senior Community Citizen of the Year	13

## COMMUNITY

Navigating new roles as mother and daughter	14
A lifetime of dedication to helping others	15
Creating Easter bonnets and new memories at Victoria Park Nursing Home	16
Francis' road to reconnection and recovery	18
A new outlook on life	19
Spotlight on schizophrenia	20
Sharing stories over a cuppa	21

## WELLNESS

When is the best time to discuss aged care with a loved one?	22
Take time to recharge with day and overnight respite	24
Moisturise, protect and check: five tips to protect aging skin	26
Building fitness and friendships	28
Warm People	29
Home Care social support	30

Front page: Donovan House Respite Centre clients.

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## A note from the CEO



### Welcome to our Winter 2024 edition of the Southern Star.

In this edition, we're proud to share an update on many new initiatives we have launched, including the No One Dies Alone program to strengthen palliative care in our aged care homes and a new Cognitive Stimulation Therapy program to help improve memory and happiness for people with dementia.

We introduce you to Maureen from Success Village, who was named Cockburn's Senior Community Citizen of the Year, and Lena, who now cares for her 89-year-old mother at Foley Village. In our residential aged care homes, we look back at the joyful Easter bonnet crafting competition at Victoria Park Nursing Home and share Francis's inspiring recovery story as a Community Mental Health client.

Since our last edition, we have celebrated and acknowledged several significant days for our community. We recognised the dedication of our volunteers during National Volunteers Week, honoured nurses on International Nurses Day, and heard from Community Options client Phil, who candidly shares his experiences living with schizophrenia as part of World Schizophrenia Awareness Day.

For practical advice, our clinical team has provided five essential tips to protect aging skin, and we celebrate the friendships and vibrant community spirit fostered through aqua fit classes at our Health and Wellness Centre.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Southern Star and that these stories bring you hope, encouragement and a deeper connection to our community.

Warm regards,

Clare Grieveson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Southern Cross Care (WA) Inc.



Consumer Advisory Committee members Alma, Cindy, Fran and Noel (front) with Graham, Jo, Marg, Ray, Ross and Damien (back).

## Collaborating with our Consumer Advisory Committee

**Listening to our residents, clients and their families is essential to improving quality of life for the people we support.**

Our aim is to ensure everyone feels connected, included and fulfilled, especially those who might be experiencing loneliness. So, we've been working with the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) to update and improve our activity programs to meet the varied interests and abilities of our residents and clients.

CAC member Margaret Fisher said the committee had been working with different areas of the organisation since October 2023 to workshop ideas about how to create a structure that will deliver meaningful activities in our services.

"I think having purpose and meaningful activities is so important to our quality of life, no matter what stage of life we're at," she said.

*"We had an initial presentation with teams from each different area of the organisation, and together, we workshopped physical activities and person-centred activities that involve the community, encourage connection or relate to a person's culture or life story."*

"We also considered that sometimes, it may be activities that are happening around people that can still bring a lot of enjoyment to them."

Continue on page 4







Jeremiah Donovan House resident Edna meeting a Koala.



Sacred Heart College students visiting residents at Villa Pelletier.



Donovan Respite Centre bowling activity.



## Your feedback is important to us

We value your feedback including compliments, suggestions and complaints. There are many ways in which you can provide feedback:

- Contact your Facility Manager, Village Manager, Wellness Partner or Recovery Partner on the phone or ask to meet with them to discuss your feedback
- If you are a home care client, you can also talk to your Support Workers or Carers, as they can pass the feedback on to your Wellness Partner
- We have an online feedback system available to all clients and their families on our website where you can lodge a feedback form [www.scrosswa.org.au/contact-us/feedback/](http://www.scrosswa.org.au/contact-us/feedback/) or email us at [feedback@scrosswa.org.au](mailto:feedback@scrosswa.org.au)
- Use our QR code, which is linked straight to the feedback form. This will go to the relevant manager for actioning in line with our Feedback Policy
- Each of our residential aged care homes have monthly resident and relative meetings where all feedback is welcome to be raised and discussed. We also conduct regular experience surveys at our homes and services through a system called CarePage.



cherished memories. They've introduced therapeutic music sessions for people living with dementia, innovative new board games and are getting people involved in everyday tasks like gardening and cooking to help them feel at home.

"This has been a really important and satisfying piece of work," Margaret said.

*"I think I can speak for the other members of the committee when I say this collaboration is something that we can see is making a tangible difference for a broad number of consumers across Southern Cross Care's services."*

"I encourage residents, clients or other family members to consider joining the Consumer Advisory Committee so that they can also have a say in shaping the future of aged care services."

Created in collaboration with residents, clients, team members and the committee, our new activities framework ensures activities consider individual needs, including movement, connections, community involvement, special events and technology and learning.

Keeping residents connected to their community is already happening at Victoria Park Nursing Home and Hostel through the regular monthly visits from local school children and daycare attendees. Additionally, the home opens its chapel every week, welcoming community members to join in their services. At Joseph Cooke House, residents enjoy the companionship of a variety of animals, including regular petting zoos and a therapy dog. This interaction is especially valuable for those who cherished similar experiences before transitioning to an aged care home.

In our retirement villages, our Village Managers have been working closely with residents and social committees to ensure the activities available to residents match their wide range of interests and changing age demographics. There is now an increased variety, which includes intervillage activities, social activities, health and cognitive options, intergenerational visits and activities to meet men's and women's needs. This structure is providing more opportunities to connect, increasing participation in activities from both new and existing residents. Many villages have also introduced exercise programs such as table tennis, chair yoga and Tai Chi as well as men's sheds.

Our respite teams have made improvements to ensure that clients have engaging and fun experiences during their stays. They have started creating Personal Support Plans to help tailor activities to clients' backgrounds, interests and





Volunteer Loes playing lawn bowls.



Volunteers at SCC (WA)'s National Volunteers Week celebration.



Administrative Officer Chelsea, volunteers Robert, Sister Margaret, Lily, CEO Clare Grieveson, Allan and Head of Volunteer Services Ian.

## Meet our volunteers



### Christine

Christine has devoted over a decade to volunteering at SCC (WA)'s residential aged care homes. Christine's commitment to volunteering began at a young age, sparked by her belief in the importance of lending a helping hand wherever possible.

"I just think, if you've got time to spare and you can help, then do it because it's wonderful," she said. "You get as much out of volunteering as you give."

Loneliness can be a constant struggle for some residents, especially those without family or friends nearby. Christine and her fellow volunteers play a crucial role in reducing feelings of isolation, bringing laughter and connection to the residents days.

"Many of the residents are so appreciative of our time and what we do," she said.

"Some residents spend a lot of time alone. They don't always mix with the other residents, so having the volunteers coming in and joking around with them, I think it's really beneficial.

"If I know any silly jokes, I will tell them. If I've come across any amusing videos, I will show them to the residents. Laughter is the best medicine; I think it helps people so much."

Christine hopes to inspire a cycle of giving within the community.

"I hope that if I'm in a similar situation to these residents in a few years' time, there'll be somebody doing that for me."



### Mahesh

Mahesh's volunteering journey began three years ago when he stumbled upon an advertisement seeking a volunteer chess player. As an avid chess enthusiast, Mahesh saw this as an opportunity to engage in his hobby and make a meaningful difference in someone's life.

The ad led him to Margaret Hubery House, where he met Bruce, a resident with a keen interest in chess. As they played, Mahesh learned about Bruce's life, his family, and his values, enriching their time together far beyond their chess strategies. "Once I became familiar with Bruce, volunteering with Southern Cross Care meant so much more to me," Mahesh said.

"I was able to facilitate something that was extremely important and meaningful for Bruce, which was his passion for chess, as well as learning about the things that are important to him."

Mahesh believes that the human connection he and Bruce gained through volunteering has immensely enriched their lives.

"I think that human connection is so fundamental to having and living a beautiful and rich life," he said. "Volunteering fills up your own cup sometimes more so than it may fill up the cup of others. It just gives you such a big outlet to provide to the community and to others."

## Honouring our devoted volunteers

Over the past year, we have been fortunate to have 114 dedicated volunteers generously give over 10,400 hours of their time supporting our residents and clients.

Their selfless service, ranging from social visits and engaging activities to clergy visits, pet visits and musical performances, helps uplift our residents and clients and reminds them they are not forgotten.

In December, we recognised the contribution of our volunteers during our annual Volunteers Appreciation Breakfast and honoured individuals who reached milestones of up to 15 years of service to Southern Cross Care (WA) (SCC (WA)).

Volunteers Allan, Robert, Sister Margaret, Lily, and Reverend Donovan were recognised for five years of volunteering at SCC (WA), alongside Yvette, who has served an incredible 15 years with us. In May, we celebrated National Volunteers Week by inviting volunteers to an afternoon of lawn bowls at Rossmoyne Bowls Club.

Volunteers are an integral part of our community, bringing warmth and friendship to those who need it most. Thank you to all our volunteers. Your work is extraordinary and we are deeply grateful for your continued commitment and contribution.



## Supporting resident choices in menu planning



Southern Plus East Fremantle residents enjoying a meal.



Volunteers and employees at the first No One Dies Alone workshop.

Good food and an enjoyable dining experience are fundamental to the quality of life for people living in aged care homes. Creating a positive dining experience involves recognising and respecting residents' preferences, supporting their choices and engaging them in meal planning.

In our residential aged care homes, menus are reviewed twice yearly to reflect the changing seasons of summer and winter.

Hospitality Manager Vineeth said the menus are guided by feedback and suggestions from residents, ensuring they have a wide range of food options that are not just nutritious but also appealing to them, including cultural preferences.

"Food and dining play a major part in the quality of life for people living in aged care. So, it's important that we give people the opportunity to choose what they love and what they don't like in our menu progression," he said. "We listen to their likes and dislikes, and we prepare a menu accordingly, ensuring it's nutritious by consulting a dietitian."

Our dedication to making dining an enjoyable experience is reflected in the positive feedback we have recently received from our residents and their families.

*"Mum is very fussy with her food choices, but all the carers always give her a variety of choices."*

- Victoria Park Nursing Home resident family member

*"The curry we had for lunch today was fantastic."*

- Villa Pelletier resident Julie

*"The food has always been balanced, nutritionally wise, well presented and tasty plus a great variety."*

- Frank Prendergast House resident family member

To further improve our meal planning, our Hospitality Team has been busy designing the winter menu for our residents using a new web-based menu planning program called SmithKit.

Vineeth said SmithKit provides over 4,000 recipes, including those of different textures, cultural backgrounds, diet types, and nutrition levels.

"The software also saves favourite recipes specific to residents' preferences and tags recipes according to allergens," he said.

Our Hospitality Teams worked with SmithKit to create the winter menu, which was shared with residents for feedback before the menu was finalised.

## Launching the No One Dies Alone program

After months of preparation and training, SCC (WA) is proud to have launched our No One Dies Alone (NODA) program at Frank Prendergast House (FPH) and Joseph Cooke House (JCH).

It's a sad reality that many elderly people may face their final moments without the comforting presence of family or friends. The NODA program aims to ensure all aged care residents undergoing palliative care receive companionship and emotional support 24-48 hours before their passing.

In preparation for this meaningful launch, we engaged in discussions with our Consumer Advisory Committee and the wider community, provided training to clinical staff and a team of dedicated volunteers and implemented a new app to support volunteers through the process.

We have also been fortunate to work alongside researchers from Edith Cowan University's School of Nursing and Midwifery, who have played a vital role in preparing and evaluating this important program.

So far, we have trained 24 volunteers to provide company and emotional support to our residents in their last moments,

with another seven volunteers completing their applications.

"It is so comforting and reassuring to know that there are volunteers available and prepared to assist our residents at such a crucial moment of their life journey," Project Coordinator Ming Lai said.

"For those who participate, this is not merely a responsibility but rather a privilege.

"We are so grateful for their willingness to volunteer their time to be by a stranger's side."

The NODA program has been made possible thanks to grant funding from Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA).

**If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or want to know more, please contact Project Coordinator Ming Lai by emailing [NODA@scrosswa.org.au](mailto:NODA@scrosswa.org.au) or call 0434 820 320.**



## Cognitive Stimulation Therapy boosts memory and happiness for people living with dementia



**Chloe Fraser**  
Content and Marketing  
Coordinator

Have you ever heard a song, looked at a photo or seen an object and been transported back to a memory of days gone by? Well, SCC (WA) has trialled a new Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) program in collaboration with Memory Nurture to boost the memories of our clients living with mild to moderate dementia.

CST is a group-based program backed by worldwide, evidence-based research. CST can help improve aspects of dementia that people may experience including short-term memory, problem-solving skills, communication abilities and mood. It can also decrease symptoms of anxiety and

depression and improve overall quality of life, helping people to remain living independently at home for longer as opposed to transitioning to residential care facilities.

We collaborated with Memory Nurture, who designed a 16-week program consisting of group exercises and activities. The program, held in the Success Village Community Centre, was split into two courses. On Tuesdays, participants shared and listened to each other's life stories and created individual life storybooks at the end of the program.

Home care clients Helen, Portia, Nolene and Dawn with Wellness Partner Wayne and Memory Nurture employees Elizabeth, Jill, Rebecca and Madeleine.



On Fridays, the group participated in different exercises and activities, including word and number games, puzzles, quizzes, reminiscence therapy discussing past events, reality orientation discussing present events and music therapy.

Participants completed a DSAT (Dementia Specific Assessment Tool), and a quality-of-life survey before and after the dementia program.

The final DSAT assessment and quality of life survey revealed participants had retained cognitive function and improved their quality of life over the program.

Wellness Partner and program facilitator Wayne Enright said participant and family feedback was "extremely positive."

*"Everyone involved in the program said they felt connected and enjoyed sharing their lived experiences and listening to others within the safe space of the group," he said.*

Wayne hopes the program's success will encourage others in the community, living with mild to moderate dementia, to join the program and experience its benefits.

"This dementia program is a first for SCC (WA) and we hope to develop the capabilities to directly provide this dementia program in the future, filling a niche within the home care space," he said.





Joseph Cooke House Clinical Nurse Manager Sibi and Enrolled Nurse Trudy.

## Celebrating the spirit of nursing on International Nurses Day

At SCC (WA), we are proud to have a dedicated team of 140 nurses who bring an incredible passion to their work each day.

They not only ensure personalised care for every individual but form meaningful connections with our residents, offering compassion and support to residents and their families during the most challenging times.

On 12 May, we celebrated International Nurses Day by recognising our extraordinary nurses at morning teas across our sites.

Joseph Cooke House Clinical Nurse Manager Sibi proudly described nursing as a calling driven by her desire to help others.

“You really need to have the passion and the compassion within yourself to become a nurse,” she said.

“I have seen the way my parents have looked after their parents as they’ve gotten older, and that is what made me want to become a nurse.”

Sibi said nursing allows her to give back to the community and make a real difference, especially in aged care.

“In hospitals, you see people day in and day out, whereas in aged care, you get to know the residents from the time of admission until they pass away. It’s a journey which we go through, and I feel it is a blessing for me.”

As a Clinical Nurse Manager, Sibi’s role involves understanding each resident’s needs and wants to create personalised care plans for them. What she cherishes most, however, is the one-on-one interaction with residents, making sure their days are as comfortable and dignified as possible.

Similarly, Trudy, who has dedicated 20 years to SCC (WA), shares the same enthusiasm for her work.

She started her career as a carer before becoming an Enrolled Nurse with the support provided by SCC (WA).

Trudy said she finds joy and fulfilment in the stories shared by her residents.

“I always wanted to be a nurse,” she said.

“What I love most about my job are the residents. They’ve always got wonderful stories, and for some of them, they take you as their family because they’ve got no living relatives.

“It’s really special.”

## Cockburn’s Senior Community Citizen of the Year



Chloe Fraser  
Content and Marketing  
Coordinator

In appreciation of her incredible dedication to the Cockburn community, Success Village resident Maureen has been named the 2024 City of Cockburn Senior Community Citizen of the Year.

Volunteering at the Cockburn Seniors Centre, Maureen lends a helping hand and brings joy to visitors four days a week.

Whether greeting visitors in the reception area, brewing coffee in the cafe, creating displays to celebrate special occasions, or organising events, Maureen does it all with a smile.

She is also the centre’s health and safety representative and a member of the City of Cockburn’s age-friendly reference group.

“When volunteering, you just do whatever you need to do and go wherever you need to be to help out,” she said.

“I do it because I love it, so I was really stunned to win (this award); I didn’t expect it at all.”

Maureen retired in 2017 after more than two decades working in aged care and ten years as a fly-in, fly-out catering assistant up north.

She said her decision to start volunteering at the age of 70 has not only filled her days with purpose but also allowed her to reconnect with the community.



Success Village resident Maureen.

“There is a huge void when you stop working, and I always said I wanted to volunteer,” she said.

“I love working at the Seniors Centre.

“You are reunited with old friends but also make a lot of new friends too.”

Humbled to receive the accolade, Maureen said the greatest reward comes from the joy and companionship her volunteer work brings to others, especially in reducing loneliness.

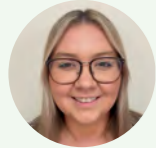
“A lot of people who come in are terribly lonely, so it feels good when you can sit with them or help them with something,” she said.

*“That’s why I like doing the displays for days like Christmas and ANZAC Day..they bring back memories for people. I just love seeing their faces when they walk in and see the displays.”*

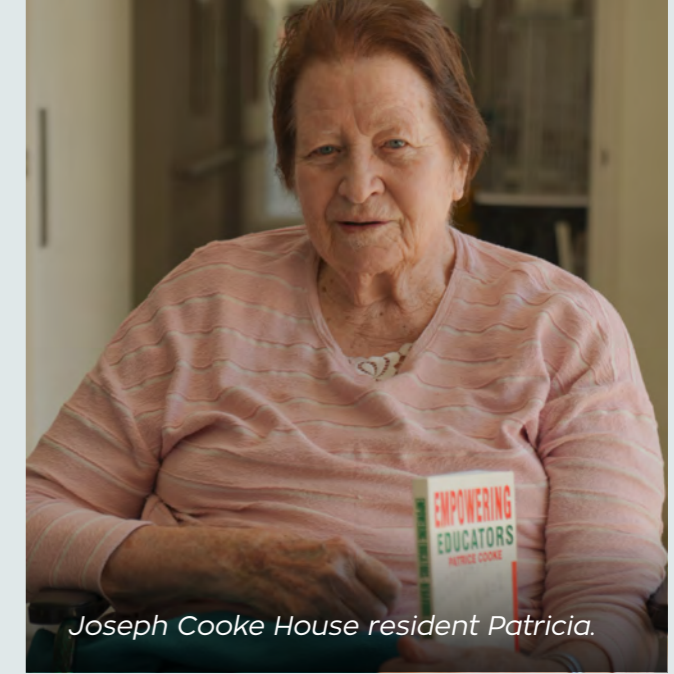
Maureen hopes to inspire others to lend a hand, share a smile and contribute to their community in their own ways.



# Navigating new roles as mother and daughter



Chloe Fraser  
Content and Marketing  
Coordinator



Joseph Cooke House resident Patricia.

# A lifetime of dedication to helping others

It is a privilege to care for residents like Patricia, who have made such an impact on the community throughout their lives. Patricia is the daughter of Joseph Cooke, a Senator and a Knight of the Southern Cross, whom one of our residential care homes was named after.

Patricia lived a very full working life as a clinical psychologist. She wrote and published three books focusing on supporting young offenders and children who had spent time living on the streets.

Patricia engaged in a lot of advocacy work to help introduce changes to the legal system to better support juveniles in incarceration. She and her colleagues also helped to foster 123 children between them.

"I've had a pretty full and busy life," Patricia said.

"I was honoured to get a gold medal from the Mayor of Perth for the difference my work has made over the years."

Lena said their family's appreciation for the Foley community has only grown over the years. "Foley Village is such a good community," Lena said.

*"Mum loves sitting out the front in her chair in the mornings and people come past and sit down and have a chat with her before I arrive. She often mentions, 'moving here was the best decision we ever made'."*

Now, Lena is taking steps to add her name to the lease, preparing for the possibility of moving in with her mum should the need arise.



Lena and Angelina.

"She basically taught me everything I know about cooking and now we still make a lot of Italian desserts together," Lena said.

"She's not capable of doing the recipe anymore, but I'll start rolling them and she says I'm not doing it right, so she will just take over without even thinking.

"We also go for walks nearly every night. I'll pick up one of her neighbours across the road and we all go down to East Fremantle and walk on the foreshore or down to Point Walter, sometimes we just walk up and down the streets here in the village."

Both Lena and Angelina participate in village activities, including bingo every second Monday in the Community Centre. Angelina also enjoys knitting and joins her neighbours weekly on Fridays.

As we get older, there often comes a time when the caregiving roles reverse, with children stepping up to support their aging parents. For Angelina and her daughter Lena, their bond has only grown stronger as they navigate this new phase of life together at Foley Village.

Every day from 11am to 7pm, Lena lovingly assumes the role of primary caregiver for her 89-year-old mother, Angelina, who lives with early-onset dementia.

Over the years, their relationship has been strengthened through travel and shared experiences as a family. Now, their days are filled with activities that enrich both their lives, from cooking together to enjoying leisurely walks and scenic drives around Foley Village and East Fremantle. They also involve Angelina's neighbours in their outings, keeping Angelina physically active and socially engaged.





Victoria Park Nursing Home Easter celebrations in Kalgoorlie.

# Creating Easter bonnets and new memories at Victoria Park Nursing Home

Victoria Park Nursing Home (VPNH) in Kalgoorlie gave residents a memorable Easter with a bonnet-making competition and special afternoon tea.

In the lead-up to the event, care teams and residents worked together to craft colourful Easter bonnets. They also made table decorations for the afternoon tea in the VPNH Hall.

An Easter egg run added to the excitement of the day and Activities Assistant Sue got into the spirit by wearing an inflatable Easter Bunny costume. To sweeten the event, the VPNH Hospitality Team prepared

homemade cakes and biscuits decorated with Easter eggs.

SCC (WA) CEO Clare Grieveson and board members attended and participated in the festivities.

The highlight of the day was the bonnet competition, a showcase of the creativity and vibrant spirit of our residents and employees. Chair Bradley Prentice proudly announced the competition winners. Noeleen, Pam and Morf were the winning residents, and Annette, Kay and Anuja were the winning employees.



The event gave residents an opportunity to connect with their peers, reminisce about their own Easter traditions and create new memories with the VPNH community.

"It was such a wonderful event," said resident Noeleen. "It brought back memories of Easter time when my family was young".



Scan the QR code to read our feature in the Kalgoorlie Miner.



# Francis' road to reconnection and recovery



Chloe Fraser  
Content and Marketing  
Coordinator



Community Mental Health client Francis.

**Eighteen months ago, Francis found a change of lifestyle and a renewed sense of hope within SCC (WA)'s community mental health program.**

After his marriage ended, Francis faced a profound personal struggle, which led to unemployment, homelessness, and disconnection from the people he loved the most.

Francis' journey through these hardships led him to seek support and accommodation from several homeless services, a time he describes as being particularly tough.

"It is a great service they provide, but it just wasn't a good environment for me to be in," he said.

"I just couldn't continue living that way. That's when I realised that I needed to sort my life out. I needed help."

It was his decision to consult a psychologist two years ago that connected him to tailored mental health services and, ultimately, to SCC (WA).

"Without those other services and without Southern Cross Care, I don't know where I'd be," Francis said.

Since working closely with his Recovery Partner, Sean, Francis has taken steps

towards mending his family relationship and now has regular contact with his daughter, which is extremely important to him.

He has also achieved many of his other goals, including gaining steady employment and moving out of his share house and into his own space.

"Apart from the people at work and a couple of mates, Sean is the only contact I have so it's good knowing that every Thursday he'll be here," Francis said.

"We normally go for a walk or a feed and do a lot of planning around my goals and things. I need that encouragement. Otherwise, I just get stuck in a rut, and once you're in it, it's hard to get out of it."

Sean said Francis has put a lot of effort into rebuilding his life and has grown in confidence since they first met.

"Francis' journey is still beginning, but he's already come such a long way," Sean said.

"I've seen him come out of his shell and become more social, which is one of his goals we're going to start working on a bit more, but having consistent work and making changes to his life, like building relationships back with his family, has been fantastic for him."

# A new outlook on life

**Home Care client Bev vividly remembers being stationary at a set of traffic lights when she was suddenly hit by another vehicle. The car accident, more than 20 years ago, left her with a lasting leg problem affecting her mobility and independence.**

"That's when this leg problem started," she said. "I didn't really follow it up, but I've never been quite the same."

At the time, Bev did not anticipate the long-term impact of her injuries. Until her life took another unexpected turn years later when she underwent brain surgery to remove a non-malignant tumour. After the surgery, Bev noticed the issues with her legs had increased and after a discussion with a friend, she decided to explore rehabilitation options.

"I couldn't drive for a year, and my husband was out quite a bit playing bowls and doing things," she said.

"We want to stay living in our own home for as long as we can, so that's been a big factor in me wanting to prioritise my health and mobility," she said.

Initially joining a local fitness group, Bev found the program too intense for her stage of recovery. This led her to seek specialised support from Southern Plus, where she found a program tailored to her unique needs through her Commonwealth Home Support Programme funding.

"The type of support I am getting from Southern Plus is much more suitable to what I need," she said.



Commonwealth Home Support Programme client Bev and Physiotherapist Remy.

"The exercises have been very measured, and the massages have been terrifically beneficial."

Bev also reported improvement in her leg's strength and balance, and a significant reduction in fluid retention. She is also confidently driving again.

Bev said Physiotherapist Remy and Health and Wellness Centre Manager Mary-Ann have been key to her recovery. She said their expertise and emotional support have revitalised her attitude and outlook on life.

"I haven't been feeling very positive since I've had this injury and surgery, and that's not me," Bev said.

*"Since working with Remy and Mary-Ann, I'm feeling more like me. And having nice friendly people come into my house that I feel comfortable with has made a big difference, too."*



# Spotlight on schizophrenia



**Chloe Fraser**  
Content and Marketing  
Coordinator



Community Options client Phil.



Senior Recovery Partner Theresa.



Willetton Senior High School students  
with Margaret Hubery House residents.

**For Phil and many people like him, living with schizophrenia is a constant battle that affects every part of his day.**

Diagnosed with schizophrenia as a teenager, Phil openly speaks about the challenges he faces living with the condition, which he describes as a “cruel disease.”

“It’s not easy, but I’ve learned to live with it,” Phil said. “Tears sometimes fill my eyes when I’m really suffering badly from it, especially the paranoia. “Sometimes I think, why me? But I’ve had this since I was a kid. I just do the best I can.”

Phil joined our recovery program at Community Options in Mount Claremont in 2009 after spending some time at Graylands Hospital. Over the last 15 years, he has learned important skills that help him manage his condition and has embraced new hobbies that add joy to his life.

*“I’m learning to play cricket, and I’m learning to laugh at myself when I can. The team in here has helped me get better with cooking and cleaning.”*

Senior Recovery Partner Theresa said there were many misconceptions about schizophrenia and the impact it has.

“I don’t think people realise how hard it is for people who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia,” she said.

“There’s a misconception that schizophrenia is scary. But it’s actually very complex, and it impacts people in many different ways.

“It can be hard for families to see their loved ones go through, so it is really good that there are places like this to support the individual and their families.”

By focusing on personalised goals, recovery programs like Community Options play a crucial role in helping our clients achieve their recovery

goals of living independently, having career success and maintaining healthy relationships in their community.

“Everyone has their own goals they work on. So, Phil has been concentrating on his cooking, personal hygiene, health-specific goals and getting out into the community more,” Theresa said.

“Phil loves his sport. He has a pool table here and he goes out and plays sport three days a week. So, through the challenges we find lots of good.”

Phil is now working towards his goal of giving up smoking.

“I’m working on it,” he said. I’m not smoking as much as I used to.”

On 24 May, we recognised World Schizophrenia Awareness Day. The day reminded us about the importance of reducing the stigma that is still associated with schizophrenia and the need to advocate for early detection and intervention to ensure people receive the support they deserve.

## Sharing stories over a cuppa

Intergenerational visits between children and people living in aged care offer great benefits for both groups. The happiness and laughter young people bring can uplift the mood of older people, reducing feelings of loneliness and boredom.

To celebrate International Tea Day in May, Margaret Hubery House residents enjoyed a visit from Willetton Senior High School students. The residents engaged in meaningful conversations, socially connecting with the students while also learning about the importance of hydration and the benefits of drinking tea.



## When is the best time to discuss aged care with a loved one?



Aging and aged care are difficult topics for many families and it's very common for people to avoid thinking about and discussing where they plan to live as they begin to need more help and care.

But by avoiding a conversation about how to plan for care and housing as we age, we place pressure on our loved ones. I've seen many families experience conflict when they are forced to make urgent decisions they are not prepared for.

When an individual enters cognitive decline, it can become extremely difficult for them to communicate their wishes. They may begin to experience memory loss, declining attention span and sometimes even the ability to reason. And this is one of the main reasons I suggest getting your loved ones on the same page as you about your aged care plan early.

### So, how can we better plan for our own aged care?

An Advance Care Plan is a formal recording of your personal and health care wishes. It can be a very important tool for ensuring that decisions about moving into aged care are driven by wants, not urgent needs.

It is about identifying who you would want to speak on your behalf if you could no longer communicate your preferences for care and what you would want them to say.

Ideally, an Advance Care Plan is developed with important decision-makers in your immediate family and inner circle or by you and provided to this inner circle so you are all on the same page.

### When is the best time to create an Advance Care Plan?

Depending on your own circumstances, if you are between 50 and 70 it might be a good time to consider developing an Advance Care Plan and sharing it with your loved ones or someone you assign with your Enduring Power of Guardianship.

It may be confronting to consider cognitive and physical decline when you are in good health. But that is, in fact, the best time to think about and document how you would want to be cared for at various stages of decline.

There are many online resources that outline what needs to be included in your care plan. Your state government health department is a good place to search. For example, it should include your references for at-home or residential aged care and how you would fund your choice.

By involving the whole family and ensuring they understand your health and personal preferences, you can empower yourself and ensure your wishes for the future are discussed and understood.

When the Advance Care Plan is in place, your family members can have the comfort and peace of mind to know that future decisions will align with what you really want, rather than what they guess you might want.



#### Online resources:

[www.advancecareplanning.org.au](http://www.advancecareplanning.org.au)

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)



## Take time to recharge with day and overnight respite

Being a full-time carer for a loved one can be challenging, which is why it is important that carers take a break or time away from their usual care responsibilities.

Donovan House Respite Centre in Forrestfield and Tony Quinlan Respite Centre in Hilton provide day and overnight respite options in a comfortable, safe and engaging home away from home.

Whether you or a loved one is staying for a few hours or a few days, both centres offer the perfect opportunity to interact with others and participate in different activities.

Day respite services run from 9am to 3.30pm, unless prior arrangements have been made. For those requiring longer care, our overnight or 'cottage style' respite is available in single bedrooms with shared bathrooms.

### OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:



Transportation to and from the Centre



Assistance with medication



Personal care



Nutritious meals



Social engagement



Meaningful activities and outings



Donovan House Respite Centre clients enjoying morning tea with employees.



Donovan House Respite Centre client Smiljana.

*“Mum has balance problems so when she moves, I’m always on alert. When she’s at respite, that part just disappears, and I can have a break to recharge and do things. Mum has opened up a lot since going to respite. She comes back at the end of the day happy, and makes me happy.”*

- Renato, whose mother Smiljana attends Donovan House Respite Centre in Forrestfield.

In our recent feedback survey, some of our respite clients told us:

*“It’s absolutely great. The staff are friendly, caring, and helpful. They respect my decisions, and never rush me despite of how slow I move. I am so grateful.”*

- Donovan House Respite Centre client.

*“I come every day and it’s great. I do all the activities. The food is very good.”*

- Tony Quinlan Respite Centre client.

### Eligibility and funding:

You or your loved ones may be eligible to receive Government funding for respite care through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) or Home Care Package (HCP). To find out if you are eligible, you will need to arrange an assessment through My Aged Care.

### Are you looking to broaden your social circle with like-minded women?

Join our Ladies Group for a memorable Monday experience at Donovan House Respite Centre. Gather with women aged 65 and over for a range of exciting activities that cater to diverse interests. We even offer a free transport service for clients living within a 5km radius.

For more information, contact one of our knowledgeable client engagement officers on 1300 669 189 or visit [scrosswa.org.au](http://scrosswa.org.au).

### Donovan House Respite Centre

138 Lewis Road, Forrestfield WA 6058

### Tony Quinlan Respite Centre

36/84 Collick Street, Hilton WA 6163



# Moisturise, protect and check: five tips to protect aging skin



**Diane Piper**  
Nurse Consultant



## Strengthening palliative care in our aged care homes

Our residential aged care homes in Broome, Forrestfield, Shelley and Rossmoyne recently received funding from End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) to develop and strengthen our palliative care services.

We understand that end-of-life care is a deeply personal journey, and we are proud to be taking steps to improve the support available for residents and their families.

With funding from ELDAC, we have set up a memorial corner, enhanced palliative care education and training for our employees, and established a palliative care hub with resources for employees, residents, and their families.

We have also appointed an SCC (WA) employee as an ELDAC Aboriginal Consultant to support residents and families through the palliative process, implemented a palliative care trolley to aid in family and resident care, introduced Palliative Care Champions and Teams and engaged employees in reflection and debriefing sessions following a resident's passing.

We look forward to our continued partnership with ELDAC to further enhance the care we deliver to our residents.



The new memorial corner at Germanus Kent House in Broome.

Maintaining the health and integrity of our skin, particularly as we age, is crucial for our overall health. As our largest organ, our skin requires special care to protect it against common concerns like skin tears, pressure injuries and sun damage.

Here are five essential tips to help protect our skin as we age:

### 1. Moisturise twice a day:

Keeping our skin hydrated is key to preventing injury. Remember to moisturise your skin twice a day, especially after showering. Integrating a good quality moisturiser into your daily routine can significantly strengthen the skin's resilience, improving its elasticity and moisture content. Moisturisers do much more than simply soothe dry skin; they act as a barrier, protecting the skin from harsh elements and reducing the risk of developing skin tears, which can lead to significant discomfort and pose a risk of infection. Research shows that 70-80% of skin tears occur on arms and hands, and applying moisturiser twice a day can reduce the risk of skin tears by 50%. Remember to look for pH-balanced moisturisers free from perfumes or additives that can irritate the skin.

### 2. Pad furniture and sharp corners in your home:

Minimising the risk of skin tears from bumps and falls can be as simple as padding the edges of furniture and other areas where accidents are likely to occur. This simple step can make a significant difference in preventing unnecessary injuries.

### 3. Be gentle to your skin when showering:

As we age, skin is more susceptible to damage from harsh treatments, so it is important to implement a gentle showering routine. Using pH-balanced products, showering in warm water rather than hot and patting the skin dry rather than rubbing can prevent irritation and aid in maintaining healthy skin.

### 4. Wear protective clothing and sunscreen when outdoors (even in winter):

Despite the lower temperatures, the sun's UV rays can still cause significant damage to the skin, including sunburn and an increased risk of skin cancer.

With age, the skin becomes thinner and loses some of its protective layers, making it more susceptible to UV damage. Wearing protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts and wide-brimmed hats, and applying a high-SPF sunscreen when spending time outdoors can significantly reduce these risks.

### 5. Perform regular skin checks:

Regularly check your skin for any signs of damage, irritation, or new growth. If you do notice any areas that don't look right, report them to your doctor or to your clinical team if you are living in a residential aged care home. It is also recommended to talk to your doctor about how often you should be getting a professional skin check. Catching potential issues early will prevent complications down the line.

By integrating these practices into our daily regime, we can significantly enhance the protection and resilience of our skin, ensuring it remains healthy and robust against common age-related challenges.





Health and Wellness Centre clients Helen, Maxine, Mandy and Debbie in the hydrotherapy pool.

## Warm people



**Ian Simms**  
Head of Pastoral Care  
and Volunteer Services



## Building fitness and friendships

The Southern Plus Health and Wellness Centre helps clients over 55 achieve their health goals or recover from injuries. But for a group of women who attend Aqua Fit classes, the centre has also become a place where they have formed lasting friendships.

At the Centre, clients work with our team of Exercise Physiologists and Physiotherapists to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes a variety of services such as one-on-one exercise programs, group classes in the hydrotherapy pool, and tailored rehabilitation programs.

For Mandy, Helen, Debbie and Maxine, the Aqua Fit classes have been more than just a form of exercise, it has brought them closer together and created a sense of community.

The women meet several times a week to work out together.

Debbie, who has been attending classes at the centre for about five years said the water-based exercises offer relief for her knees and doing it with friends made exercising more enjoyable.

"Physically, my knees feel better since starting the classes and doing it in a group is great," she said. "You learn bits and pieces about other people and have each other to encourage you."

Mandy, who has been dealing with a frozen shoulder for about 18 months, also finds the low-impact class perfect for her needs.

"I'm not really a gym person, so I love the hydro classes," she said.

"The other ladies that go are all so lovely, and we are quite close. It's welcoming, and when you feel like you've made a friendship group, it's just more fun to be there. You look forward to seeing the girls."

Maxine and Helen said they initially started the classes as a way to keep fit and help them stay mobile as they age. They agreed that meeting new friends was an unexpected bonus.

"I've created some great friendships out of it, and we often meet and go out for lunch and things. So, it's been really quite lovely," Maxine said.

"It lightens my mood for the day because you meet people and get to know them, and it's something to look forward to," Helen said.

To find out more about our aqua classes or other services on offer at the Health and Wellness Centre in East Fremantle visit our website [scrosswa.org.au/wellness](http://scrosswa.org.au/wellness) or call our team on **6424 7443**.

The colder months of the year are here, and those summery items of clothing are giving way to bulkier garments that promise warmth. Activities around the neighbourhood suddenly undergo a ruthless evaluation of how warm I will be at the end of them, especially when the wind makes us wonder why we ever complained about the heat of summer. We appreciate warmth. We look for it and know we need it when we no longer have it.

We understand the physicality of warmth only too well, don't we? But there is another kind of warmth that we need just as much, I reckon. We interact with people all the time, meeting individuals from various backgrounds and experiences who are all interesting in their own right. But not everyone is warm, not even in that first meeting when we might expect a person to put their best foot forward, shall we say. Some people, we would have to admit, are downright cold. And it takes considerable effort to keep working the relationship so that we achieve even a basic level of functional warmth.

I appreciate warm people, as I'm sure you do, and I reflected this week on what makes them such special people in our relational world and how they manage to communicate this lovely quality of warmth.

I suspect we find warm people so inviting because they do just that: they invite us into their space. They make us feel that it is perfectly okay for us to be around them and their friends, that there is a place for us in their relational network if we would care to join in. That's a world away from the kind of people who foster cliques and exclude people who look differently, speak differently, or have different ideas. We love being around warm people, and unless we deliberately damage the offer of this space by rudeness or disrespect, we enjoy the sense of wellbeing that quite naturally unfolds.

Have you watched warm people do what they do so well? They smile a lot, genuine smiles that light up the eyes. They turn their bodies during conversations so that quieter ones can join the circle effortlessly. They are on the lookout for someone who might have said something unfortunate that may have embarrassed another, and they add words that smooth over the likely offence. If we have not followed the line of discussion, they take the time to fill us in without patronising us or making us feel we are holding up the group by our clumsiness. They notice and they encourage, and we are enriched because of them.

I value warm people, and I am inspired by them because they build up rather than break down. Can we be like that, I wonder?



# Brighten your days with home care social support



Home care client Jean and Support Worker Sue.

It's amazing how a leisurely outing, interaction with those around you or a chat over coffee can effortlessly brighten your day. At SCC (WA), we believe those joys should never fade away, no matter your age.

Did you know the services available to you as part of your Home Care Package and Commonwealth Home Support Programme can include more than clinical and domestic care? Our compassionate Support Workers can also help you reconnect with the community around you.

In research undertaken by Edith Cowan University, 29% of clients said they would like to do more social activities.

Whether helping you with grocery shopping, revisiting cherished places, or sharing a cup of coffee and a slice of cake, our Support Workers will be there to share the moment with you.

Understanding that each individual's needs are unique, our Wellness Partners ensure the services you receive through your Home Care Package or Commonwealth Home Support Programme cater to your age-related care needs.

As part of our commitment to support you in living a vibrant, independent life at home, our Wellness Partners work with you to tailor your home care plan to not only meet your clinical needs, but also strengthen your social wellbeing. Our goal is to ensure you feel connected and supported every single day.

Support Worker Sue said home care encompasses much more than cleaning and clinical tasks. It's also about creating moments of joy and providing emotional support for those who need it most.

*"A social visit can be just sitting there having a chat, having a cup of coffee, maybe doing a little bit of dusting, or going through old photos. Or you might go out and help them with their shopping," she said. "It's also about the emotional connection and support, just being there for them."*

For clients like Jean, social visits from their support workers are not just appointments on their calendars; they are something to look forward to.

"Sue comes once a week and takes me out shopping and then we go out for a meal," Jean said.

"She's terrific. "I have great fun when we go out and I go home feeling so well. We have lots of laughs, which is the main thing."

So, if you or someone you know has been feeling isolated lately, contact us today to explore how you can access social support through your Home Care Package or Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

Please note that eligibility criteria apply, and the extent of support provided is based on your assessed age-related care needs.



To find out more about the breadth of services available in your area scan the QR code or call us on 1300 669 189.





**Southern  
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[www.scrosswa.org.au](http://www.scrosswa.org.au)

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