

together stronger

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL UNITINGCARE AGEING SUPPORTERS | AUTUMN EDITION 2011



Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Together Stronger*

As the Acting Director UnitingCare Ageing for only a few short weeks, I have had the opportunity to speak initially with many of the staff in leadership roles across the organisation.

In those conversations it quickly becomes clear that the passion and commitment to creating and delivering services based on individual and community needs is the basis of all that we do every day whether it comes from our volunteers, our partners, our staff or our leadership team. I am looking forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with clients, residents and partners in the coming months.

I have only recently joined UnitingCare NSW.ACT in my capacity as the Director of Corporate Finance and Strategy and was drawn to being part of an organisation that provides such invaluable services to the community. As I become increasingly involved with the work our dedicated staff undertake every day in UnitingCare Ageing, I am reassured of the quality care and support that we are providing to the 14,000 people in our services.



Together with the UnitingCare Ageing Board and the Executive Leadership Team, we will continue to deliver on our Inspire Strategy ever mindful of our vision of Inspired Care... Enriching Lives... Together.

David Makinson
Acting Director
UnitingCare Ageing



Debunking the myths of ageing

Seniors Week 20 – 27 March

We're all ageing at any given point in our lives but there are some perceptions of older people in the community that make most of us fear the process – older people are often not seen as contributing to those around us, can face a loss of respect and are only seen as being dependent on others.

Meet one of our savvy seniors –

Margaret Sommerville

At 98 years of age, Margaret admits it might be time to start thinking of slowing down but she has too much on to give it much consideration.

For the past three decades Margaret has dedicated much of her time to bringing joy to children with her handmade knitted finger puppets, over 50,000 in total, and it's a passion she's in no hurry to give up just yet.

"I need something to do and I love making them, so I keep on keeping on..." Margaret explains.

Having nearly reached a century, Margaret has accumulated decades of wisdom and skill which are proving a valuable asset in both her local and wider communities.

Margaret's range of puppets feature more than 100 types including much loved Australian animals and birds such as emus and kookaburras, as well as pandas, nativity figures and many more.

It's true that some of us might age better than others but the great thing about the myths of ageing is they can be disproven. This Seniors Week, from 20 – 27 March 2011, UnitingCare Ageing asked the community to debunk the myths of ageing by acknowledging the contributions of all seniors.

“Everyone has an amazing story and something special to give but it's a sad fact of life that the older we get, the less acknowledged the truth of that statement is,” explained Joanne Toohey, Director Operations, UnitingCare Ageing.

“Many aged care providers, ourselves included, not only have wonderful older clients, but wonderful older staff members who are continuing to touch the lives of those around them each day.”

“There's currently a lot of concern about the ageing population and yes, this is something we have to address as a society, but let's embrace the positives as well.”

Seniors everywhere in UnitingCare Ageing are debunking the myth of growing older. Take 98 year old

Margaret, who produces handmade finger puppets which are sold to further the work of Christian organisations and power couple 77 year old Gordon and 75 year old Pat, who have raised and trained a prize winning racehorse and written an autobiography between them in recent years.

There's also 85 year old Anzhen, an accomplished pianist who has produced three CDs in the last two years with a fourth on the way, and 93 year old John who is busy restoring an AJS 500cc motorbike to its original condition.

“As a community we need to acknowledge and respect the contributions seniors continue to make,” Ms Toohey urged.

So take the time to chat to an older person about their life and what they are up to. Your quiet neighbour may have a thing or two to teach you about the joys of ageing and the contributions they can make, irrespective of the number of birthdays that have passed.

Sold through retail outlets and online suppliers, the proceeds further Christian work around the world.

“After over 30 years of making the little knitted finger puppets it was very satisfying to have reached the grand total of \$200,000 given away!” Margaret says.

In October of last year Margaret received a phone call from the CEO of Somerville Community Services. The Darwin organisation was named in honour of Margaret's efforts in evacuating 95 children from Croker Island to Sydney in 1942, a six week ordeal chronicled in her book, They Crossed a Continent.

As a result of the phone call Margaret sat for well-known Darwin artist, Catherine Paton, who sketched and painted her portrait.

Margaret also took the time to participate in a state wide survey on ageing conducted by the University of NSW in 2010, culminating in a guest speaker invitation.

As for Margaret?

Happily established in her home of ten years, UnitingCare Ageing's Mayflower Village Rockdale, Margaret is travelling to Darwin this year to celebrate the release of a book featuring her achievements. Margaret's puppets and the upcoming trip ensure that her life won't be too quiet anytime soon.



UnitingCare Ageing applauds recommendations in draft inquiry report

UnitingCare Ageing has welcomed the release of the Productivity Commission's draft inquiry report into Caring for Older Australians, noting that the recommendations appear to address underlying structural weaknesses in the current system.

UnitingCare Ageing identified the report as a groundbreaking report which has correctly identified and responded to systemic weaknesses in the current aged care and services system.

Key recommendations applauded by UnitingCare Ageing include:

- Greater consumer choice in where older Australians receive care and services, who provides it and how they pay for it;
- Simpler access to aged care and services underpinned by a comprehensive information service and common assessment across a continuum of care;
- Simpler, more transparent regulation with improved governance arrangements;
- The preservation of safety nets for people who are financially disadvantaged or have special needs;
- A more equitable approach to financing including increased provision for co-contributions which are means tested;

- Independent assessments and evidence used to determine a fair cost of care to inform pricing;
- Consumer protection arrangements which require much greater transparency about reporting on the cost of care and accommodation; and
- Improved professional development and competitive pay arrangements for nursing and care workers.

As the single largest aged care provider in NSW and the ACT, UnitingCare Ageing has been strongly advocating for greater consumer access and control in aged care and services.

Figures stated in the report predict that by 2050, 3.6 million older Australians will be receiving care. This is more than a three-fold increase from the one million people currently receiving care in 2011.

When we discuss older people needing care and services, we are talking about people we know – they could be our parents, our partners, friends, neighbours and even ourselves.

It is imperative that the current flaws are addressed before meeting the needs of older Australians becomes a significant crisis.

As a provider we want to be able to see barriers to access and choice removed so that we can meet the needs of every older person, regardless of their position in life.

Further reading into the report is required but as an organisation we strongly urge the Government to take note of the recommendations outlined and begin considering the ways they could be implemented to improve the lives of all older Australians.

Property Development Update – North Coast Region

UnitingCare NSW.ACT is paving way to effect positive change in the lives of those the organisation serves. The development of a new model of care for UnitingCare Ageing focuses on healthy ageing, independence and choice for older people, integrating them into the community and developing services around the person. The service model underpins UnitingCare Ageing's new service development projects across NSW and the ACT.

In this section we highlight development projects in the North Coast Region. Please contact us to register your expression of interest.



Seniors Development

Location: Nambucca Heads, North Coast NSW

Status: Under construction

The development at Nambucca Heads is an 86-bed residential facility which provides 40 low care places, 46 high care to complement nearby independent living units and day centre services. The Nambucca Heads precinct is a community hub for older people which incorporates onsite services such as a café, library, and salon.

The precinct enjoys coastal and hinterland views, whilst its location provides close, convenient access to shops and the CBD. The design is a unique feature of the development, including interesting internal settings and a resident rooftop garden that encourage interaction and mental stimulation.

The new development will embody UnitingCare Ageing's person-centred approach, through a holistic case management team. At Nambucca Heads, there is opportunity for people to continue to be included in all aspects of community life.



Residential Aged Care Development

Location: Port Macquarie, North Coast NSW

Status: Under construction

The Port Macquarie development enjoys all the benefits of Northern NSW coastal living. It provides convenient access to the local community, shopping and specialist healthcare services; and will accommodate 110 people, (60 low care, and 40 high care placements).

The development creates a unique intergenerational community atmosphere that provides an innovative and dynamic living experience for people with Dementia, a "wellness centre" and offers diverse social choice and flexibility to foster a natural integration and interaction with the wider local community. An intergenerational model will be realised through the co-location of UnitingCare Children, Young People and Family Services, a children's playground and a commercially operated café.

Residents will have access to landscaped gardens and courtyards, luxurious private rooms with ensuites, dining and lounge rooms, chapel, library, store and hair dressing salon. The needs of visitors have also been taken into account with accommodation services being incorporated into the project design.

Enquiries about any of the services can be made by calling 1300 925 979.

Share Appeal 2011

A place to call home

This is the story of Jeff, who has a mental illness and also suffers from high anxiety.

"I grew up in the South West suburbs of Sydney with my mother and grandparents. By the time I was 20, my grandparents had died and I could no longer live with my mother. I spent the next 25 years in boarding houses.

"In 2007 UnitingCare Disability entered my life when the boarding house I lived in closed. For the first time ever I went to a meeting just about me. I was asked 'Jeff, where would you like to live?' I was offered choices!

"Life is very different now. I moved into a Housing NSW unit in March 2008 and at 46 years old, finally had my own home.

"I've completed a TAFE course in Organic Gardening and have volunteered for Bush Regeneration Day and Clean Up Australia Day. UnitingCare Disability assisted me to attend the National Self Advocacy Conference

and I have become a member of the Supported Living Self Advocacy Group.

"My long term dream is to help the homeless. I want others to have a better life too.

"My life is so different because of UnitingCare Disability. I feel like I'm living like a king!"

UnitingCare Disability works in partnership with individuals, families and carers as they build and pursue their goals and dreams, and with local congregations and communities to strengthen their capacity to fully include people with disabilities.

UnitingCare seeks your support to help us to continue to change lives for more people like Jeff, by making a donation to the UnitingCare 2011 Share Appeal. A small amount together can make the world of difference.

Thank you for your generosity

UnitingCare Christmas Appeal

The practice of exchanging gifts at Christmas stems from people wanting to mark the gift of God through Jesus of Nazareth. In continuing this tradition, the UnitingCare Christmas Appeal has been another wonderful success in 2010. I would like to personally extend my sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the 2010 UnitingCare Christmas Appeal for your generosity and support.

Your generosity and passion for helping others makes UnitingCare the organisation that it is. Your support of the UnitingCare Christmas Appeal has brightened Christmas for the people we serve, enabling them to have a happy and enjoyable time.

Rev. Harry Herbert
Executive Director
UnitingCare NSW.ACT



Help UnitingCare change lives

Yes I would like to support the work of UnitingCare NSW.ACT with a donation.

First Name Surname

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone number Congregation.....

Please enclose your cheque/money order payable to UnitingCare NSW.ACT or complete the credit card details:

Payment method: Cheque Bankcard Visa Mastercard

Amount: \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$.....

Card Number

Name on credit card..... Expiry date /

Signature.....

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

I would like to join the UnitingCare mailing list.

My email address is:

.....

Please send me details on how I might consider UnitingCare in my Will.

UnitingCare respects and values your privacy and will not disclose any personal information without your written permission.

0411/7SR

Address all donations to UnitingCare NSW.ACT GPO Box 9961 Sydney NSW 2000
Donations can also be made online at www.unitingcarenewswact.org.au

Thank you for your support