

# Imagine

Older People Living Well



Mercy Health  
Care first



SOUTHERN  
CROSSCARE  
(vic)

SPRING 2017



## Melbourne Archbishop marks new beginning

(Back row, from left): Mercy Health Chairman Julien O'Connell AM, Archbishop of Melbourne, His Grace Denis Hart, Knights of the Southern Cross State Chairman Tom Brodie, Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen, and Southern Cross Care (Vic) past Chairman Geoffrey Flower. (Front row): Mercy Health Board member, Sr Joan Wilson RSM

Spring is said to be the time of new beginnings and growth, and this was symbolised in the recent blessing ceremony at the Hughesdale support services office.

There was anticipation among staff in the lead-up to the blessing on Thursday 7 September. The historical event acknowledged the

shared mission Southern Cross Care (Vic) is embarking on with Mercy Health, following the merger announcement on 1 July.

The occasion was made even more meaningful with the Archbishop of Melbourne, His Grace Denis Hart, conducting the blessing.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor

Stephen Cornelissen said Southern Cross Care (Vic) and Mercy Health have a bright future together.

"Building on our shared Catholic heritage, our organisations can look forward to a future in which we will continue to provide high-quality, compassionate and affordable care to those in need."

Continued inside ►



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Southern Cross Care (Vic) joined Mercy Health in July 2017.

Our qualified and compassionate care teams support residents and clients to live life well.

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Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, the Mercy Health Group is made up of more than 7,000 people who contribute to the organisation's mission every day. Services include aged care, home care, acute and subacute hospital care, palliative care, mental health programs, maternity and specialist women's health services.

Adj Prof Cornelissen said Mercy Health would continue to honour the heritage of Southern Cross Care (Vic) and the legacy of its founders, the Knights of the Southern Cross, through service to the community.

## Have your say

We hope you have enjoyed the spring edition of *Imagine*. Please share your feedback with us at [marketing@sccv.org.au](mailto:marketing@sccv.org.au)

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### All other enquiries

1800 508 008

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

## Coming soon! Get more news with *Our Voice*

We are excited to announce that from summer 2017, *Imagine* will be incorporated into *Our Voice*, Mercy Health's quarterly groupwide newsletter. *Our Voice* will continue to provide you with interesting stories about our residents and clients, as well as news from the wider Mercy Health Group covering health, mental health, specialist women's health services, and much more. Stay tuned!



Four Mercy Health story panels are now displayed at the reception area of the Hughesdale office, acknowledging the Sisters of Mercy and the orders and organisations that contribute to the Mercy Health story including the Family Care Sisters, Good Shepherd Sisters, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and the Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria).



Knights of the Southern Cross State Chairman, Tom Brodie, lighting the candles during the blessing ceremony

# Message From the Group CEO



## Heralding a new chapter

**A**s Group Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Health, I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the Southern Cross Care (Vic) community for the first time in *Imagine*.

The merger between Southern Cross Care (Vic) and Mercy Health marks a new chapter in our history. Coming together gives us stability and strength in the market so we can continue to deliver on our shared mission to provide compassionate and high quality care to those in need.

The Knights of the Southern Cross founded Southern Cross Care (Vic) 48 years ago, and their mission to serve the older community has only grown stronger against the backdrop of Australia's ageing population. Mercy Health, historically a provider of healthcare, expanded our services to care for older people in 1997. Meanwhile the landscape has changed dramatically. In 1964, about 8 per cent of Australians were aged 65 and over, and in 2014, that figure was 15 per cent. This demographic

shift has had a positive impact on residents and clients, who now demand greater choice and personalised care. The traditional 'one size fits all' care plan is now a thing of the past. As an early adopter of person-centred care, we celebrate this gradual change across the sector, having witnessed the positive impact it has on those we serve.

The philosophy of care at Southern Cross Care (Vic) has always centred on the uniqueness of the individual. We respect residents and clients for who they are, honouring their dreams and experiences and supporting them to live the best life possible based on what's important to them. Mercy Health shares these same values, which further reinforces how well suited we are to come together.

While the transition period has now begun, I wish to assure our residents and clients that your wellbeing remains at the forefront of everything we do. That's why we are making every effort to ensure you do not experience any interruption or disruption to your service or the high-quality and

compassionate care to which you are accustomed to. Most changes will occur in the background as we seek to align our infrastructure, systems and processes.

During this time, if you have any questions about your care or the transition, I welcome you to contact us. All feedback will be treated with the strictest confidence. In the months ahead, I will continue to keep you updated on any developments.

**Adj Prof Stephen Cornelissen**  
Group Chief Executive Officer

**Have a question  
about your care  
or the transition?**



[yourquestions@mercy.com.au](mailto:yourquestions@mercy.com.au)





# Violence prevention programs gets a boost from the State Government

**A** violence prevention program by Southern Cross Care (Vic) and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) has been given a boost, thanks to a grant from the Victorian Government through the Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention Program.

Both organisations were delighted to receive a grant for their partnership project,

*Equality@Work*, which aims to develop and implement a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) specific workplace model to prevent family violence and other forms of violence.

Executive Manager of Workforce and Culture at Southern Cross Care (Vic), Danielle Rose, said the grant will enable the organisation to further develop its gender equality and violence prevention model.

"Women account for over 88 per cent of our total workforce of 1400 employees, of which, more than 60 per cent are from a CALD background," she said. "Through our partnership with MCWH, we want to provide opportunities for women from a non-English speaking background to take a leadership role in championing gender equality and violence prevention, and to be involved in the engagement and development



Let's go and build stronger teams!



**"We are proud to partner with Southern Cross Care again, to build on previous and current initiatives that will further empower women and give them a stronger voice in the workplace."**

**Adele Murdolo**  
MCWH Executive Director

of a shared action plan that is meaningful to them."

The partnership project will also build on the existing relationship between the organisations. In 2013, Southern Cross Care (Vic) introduced a women's health education program across the organisation followed by a women's leadership program, both facilitated by MCWH.

"We are proud to partner with Southern Cross Care (Vic) again, to build on previous and current initiatives that will further empower women and give them a stronger voice in the workplace," said Adele Murdolo, Executive Director of MCWH.

"Workers from CALD backgrounds are a growing and increasing dominant cohort within the Australian aged care workforce. As such, they are of critical importance to the sector's viability in terms of addressing the need to care for Australia's ageing population, which is expected to quadruple by 2050," said Adele.

"The *Equality@Work* project which commenced on 1 July, will be co-designed with staff at two of our community services office in the north/west region and aged care home in Springvale. Once the model is developed, it can be adapted and implemented across all Southern Cross Care (Vic)

locations in Victoria. The project is expected to be completed in 12 months.

"As an accredited White Ribbon Workplace, we are committed to ending the cycle of violence against women. We will be engaging our White Ribbon Ambassador to assist in the promotion and facilitation of the project within the organisation," said Danielle.



# Keeping independence in sight

**E**ver since he was a young boy, Kevin Wood has always been full of dreams for the future. Sprightly and confident, there was little that could dampen his spirit and zest for life – least of all, his impaired vision.

Born with a severe congenital visual defect, Kevin grew up with limited vision but never once did he let his disability hold him back in life. Acute glaucoma eventually caused his eyesight to deteriorate and he became legally blind nine years ago.

Not one to wallow in self-pity, Kevin prefers to look on the brighter side of life and continues to enjoy an active and independent life with his wife, Ann, in the Bentleigh home they built in 2005.

"I've spent a lifetime overcoming discrimination and setbacks, but that only made me stronger, better and wiser," said Kevin. "I don't believe in feeling sorry for myself. I'd rather use my experience to help others or those with disabilities."

And that's exactly what Kevin did during his decades-long career in the agricultural sector. As President of the Share Dairy Farmers Council of Victoria and a Central Councillor of the Victorian Dairy Farmers

Association, he was instrumental in uniting the Victorian dairy groups and campaigning for reforms. He later went into public service and held various senior management roles before retiring in 2005.

Kevin was also heavily involved in community work, with his proudest achievement being a milk project he spearheaded in Timor Leste for underprivileged children.

**"I was honoured to lead Brighton Kiwanis' million-dollar project in 2000 to provide fresh milk for children who were badly malnourished. It was an experience I'll never forget."**

"Even though I'm retired and no longer involved in community work, I'm not one who can sit still for long. I like to get up and about, and keep busy all the time. I can manage some activities on my own, but

sometimes, I have to rely on Ann or my support workers who come in three times a week," he said.

Through his Home Care Package with Southern Cross Care (Vic), Kevin gets support with daily activities, showering and transport to doctor's appointments. Once a week, one of Kevin's support workers, John, takes him out for a cuppa or lunch or accompanies him on social outings with friends.

"John is fantastic. He really takes an interest in what I like, and what's important to me. It's good to be supported by someone who understands me and helps me to maintain my independence. I can't ask for more from a support worker!" said Kevin.

Southern Cross Care (Vic) also supports Ann, who is Kevin's full-time carer, by helping her with house cleaning and gardening, and occasional respite.

*This article is a tribute to Kevin Wood, who passed away shortly after the story was written.*



Kevin Wood (left) shares a great rapport with his community support worker, John Strafford

# It's a balancing act

Everyone is potentially at risk of having a fall, but for people over 65, their risks are higher due to various health-related factors such as muscle weakness or problems with balance and mobility.

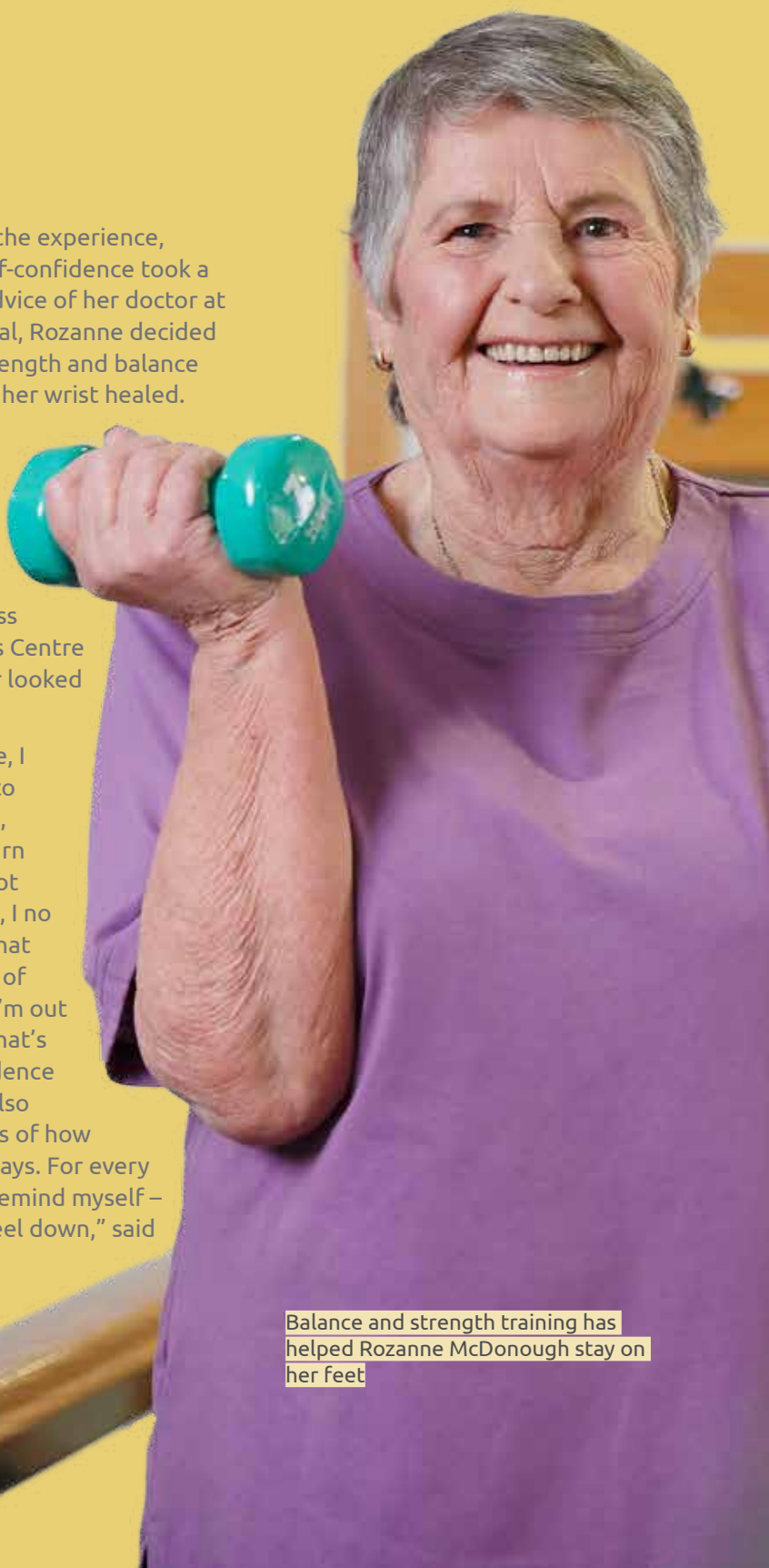
While not all falls will result in injuries, they can have an adverse psychological impact on an older person's overall wellbeing as Rozanne McDonough, 86, has discovered.

"It can do a lot of damage to your self-confidence when you have multiple falls, all within a short period of time," said Rozanne who lives alone. "For over two years, I've had a number of falls on the street and also in my own home. I started to worry about my condition and was even thinking of getting a mobility walker when I fell in my backyard and broke my wrist while gardening."

"That was the worst injury from my falls. I don't know how I fell. The garden bed was soft, I guess. I remember having to roll myself over to the side to get up. I rang my daughter who lives nearby to take me to hospital," she recalled.

Shaken from the experience, Rozanne's self-confidence took a dip. On the advice of her doctor at Austin Hospital, Rozanne decided to take up strength and balance training after her wrist healed. She began attending weekly Tai Chi and exercise sessions at Southern Cross Care Wellness Centre and has never looked back.

"At the Centre, I learned how to walk properly, and how to turn around and not fall over. Now, I no longer have that constant fear of falling when I'm out on my own. That's a great confidence booster. I'm also very conscious of how I walk these days. For every step I take, I remind myself – heel down, heel down," said Rozanne.



Balance and strength training has helped Rozanne McDonough stay on her feet



An avid gardener, Rozanne is pleased that her improved physical condition has enabled her to continue doing what she loves at home and in the community. When she is not tending to her veggie patch and chooks, Rozanne volunteers twice a week at local charities. On Fridays, she visits the Centre for her weekly workout.

“

I really enjoy my training program at the Centre. We do all kinds of exercises to help us build our muscles and keep our balance. We only do what we are able to. We always start on the bike or treadmill, before moving on to other exercises such as standing on one foot or doing leg lifts. We do weights as well.”

Rozanne’s perseverance has certainly paid off. Since attending the Wellness Centre in February 2016, Rozanne has not had a single fall – a record she hopes to maintain for as long as she can.

“I feel so different now. I’m more confident and fitter overall, and I intend to stay on my feet!”



# Celebrating 10 years of excellence



Christine Vice (centre) with her team (from left to right: Martine, Joan, Bruce, Nicholle, Julie and Marie)

**O**n 28 June, Macleod Cottage respite centre opened its doors to honour and celebrate its 10-year anniversary with guests who included past and present carers and staff.

Happy chatter, laughs and reminiscence of yesteryear marked the milestone day, complemented by a lovely spread of sweet and savoury delights prepared by the chef from Southern Cross Care (Vic)'s residential home in Reservoir.

"Respite care is one of the key supports that carers say they need to enable them to continue caring for their family members at home," said Macleod Cottage Coordinator, Christine Vice. "Looking after a family member



can be an enormously rewarding experience, but it can also be exhausting physically, mentally and emotionally."

"At Macleod Cottage, we provide a safe environment for carers to leave their family members with us when they take a well-deserved break to recharge themselves. It has been such a great privilege to be given the opportunity to support our clients and their carers over the past 10 years."

The first dementia specific respite service to open in the Banyule area, Macleod Cottage has supported hundreds of families and enjoys a strong reputation in the community today. What stands out in the Cottage is its welcoming home-like environment which puts people at ease the moment



they walk through the door, and the close rapport between clients and staff.

It is not unusual to see staff bringing in mementoes from home such as books, collectibles or keepsakes to start a meaningful discussion with clients, which assist people with memory loss to recall their fond memories.

"Most of our staff at Macleod Cottage have been with us from day one. The commitment they put into their work, and the genuine care, respect and compassion they have for people attending the Cottage is second to none," said Christine.

"Developing trust with carers is vital to forming a good working relationship. Carers need to be confident that their family member is receiving care from highly skilled and trained staff who fully understand the needs of older people, and those living with dementia.

"We're a small, tight knit team. Being small has many advantages. It ensures that information is shared among the team and we all work closely with carers to provide them with support, guidance and a hug when it is needed.

"When carers tell us how happy their family member has been during their stay with us, it makes our day knowing we have made a difference in someone's life. It is very uplifting and keeps us going."





# Carers need a break too

Do you provide daily support and care to an older loved one? Sometimes you also need to give the gift of care to yourself. That's where we come in. Our **flexible respite services** will help you to continue to lead a healthy life and assist you whenever you need the occasional break.



Call us today to find out how we can help!



1300 478 776



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