

My life, my way



News from our community

WINTER 2024

welcome

I'm so excited to send you the first client newsletter we've produced since I became AccessCare's manager in March!

You may have heard that late last year, our previous manager, Margie Hanrahan, left AccessCare after 19 years. Margie has left an incredible legacy, having helped our organisation grow and improve for nearly two decades.

As AccessCare's new manager, I am committed to excellence, and this should shine through every interaction with our staff, our clients and their families. Our focus over the next 12 months will also be on continuous improvement and innovation in the services we provide, and I hope to see more community engagement initiatives that foster stronger connections between AccessCare and you, our clients.

Another milestone we hit since our last issue is that AccessCare turned 30! Did you know that AccessCare began way back in 1994 as 'Bayside Linkages'? We were created to support and care for the most vulnerable members of the community, and since then, we have supported thousands of people in Kingston. We've changed a lot in three decades, but the one thing that hasn't changed is our dedication to helping our clients continue to live their life on their terms.

In this issue, you'll find stories about some of our incredible clients, as well as from a few team members, including one of our community bus volunteers.

Plus, we've included a bit of information around falls prevention, and how our Home Modifications team may be able to help you keep your home safe and accessible.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter, and I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Camille Hoyle

Camille Hoyle
Manager – AccessCare

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INSPIRING
STORIES**
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Claudia's knitting club

combines conversation and charitable deeds

AccessCare client Claudia isn't exactly sure how she came to manage her retirement village's knitting group.

"I didn't start the group; it was already here when I moved in. Then the lady who was running it needed to move into permanent care, and for some reason, I got the job," says Claudia.

That's not to say Claudia wasn't a qualified candidate for the position – on the contrary, she came with a very impressive resume filled with knitting exploits.

"I started life knitting during the Second World War, when I was only little," says Claudia with a smile. "Over the years, even when I was working, I used to make rugs for homeless people and for women's shelters. And I knitted teddy bears for the emergency services, which they give to children so they're more comfortable with what's happening.

"At one stage I also ran a business with a friend of mine knitting garments, which we sold at the Dingley Market."

Upon accepting the top job at the knitting club, Claudia decided to shake things up a bit. While the group had previously focused on knitting blankets, Claudia, with the support of her neighbour, suggested that the club should instead start knitting beanies for premature babies at the Monash Hospital.

"And so that's what we've been doing [for the past few years]," says Claudia. Each month, the group will come together to knit and chat, and then each member will continue knitting at their own pace until the next meeting, when all the beanies are collected.

Every month, Claudia will contribute about 30 to 35 beanies herself.

"Knitting is very relaxing," she explains. "I taught both my sons to knit when they were little, and one of them still knits, particularly when he needs to unwind after a horrific day at work."

"It's a repetitive thing, which just eases life."

Claudia explains that a shared love of knitting is one of the reasons she looks forward to visits from her AccessCare support worker, Narelle.

"Narelle knits and does a lot of craft, and she shares those interests with me when she's here doing the cleaning. She'll bring along things that she's done, which is good. She makes these little houses, and every time she finishes one, she brings it along to show me. It's nice to share crafting activities."

After a pause, Claudia continues with a laugh, "I have to add, I can't sit and do nothing. I can watch television, but I still have to be using my hands."

This constant restlessness might also explain why Claudia finally relented and somewhat reluctantly took on the management of her village's gardening club as well.

"I inherited that too. After the lady who ran it left the village, people kept on saying, you know, we had a gardening club, would you like to run it? And I held off and held off and held off and then in the end, I said, 'Okay, I'll try'."

As Claudia explains, the gardening club doesn't do any manual work, but instead, they approach gardening from historical and social points of view.

"One of the talks I've done was about plants in our life, and the fact that when you're born, mum gets flowers, and when you're married, you get flowers, and then when you die, you get flowers. Throughout the whole of our lifetime, plants in some way are ritually a part of our lives."

This new role has also enabled Claudia to learn a few fun facts herself.

"Last week I did a talk on trees, and found out things like the Quandong tree is actually a sandalwood, and that a palm tree isn't a tree, it's a tall grass," says Claudia. "Just funny things like that."

On top of this, Claudia is also a member of her village's discussion group, which meets for an hour and a half each month for members to talk about anything and everything – just "no religion, no politics."

"All the clubs here are social, which is important," says Claudia. "We do more chatting than knitting when we come together each month!"

While Claudia's calendar might be busier than ever these days, she's not complaining too much about the abundance of social clubs available in her village.

"I love people. I worked until I was 73 [as a nurse] and that's what I miss the most. I miss people. I don't know why but I do," she says with a good-natured chuckle. "I just like being around people and doing things with people and having fun with people."

"So, I'll manage these groups for as long as I can. I'll moan and grumble, but I'll do it!" 🗣️



On the cover:

An AccessCare support worker helping a client prep some healthy meals for the week.

Top left: AccessCare client and social club leader, Claudia. Top: Some of the beanies Claudia and her group have created.

How small modifications can make a big difference

Not too long ago, AccessCare client Rosalind hated taking the laundry out to her clothesline, as it meant walking down her extremely steep back doorsteps.

"I would never want to go out to the backyard, never," says Rosalind. "The steps were just too steep for me."

The front doorsteps weren't much better.

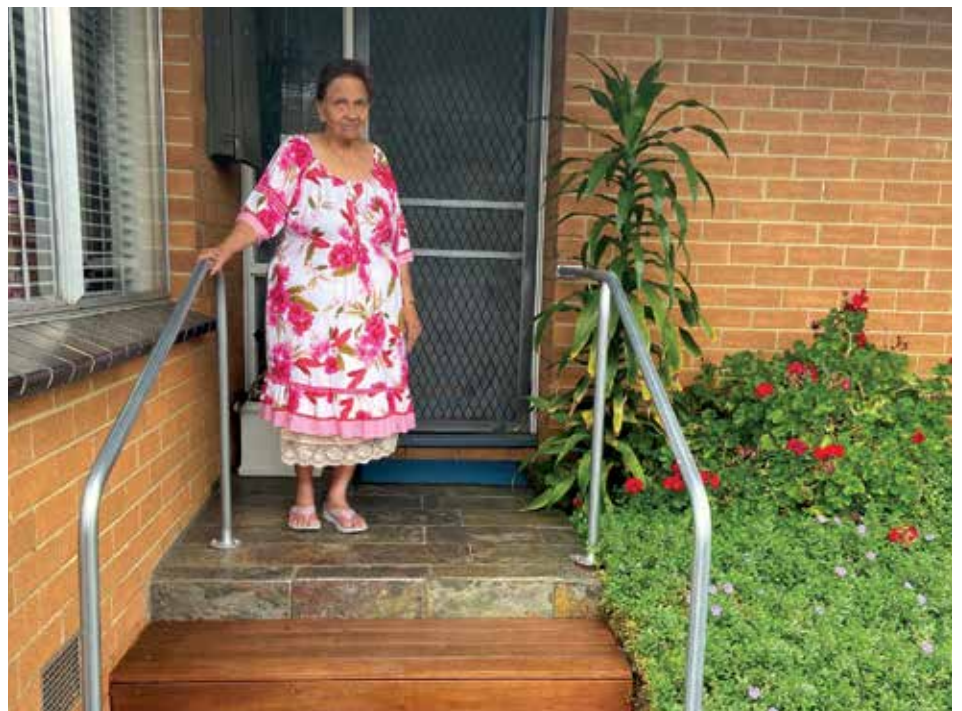
"Our home is from the 70s, so most of the steps were very steep and uneven. Out the front, we had just one big step and then the landing, so you had to lift your whole body up. And when you have bad knees, it's just awful."

Thankfully, Rosalind was able to request a modification to her front and back doorsteps through AccessCare. Our home maintenance officer Armando met with Rosalind and her husband at their home, and devised a plan to construct new sets of stairs that were lower, wider and even, and connected to a sturdy handrail.

"We were worried what it would look like, but Armando has done such a fantastic job. He was an excellent tradesman, and very particular. He would calculate and recalculate to make sure they were just right," says Rosalind with a laugh.

"He's done a beautiful job."

As well as being practical, Rosalind notes that the steps have helped to add a little passive exercise into her day.



Rosalind with her new front steps.

"The steps have helped a lot, and by holding onto the rail, you feel safe. We're very thankful to the council for helping us."


For Rosalind, it's a small change that has had a big impact by allowing her to do everyday tasks more easily.

"It's so essential. After a certain age your knees give way, you have all sorts of problems.

"Now I can do simple things like go and walk up and down the

driveway to check my letterbox, and take out the laundry.

"It's really excellent."

For advice on what home modifications you might be eligible for through AccessCare, please contact our team on **1300 819 200**. 



AccessCare volunteer, Nigel.

The power of *volunteering*

Meet Nigel, one of our incredible volunteers!

For about 18 months, Nigel has been a familiar face on our community bus, assisting our bus driver and our clients on day trips and social outings.

"I was at that stage of life where I'm semi-retired, so I had time on my hands and that's why I decided to start volunteering," says Nigel.

"It's very satisfying, and very encouraging to see that many of the clients really look forward to these bus trips. They've made friends with each other over time, and they know the bus drivers. It's almost like a family."

As well as assisting clients, Nigel also really enjoys just getting to know everyone, and hearing each client's unique life story.

"You get to learn a lot about how other people live and what keeps them happy," says Nigel, before adding with a laugh, "And you never know, I might one day need the service myself!"

At the end of the day though, it's about contributing while you physically still can.

"It's a nice feeling knowing I'm giving back to the community."

This past May, we celebrated National Volunteers Week at the City of Kingston's annual Community Awards night, where Council recognises locals who are doing great things for the community. We'd like to congratulate all the nominees and winners, and extend a particularly big round of applause to everyone who volunteers their time, skills and energy with AccessCare. 🌟

Congratulations **Lyn!**

We're so proud of our incredibly talented client, Lyn!

Three of her amazing photographs were recently accepted into this year's Warragul National Photography Competition, including the extraordinary *Being Scrutinised by Auntie May*, pictured below.

The exhibition took place at the West Gippsland Arts Centre in May, with photographs from photographers from right across the country on display. 🌟



To read more about Lyn's photography, you can read her story on our website via this QR code:



How to protect yourself from Falls



Did you know that falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalisation and death in Australia?

What's more, slips, trips and falls that require hospitalisation occur more frequently in older adults, and are most likely to occur in your own home.

The good news is, many falls are preventable, and it is possible to minimise the injury that occurs. The key is to minimise the risk factors for falls.

Risk factors can be personal, such as your health, mobility and lifestyle, which is why it's important to remain as active as possible. You should aim to

do at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least five times per week, focusing on exercises that allow you to improve your strength and balance. The City of Kingston offers several fitness activities targeted at seniors, so for more information, we encourage you to visit the City of Kingston's website or give our team a call.

Additionally, risk factors can be environmental, such as the design of your home.

To the right, we have listed some common in-home risk factors in the house, and provided ideas for how to avoid them.

And as always, if you have any questions or would like advice about how to make your home safer, please get in touch with our friendly team.



Additionally, it's worthwhile considering a personal alarm. If you're interested in finding out more about these alarms, we encourage you to scan this QR code and read this article on our website:



Low or no lighting in high-risk areas

- ✓ Increase the amount of light, particularly in frequently used areas and at night
- ✓ At night, leave lights on in the passage way and other places you might walk, such as to the bathroom.



Tripping hazards on the floor


- ✓ Keep walkways in your house clear of obstacles and clutter
- ✓ Remove mats or rugs or stick them down
- ✓ Add colourful strips to any steps, and consider replacing outdoor stairs with ramps
- ✓ Keep walkways clear of clutter, and make sure electrical cords are not in walkways
- ✓ Run any cords along skirting boards and tape them down to the ground
- ✓ Remove or repair torn or stretched carpet.



Modify entryways

- ✓ Install rails near front and back door and any steps
- ✓ Consider replacing any outdoor stairs with a ramp.

Slippery surfaces


- ✓ Use non-slip mats in wet areas, such as the shower and bathroom
- ✓ Install rails in the bathroom and toilet. 



A new look for our community bus

We've given our community buses a bit of a makeover!


You might remember last issue we unveiled our new logo – well, we have now splashed it across the outside of our fleet of community buses. What do you think?!

To find out more about how you can get onboard one of our community bus trips, give our team a call! 

Calling all carers

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria launched their Walks for Carers club to support unpaid carers of older people or people living with disabilities or mental illness.

Through this club, carers get together once a month to go for a walk and chat about all things related and unrelated to being a carer. Their goal is to improve carer wellbeing through social connection, informal peer support and information about carer services.

For Kingston residents, your closest group is the Mordialloc Neighbourhood House, with walks taking place on the third Thursday of every month. It's free and everyone is welcome, so if you're a carer in the community, we encourage you to pop down at 9.45am for a cuppa and a good chat. 

Kingston events

Did you know that Kingston's Community Hubs offers weekly activities for all Kingston community members? Below are just a few of the weekly events you can get involved with:



Are you experiencing financial hardship?

We know that a lot of people are doing it tough right now, and that some are having trouble paying their rates and other bills.

That's why the City of Kingston team is offering advice to any local residents going through serious financial hardship.

To find out more about the support options available to Kingston residents for Council services, please scan this QR code or call the team on **1300 653 356**.

You can also speak with a financial counsellor for free by calling the National Debt Helpline on **1800 007 007**.



Not all classes are available at all locations, so please call **8551 1200** or visit kingston.vic.gov.au/community/activities-and-places/community-hubs to find out more.

Fabulous Forties festival

There's a large number of events taking place over this six day event celebrating the 1940s, including a special Morning Melodies featuring the music of Cole Porter, and a screening of the classic Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall film, *Dark Passage*.

WHERE

Kingston Arts Centre

DATES

Thursday 13 – Tuesday 18 June

TICKETS AND DETAILS

kingstonarts.com.au



1300 819 200

accesscare.org.au

Do you have any suggestions, questions or story ideas for AccessCare? Feel free to reach out via email at info@accesscare.org.au or on 1300 819 200.

Follow us on social media for more stories from our community:

facebook.com/accesscarem Melbourne

If you have a spare moment, we would love it if you could leave us a review on Google by scanning this QR code:



AccessCare proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.