

THE
VOICES OF
ST VINCENT'S
SUMMER 2023



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Embracing the Spirit of Togetherness this Festive Season

As I journey through this season of Advent, a time for preparation and reflection, I find myself thinking about the moments throughout this year when we have witnessed genuine and authentic expressions of our mission in action. These moments have defined who we are as a community and how much we value and respect each and every person; resident, family members and staff alike. I have seen firsthand, and heard recounts of hope, joy, peace and love being given and being received. These are the gifts of the Christmas season, that we have shared throughout the year, and this is what makes St Vincent's such a unique place to live and work.

The festive season holds a special place in our hearts, a renewed time for reflection, celebration, and hope. It also brings an extra level of connection and joy to our homes. The delicious holiday treats, lively markets, and cheerful carols add a fun and festive spirit to our homes, creating an atmosphere of shared joy.

Christmas can carry different meanings for each of us. For many, it's a holy time in celebration of the birth of Jesus. For others, it's a well-deserved time of rest, while others continue to work diligently to care for and support others, both in our homes and across many other services. I am also aware that for some, this season can be a time of hardship and/or a time of loneliness, as family and friends are distant or in some cases no longer present. Whatever this season signifies for you, I pray that you may still find moments of connection, togetherness, and joy with those who matter most to you, no matter who that may be.

As we look back on the year that is almost gone, let's also take time to celebrate the many moments that have illuminated our days. For the year that's coming, let's recommit to ensuring that the spirit of the Advent/Christmas season doesn't just last for the one month, but carries on through the whole year. Let's continue to strive to be hope, joy, peace and love to

one another every day in our care for each other. Let's make time to share laughter, heartfelt conversations, or simple acts of kindness because these moments have the power to spread joy, create lasting memories, and bring us even closer together as a community.

With all this in mind, amidst the hustle and bustle of the festive season, and in the spirit of kindness, let's approach this time with gentle hearts, patience, compassion and understanding.

I wish each of you, not just a season but a whole year ahead filled with hope, joy, peace and love.

Merry Christmas and may you all have a safe and restful festive season.

God Bless,



LINCOLN HOPPER
Chief Executive Officer

FESTIVE TUNES AWAIT: Scan and Play St Vincent's Christmas Playlist!

Looking for the perfect soundtrack to accompany your crafting sessions or set the festive mood? Look no further! We've curated a special Christmas playlist by St Vincent's Care, filled with our favorite holiday tunes. Simply scan the QR code below to dive into a musical celebration of the season. Let the crafting continue with the perfect backdrop of joyful melodies!





MISSION STATEMENT

Have you noticed that Christmas decorations came out a lot sooner than ever before this year? At my local Shopping Centre, they were in the stores and up throughout the Centre even before all the Halloween decorations were removed. Generally, we seem to all be in a very big hurry to jump straight to Christmas, just like we jump straight to Easter on Boxing Day when the shops start selling Hot Cross Buns! For many, they tend to skip the period before this celebration and it is no wonder that we seem to be in a constant state of stress bouncing from one thing to the next.

But that was never the intended purpose. Even Mother Nature tells us there needs to be time when the fields are left fallow, so they can rest, revive, renew and prepare ahead of a new season of planting. For us this is the periods of Lent and Advent – time to pause, renew and prepare for the gift of Easter and Christmas but often we forgot about our ‘fallow’ time.

Christmas isn't just one day in the month of December. There are four weeks of preparing that leads to this day – and when I say preparing, I don't just mean gift and food shopping. Those things are important, I understand that, but we also need time to actually reflect on and prepare ourselves spiritually for all that Christmas Day represents so that it does

not just rush by us in a flash.

The Season of Advent in the Christian calendar is four weeks of preparation. This is not just preparation for the birth of Jesus, but for all the joy and hope that comes with Jesus' presence on earth. It is no surprise then that the themes for each of the weeks of Advent are; **hope, peace, joy and love**. With each week, we light a new candle in the Advent Wreath.

The first advent candle is the **Hope Candle** or **Prophecy Candle**. It begins the journey of anticipating the birth of Jesus and recalls Isaiah's prophecy in the Old Testament of the birth of Christ and all the promises God made.

The second candle on the Advent wreath represents **Peace**. Often called the “**Bethlehem Candle**,” the second Advent candle reminds us of Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem before Mary gave birth to Jesus. Building on the meaning of the Prophecy Candle, this second candle recalls that after all of the division, destruction, and dispersion of the kingdom in the Old Testament, there might finally be peace on Earth – Jesus is coming, and so is his Kingdom of Peace.

The third candle of Advent symbolises **Joy**. As we continue to approach Christmas Day, our joy grows more and more. The third candle takes us back to the joyful

Prophecy Candle – Hope
Bethlehem Candle – Peace
Shepherd’s Candle – Joy
Angel’s Candle – Love



anticipation of the shepherds who journeyed to see Jesus in Bethlehem, even before the wise men. On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the third candle and rejoice like the shepherds. For this reason, the third candle of Advent is called the “**Shepherd’s Candle**”.

The fourth candle of Advent represents **Love**, the ultimate love of God that God might send His only Son for us. Called the “**Angel’s Candle**,” the fourth candle of Advent is lit the Sunday before Christmas, leading us to eagerly await the new Kingdom of God on earth.

Each week leading up to the Christmas invites us to prepare a place in our hearts

for God, so this Advent/Christmas Season, may we pray:

Dear Lord, we prayer that we may embrace the spirit of Advent: hope, peace, joy and love; as a way to prepare for Your arrival. May everything we do—every gift we send, every party we attend, every meal we share—remind us to prepare space in my heart for You. Amen.

Wishing you and your family, hope, peace, joy and love this festive season and throughout the coming year ahead.

TROY TORNABENE
Mission Leader



HARMONY IN EVERY NOTE:



At St Vincent's Care we firmly believe providing aged care isn't just delivering a service, it's about creating a community!

Our Celebrating You series, inspired by heart-warming real stories from aged care homes across Australia, continues with Episode 3 – and it's a celebration of music, community and resilience.

Join this trio of music enthusiasts – Rob, Jan and Pat from St Vincent's Care Bardon – as they share their love for music, forming friendships, and navigating grief with the support of their community. Each with a unique story, these three show us the positive impact of aged care in fostering genuine connections and celebrating life.

For Rob, a talented St Vincent's staff member, music is more than notes; it's a powerful tool to evoke memories and facilitate emotional healing. Whether playing a familiar tune or using music as an icebreaker, Rob emphasizes its ability to connect people and spark meaningful conversations.

“You can play a song that everyone knows

and they sing along to and any sort of emotional trauma that's happened can be alleviated and helped in some way,” he says.

For over eight and a half years, Rob has been the maestro behind various activities, infusing joy and fun into the community at Bardon. He has many touching memories of his time in aged care, like singing "Amazing Grace" for a resident's wife on her deathbed, offering solace during a poignant moment.

“We sang together and a couple of days later she passed away,” he recalls. “When I finished singing to her, I came out and cried...I was very surprised that I stuck with it because it's a very emotional thing.”

For resident Jan, she's always loved music; “I love music from my boarding school

CELEBRATING YOU

Episode 3 is here!



Watch Episode 3
of St Vincent's Cares
Celebrating You
series here!

days. I've been in choirs always and I love music. It's just wonderful. I think music has so much to offer and it's now coming into the medical world," she says.

Pat, who has experienced profound loss in her life, finds solace in Rob's music during difficult times. Pat admits she was nervous to enter aged care and had the idea that it was the "next step to the grave" but St. Vincent's Care Bardon, proved to be a place of happiness and genuine connection.

Jan echoes this sentiment, trying to put her finger on what makes Bardon feel like home; "I guess there's a feeling and instantly you feel that," she says "And it does make a difference. It really does."

The home in Bardon has introduced a memorial service, to honour and remember each individual who has passed. The service, adorned with flowers from the garden, provides a moment of reflection and shared memories, transforming farewells into celebrations of lives well lived.

For Rob, Jan, and Pat, aged care is more than a service; it's a sense of community, support, and comfort. A place where every note, every story, and every individual is celebrated with joy and compassion.

We're excited about the future of our series – if you have a story to celebrate, share it with us! Email us at svcs.marketing@svha.org.au.



A RED CARPET MOMENT: CELEBRATING YOU Episode 3 Premieres at Bardon



Celebrating You Episode 3 premiered at St Vincent's Care Bardon, home of its stars, with a red carpet event for residents and families to enjoy. The stars of the series—residents and employees alike—were the true VIPs of the day, with an elegant event inspired by the glamour of Hollywood. Our dedicated marketing staff, taking on the role of 'press', snapped photos and conducted interviews, capturing the audience reaction and the inspiring impact of the series. This quote from a family member sums up what the series set out to do: "I'm looking at aged care in a different way".



THIS ISN'T THE AGED CARE AUSTRALIA IS THINKING ABOUT



At St Vincent's Care, our commitment to aged care goes beyond delivering a service; it's about creating a vibrant community!

Inspired by the many amazing stories happening in aged care homes across Australia each day, the team set out to celebrate the incredible people that make St Vincent's feel like home. The result? Our three-part video series, "Celebrating You".

This series is based on our extensive brand research and one key insight: Aged Care is at its best when you have a strong relationship between residents, employees, and families.

It sounds so simple, and usually, the best insights are.

The video series aims to shine a light on the positivity and joy that can be found in aged care, despite the negative narrative often depicted in the media. St Vincent's CEO, Lincoln Hopper, believes that this series is an important reflection of the incredible communities being formed within aged care homes across Australia.

"For every negative story you hear about aged care in the news, there are thousands of uplifting stories happening every day within our homes," Hopper explains. "These stories are worth celebrating, no matter how small or large they are."

The episodes in this series explore the strong relationship between residents and employees. How the care provided goes both ways, and this desire for human connection fuels the wonderful culture our communities are known for.

Because at the end of the day, what matters to families and residents isn't so much the four walls and the floor (which are different

across all our aged care homes!) but the people within them.

Head of Marketing and Communications at St Vincent's, James Boshier, echoes this sentiment, emphasising that the relationships within aged care homes are what make them special.

"One of the biggest concerns of residents coming into aged care is a loss of independence and identity." Boshier says. "We want to bring to life for people considering aged care the beautiful relationships between residents, employees, families, and volunteers."

"While aged care is frequently talked about in the context of how we can assist the individual to thrive, this all happens in the context of a community, and people flourish because of their community."

"This campaign shows that residents can find their identity within our communities and how they can continue to contribute and find purpose."

Celebrating You Episode 3 premiered at St Vincent's Care Bardon, home of its stars, with a red carpet event for residents and families to enjoy. This quote from a family member sums up the impact of the campaign: **"I'm looking at aged care in a different way"**.

With the release of the "Celebrating You" series, St Vincent's hopes to inspire others to see the value in aged care. We want to show that aged care is not a full stop to someone's life but another chapter, or many chapters, waiting to be written. Join us in celebrating the resilience, community, and joy that flourish within aged care homes across the country!



LIFESTYLE





FROM ADVERSITY TO ART: The Transformative Power of Community

In episode 2, a beautiful story of community, art, and self-discovery unfolds through the experiences of three remarkable individuals; Brett, Jeanette, and Tess. These three are much more to each other than just resident, staff and volunteer, and show us the heart-warming reality of finding fulfilment and a sense of home through meaningful relationships.

For Tess, an 87-year-old resident of the home, life has been about overcoming adversity – a husband who passed away early on in her children’s lives; the challenge of working as a teacher as a single mother. Tess's journey has been one of spiritual and emotional growth.

Now living in aged care, Tess is still learning and still growing. When she had the opportunity to join an art class led by Jeanette a Retirement Living Resident and Volunteer Art Instructor, she wasn't so sure.

“I said, God, I can't draw. And she said, everyone can draw. So I thought, oh, let's

be positive about this.” Tess recalls, “I really felt Jeanette right from the start, was a very special woman who has so much to give and was prepared to give it.”

Jeanette is a beacon of inspiration to all at St Vincent's Care Carseldine. With a natural ability to bring out the best in people, Jeanette runs diverse programs, including art classes, body percussion sessions, musical spoons classes, and a resident choir, fostering creativity and social engagement.

“Well, I started an art class and I thought even though I'm in independent living, this is a community. So I opened it up to, to everyone,” she says.

Her motivation goes beyond seeking praise; it's about instilling kindness, sharing her talents, and inspiring people to lead fulfilling lives.

“If I can just pass on something and give them a little bit of joy, because as you age, you do get quite a few aches and pains and things. But when you are painting and

when you are doing music, you are in the moment and all that goes,” says Jeanette.

For Brett, a Living Support Manager with a heart for happiness; “My role really is to make sure people are happy”. Brett weaves his passion for service into the fabric of community life and is all about connecting with residents to make sure they feel fulfilled and at home.

“Connection is everything and listening to people is everything,” he says “I think we just have to be always open, to encourage people to talk and be open to hear what they're saying.”

For Tess, her involvement in art classes and the supportive community created by Jeanette and Brett has brought a newfound sense of self-confidence and faith.

“It's really important when you're there in a home to feel that people really want you to be happy there. Not just to provide for you, but to sort of see how things can be better,” she says.

Feeling stronger in her faith and self-confidence more than ever, Tess has found her slice of peace and joy through art, kindness and community at a time of life she least expected it.

Tess is not just a resident; she is a testament to the positive impact of aged care on the lives of those who call it home. Brett, Jeanette, and Tess show us that no matter your age, every chapter of life can be a chance for personal growth and connection.

With the release of the “Celebrating You” series St Vincent's hopes to inspire others to see the value in aged care and showcase the resilience, community and joy that flourish in aged care homes around the country.

“If I can just pass on something and give them a little bit of joy, because as you age, you do get quite a few aches and pains and things.

But when you are painting and when you are doing music, you are in the moment and all that goes,”

“Connection is everything and listening to people is everything,”

“It's really important when you're there in a home to feel that people really want you to be happy there. Not just to provide for you, but to sort of see how things can be better,”



SHARING JOY AND CREATIVITY WITH THESE DIY CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

DIY Christmas Ornaments

Materials Needed:

Cardboard: Cut into different shapes and sizes to make a variety of ornaments.

Craft Paints: A rainbow of colours to brighten up the ornaments and allow crafters to express their unique style.

Paintbrushes: Different sizes for fine details or broad strokes.

Glitter Glue: Add a touch of sparkle to create dazzling, eye-catching ornaments.

Ribbons or Strings: For hanging the finished ornaments on the Christmas tree.

Crafting Steps:

Choose your canvas: You can pick your preferred ornament shape and size or cut your own shape from the cardboard. You might prefer classic round ornaments or opt for stars, bells, or Christmas trees.

Let the creativity flow: Decorate and paint your ornament in any way you desire. You can't go wrong with traditional holiday colours, or you might enjoy experimenting with bold and vibrant hues.

Add a dash of sparkle: Once the paint has dried, use glitter glue to add a festive touch. This step not only enhances the visual appeal but also provides a tactile experience.



The holiday season is a time for joy, togetherness, and the spirit of giving. What better way to spread warmth and cheer than by engaging in some Christmas craft activities? Christmas crafts add festive charm to any space and create a sense of accomplishment and community spirit. So, let's get everyone together, grab our craft supplies, and have some fun making these DIY Christmas ornaments!

Personalise with names or messages:

You could add your name or a special message to your ornament to commemorate the occasion.

Attach ribbons or strings: Once the ornaments are complete, attach ribbons or strings for easy hanging.

Display and celebrate: Add your ornaments to the Christmas tree, gift them to friends and family, or display them around your home to showcase your crafting skills.

Crafting personalised Christmas ornaments not only sparks creativity but also fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment. The joy of creating something beautiful with your own hands is a gift that keeps on giving, spreading holiday cheer to all who encounter these special ornaments.

This festive season, let's fill our homes with the magic of art and the warmth of shared moments.



PERSONALISED CARE





THE FAMILY CIRCLE PROJECT

The Family Circle Project at St Vincent's Care stands as a beacon of dignity, respect, and remembrance. An initiative that goes beyond the conventional understanding of end-of-life processes – a commitment to celebrating life even in a person's final chapters. This initiative, seamlessly integrated into St Vincent's comprehensive approach to palliative care, to delicately navigate the challenging moments following a resident's passing.

Family Circle guides families through the sensitive period after a loved one's passing. From confirming the resident's passing with their GP and preparing the room to displaying a remembrance frame with a photo of the departed, every step is taken with the utmost care.

A cornerstone of Family Circle is the emphasis on honouring the unique wishes of the departed and their families. Before a resident's passing, St Vincent's collaborates closely with families to understand their preferences for the transfer of the body, ensuring that the final moments are both personal and reflective. The departure ceremony, marked by a guard of honour and personally selected music, serves as a dignified farewell, fostering a sense of closure for families and friends.

The project also considers the emotional and logistical needs of families after a loved one's passing including offering comfort and assistance during the emotional process of packing up a resident's belongings. We know this task can carry a lot of emotion and provide as much support as needed, allowing families to navigate this phase at their own pace.

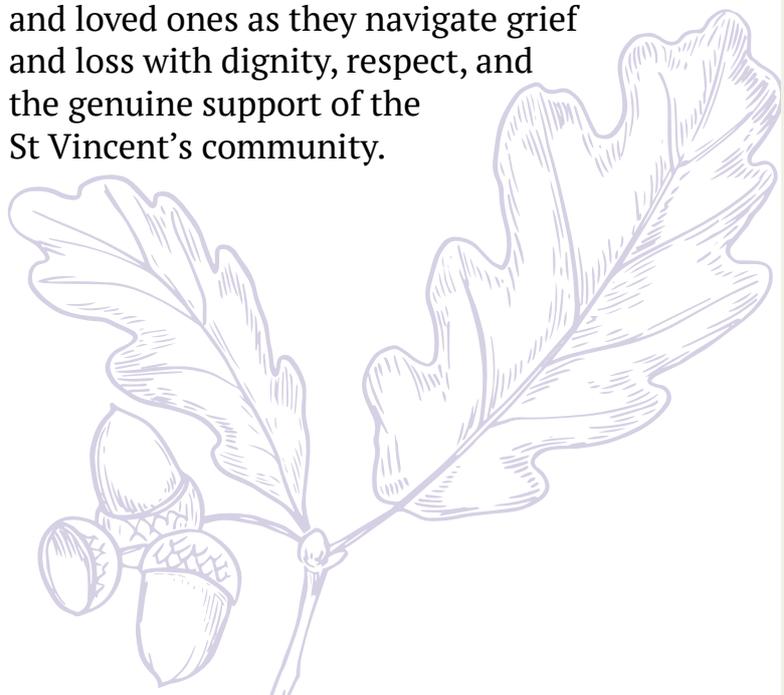
Family Circle extends beyond the immediate aftermath of a passing, recognising that grief takes time.

St Vincent's reaches out to families, offering emotional support within two weeks after the resident's passing, with another check-in at two months and the option to attend a memorial event hosted in November each year.

The project has also developed a guide to help families manage a loved one's affairs, with practical steps and resources for navigating this often-challenging terrain. From legal considerations to the delicate task of writing a eulogy, St Vincent's ensures families have the information needed to support them.

Central to the Family Circle Project is the understanding that each person's life is unique, and their farewell should be reflective of them. The annual memorial event, hosted by St Vincent's, becomes a memorable moment for families to reflect on their loved ones' lives and reconnect with the staff who shared in their care.

St Vincent's Family Circle is more than a process; it's a commitment to honouring the lives of the many unique residents who pass in our care. It is a beacon of support, reflecting our longstanding tradition of compassionate care and extending this care to include families and loved ones as they navigate grief and loss with dignity, respect, and the genuine support of the St Vincent's community.



Maria (second from the left) with her family members at the Family Circle Memorial Event at Kangaroo Point, 22 November 2023.



FAMILY CIRCLE: Through the Eyes of Maria

Meet Maria Harrison, the daughter of residents who have recently passed away in our care. She shares her experience of compassionate care at St Vincent’s while navigating her parents’ end-of-life journey.

It’s a story of care, support and the real impact of human connection.

Maria’s family discovered a support system that went above and beyond at our Kangaroo Point facility. The staff, from doctors to carers to the clinical team, became more than just professionals—they became family.

As Maria puts it, “Everyone here has been so supportive – we are such a big family, and still, every time we came to visit, they supported and accommodated us all”.

Grateful for the Kangaroo Point staff, Maria emphasises the power of small acts of kindness, friendliness and patience that make all the difference during such an emotional time. It shows the impact a compassionate approach can make in the overall experience for residents and their families.

The positive impact of the Family Circle Project stands out in Maria’s story, showing the importance of paying attention to those little things that make each person

individual. Staff addressing Maria’s parents as “mamma and pappa” wasn’t just a formality, it was a detail that left a lasting mark.

Maria encourages all St Vincent’s staff to keep it simple; “Make personal connections and get ready to be part of a bigger family”. It’s a reminder to embrace the human side of caring alongside the medical responsibilities because palliative care is about more than just procedures — it’s about people.

For families on a similar journey, Maria encourages open communication and urges them not to hesitate in seeking assistance to make sure their loved ones are comfortable and cared for. For Maria, St Vincent’s delivered on everything she needed, turning the end-of-life process into a shared experience of support and care for her and her family.

In Maria’s narrative, the Family Circle Project at St Vincent’s is about a community that extends beyond the medical. It’s a reminder that even in the face of life’s inevitable conclusion, there’s room for warmth, connection and a shared journey towards acceptance.

REVOLUTIONISING AGED CARE: Australia's First On-Site Dental Clinic



In a groundbreaking move, St Vincent's Care has pioneered the establishment of Australia's first onsite aged care dental clinic. Collaborating with Health First Dental, St Vincent's Care's Heathcote facility opened its doors to a fully equipped dental clinic in October 2022.

The initiative stemmed from the pressing issue of dental healthcare inequalities faced by residents living with physical and cognitive impairments in aged care facilities. With poor oral health identified as a significant concern by the Royal Commission into Aged Care in 2021, St Vincent's Care took a step to bridge the gap.

Dr. Ivan Chee of Health First Dental Practice and St Vincent's Care Heathcote joined forces to tackle the challenges of poor oral health among aged care residents. Dr. Chee took the opportunity to address

the accessibility issues faced by residents with mobility or cognitive impairments and invested a substantial amount to transform a decommissioned bedroom into a state-of-the-art dental clinic.

The purpose-built clinic, operates one day a week, offering extended consultation times to cater to the needs of immobile and frail residents and those with dementia. St Vincent's Care manages the bookings and ensures residents receive any support needed to attend appointments. With over 90 patients treated in the first nine months, the clinic has been a resounding success, providing accessible and affordable dental services.

The clinic has become a vital service, offering general dentistry, emergency procedures, and denture services to residents, their families and staff at Heathcote.

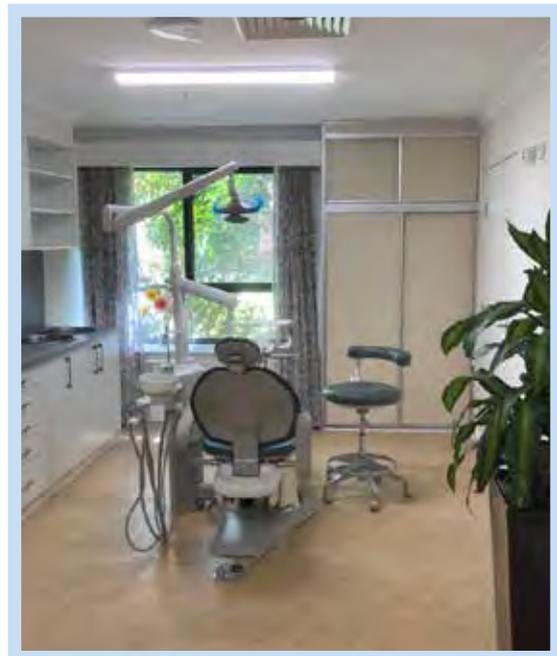


Residents, families, and staff are thrilled to have a dental clinic onsite, enjoying the convenience, peace of mind and independence it brings for residents who are now able to attend their appointments with ease.

Dr. Chee envisions replicating this model in other aged care facilities, emphasising the need for accessible, quality dental care for residents with unique challenges.

St Vincent's Care and Dr. Chee are committed to the clinic's sustainability. Plans include offering discounted dental treatment to St Vincent's Care staff and potentially extending services to residents from the co-located Retirement Village and nearby aged care facilities outside of St Vincent's.

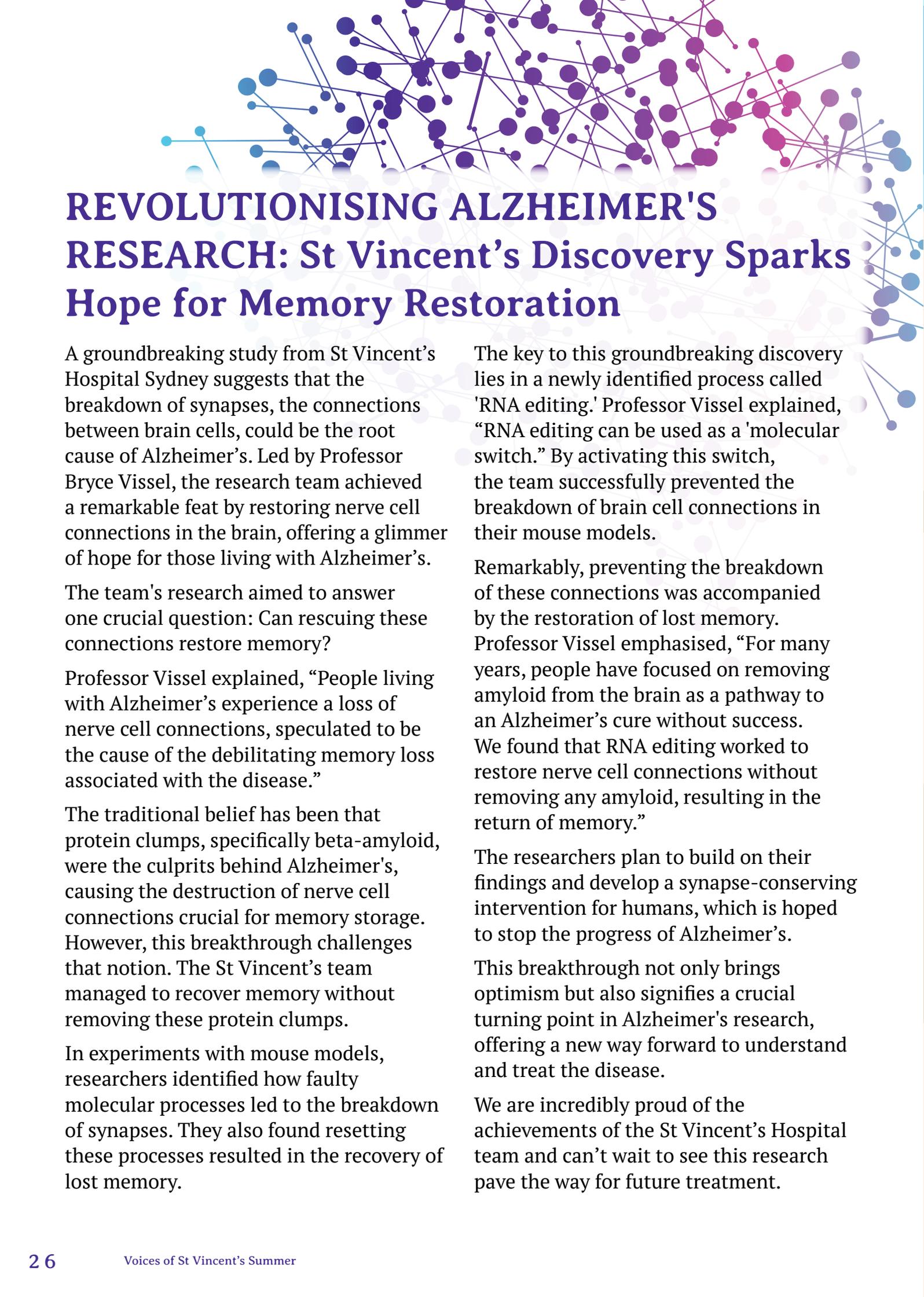
Australia's first onsite aged care dental clinic truly exemplifies St Vincent Care's commitment to innovative, person-centred care that supports resident wellbeing and health.





HEALTH AND WELLBEING





REVOLUTIONISING ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH: St Vincent's Discovery Sparks Hope for Memory Restoration

A groundbreaking study from St Vincent's Hospital Sydney suggests that the breakdown of synapses, the connections between brain cells, could be the root cause of Alzheimer's. Led by Professor Bryce Vissel, the research team achieved a remarkable feat by restoring nerve cell connections in the brain, offering a glimmer of hope for those living with Alzheimer's.

The team's research aimed to answer one crucial question: Can rescuing these connections restore memory?

Professor Vissel explained, "People living with Alzheimer's experience a loss of nerve cell connections, speculated to be the cause of the debilitating memory loss associated with the disease."

The traditional belief has been that protein clumps, specifically beta-amyloid, were the culprits behind Alzheimer's, causing the destruction of nerve cell connections crucial for memory storage. However, this breakthrough challenges that notion. The St Vincent's team managed to recover memory without removing these protein clumps.

In experiments with mouse models, researchers identified how faulty molecular processes led to the breakdown of synapses. They also found resetting these processes resulted in the recovery of lost memory.

The key to this groundbreaking discovery lies in a newly identified process called 'RNA editing.' Professor Vissel explained, "RNA editing can be used as a 'molecular switch.'" By activating this switch, the team successfully prevented the breakdown of brain cell connections in their mouse models.

Remarkably, preventing the breakdown of these connections was accompanied by the restoration of lost memory. Professor Vissel emphasised, "For many years, people have focused on removing amyloid from the brain as a pathway to an Alzheimer's cure without success. We found that RNA editing worked to restore nerve cell connections without removing any amyloid, resulting in the return of memory."

The researchers plan to build on their findings and develop a synapse-conserving intervention for humans, which is hoped to stop the progress of Alzheimer's.

This breakthrough not only brings optimism but also signifies a crucial turning point in Alzheimer's research, offering a new way forward to understand and treat the disease.

We are incredibly proud of the achievements of the St Vincent's Hospital team and can't wait to see this research pave the way for future treatment.



STAY COOL THIS SUMMER WITH OUR TOP 5 TIPS

As the sun graces us with its warmth and the days stretch longer, it's the perfect time to embrace the joys of summer. Here are five tips to make your sure your summer days are delightful and safe:



1. Stay Hydrated, Stay Happy:



Summer days can be sizzling, and while we love soaking in the warmth, it's essential to stay hydrated. It's important to sip on cool water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Hydration not only keeps you cool but also helps maintain that radiant summer glow.



2. Light and Lovely Clothing:



Dress comfortably in light, breathable fabrics to beat the heat. Loose, flowy clothes not only keep you cool but also add a touch of summer chic to your style. Don't forget your favourite wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses for a dash of sun-kissed elegance!

3. Seek the Shade:



While getting some sunshine is delightful, remember to take breaks in the shade. Consider staying indoors during the hottest parts of the day, from late morning to early evening. Whether it's under a leafy tree in the garden or a cosy nook indoors, a little shade offers a refreshing retreat and helps prevent over-heating.

4. Slip, Slop, Slap:



Sunscreen is your summer superhero. Before stepping out, make sure to slip on a shirt, slop on some sunscreen, and slap on a hat. This simple routine protects your skin from the sun's rays, ensuring you enjoy the warmth without the burn.

5. Socialise Safely:



Stay sun-smart while catching up on the latest stories, sharing laughter, and creating summer memories. When gathering outdoors, ensure there's plenty of shade and comfortable seating. While outdoor activities are delightful, consider reserving strenuous activities for the cooler parts of the day – early mornings or late afternoons.

As we savour the magic of summer, let's ensure it's a season filled with joy, laughter, and good health. Your well-being is our top priority, and these simple tips are here to make your summer days as bright and beautiful as can be.



COMMUNITY





CELEBRATING THE GOLDEN YEARS AT OXFORD PARK VILLAGE MITCHELTON

In a heart warming celebration of community, Oxford Park Village Mitchelton hosted the much-anticipated Golden Years Festival. This event, designed to bring joy to our residents and the wider community, was a resounding success, with over 250 people in attendance. Food trucks, live music and farm animals, this festival had it all and provided an opportunity for visitors to take a tour of the village and see what retirement living is all about.

Foodies and coffee connoisseurs were in for a treat as a delightful array of food trucks and coffee vans graced the festival grounds. The tantalizing aromas of diverse cuisines filled the air, offering a delicious journey for the taste buds. It was the perfect opportunity for residents and guests to indulge in their favourite culinary delights and savour the flavours of the day.

One of the festival's highlights was the presence of the charming farm animals from Old McDonald Farms. Children and adults alike couldn't resist the opportunity to get up close and personal with these adorable creatures as they brought smiles and laughter to everyone's faces.

For those with a sense of adventure, guided Retirement Village tours were available, offering a unique way to explore the world of retirement living. These tours provided insights into the joys of Retirement Village life, sparking the curiosity of attendees and perhaps

inspiring a future adventure in a vibrant senior community.

The Golden Years Festival also had an exciting raffle with a grand prize of \$500 cash. The anticipation was palpable as attendees eagerly awaited the drawing, hoping for a chance to win this generous prize adding an extra layer of excitement to an already fantastic day.

Live music filled the air, courtesy of the talented St Laurence's College band and the equally gifted Ciara Ballantyne from our very own communications team. Their performances set the perfect ambiance, creating a vibrant and cheerful atmosphere that resonated with festival-goers.

The craft stall by Sr. Christine Henry and the artwork display from local residents showcased the creativity and artistic talents within the community. It was a testament to the richness of experiences and skills that our residents bring to Oxford Park Village.

The Golden Years Festival at Oxford Park Village Mitchelton was a day filled with laughter, entertainment, and a strong sense of community. It brought together residents, families, and the wider community to celebrate the golden years of life.

With delicious food, adorable farm animals, live music, and so much more, it was an event to remember!

We look forward to many more joyful gatherings in the future, strengthening the bonds of our community even further.

CARSELDINE ART EXHIBITION: A Dazzling Showcase of Creativity at Holy Spirit Village

In a delightful showcase of creativity and community spirit, the Holy Spirit Village in Carseldine recently played host to an unforgettable Art Exhibition. St Vincent's Care welcomed residents, their families, and art enthusiasts from the wider community to a morning filled with artistry and delectable treats.

The Holy Spirit Village Function Room was transformed into a gallery of wonder, adorned with over 250 pieces of art. From vibrant paintings that brought nature's beauty to life to intricate sculptures that captured the essence of human emotion, the exhibition featured an unbelievable range of artwork.

It was a wonderful display of the power of creativity and connection. It shows us how art can bridge generations, spark conversation and bring people together. We're committed to nurturing not only the physical well-being but also the emotional and creative spirit of our residents, and this event was a shining example of that commitment.

The exhibition reminds us that beauty and inspiration can be found all around us if you have a creative mind and artistic eye, including within the walls of an aged care community.

It was a day filled with art, laughter, and connection—a true celebration of life and creativity.





MEET OUR PECK-TACULAR VOLUNTEERS!

Did you know at St Vincent’s Care, our community is powered by the kindness of 450 dedicated human volunteers? And guess what, we also have a couple of feathered friends—our chicken volunteers!

Our volunteers play a pivotal role in our homes, engaging in a range of activities, from running events and providing pastoral care to driving buses and assisting with administrative duties. Volunteering is not just an act; it’s an enriching experience that offers benefits for individuals, residents and communities.

We are always eager to explore how our volunteers bring vibrant interests to our community.

In Toowoomba, one of our dedicated volunteers, Belinda Haddow, has introduced an innovative twist to traditional pet therapy by bringing in her chickens for what we fondly call “chicken therapy”. The chickens – particularly the sociable Victoria Peckham and “the one with the distinctive pom-pom head” – have been warmly received by residents, adding a touch of uniqueness to the already vibrant community in Toowoomba.

Belinda’s unconventional initiative is just one example of the creativity and warmth that defines our St Vincent’s Care environment.



Ready for some egg-citement? Come volunteer with us!

Volunteering can make a lasting and meaningful difference in someone’s life, creating a positive ripple effect in our community. Joining our team means becoming part of a vibrant and caring community that values diversity and shared compassion. We understand the importance of flexibility and offer volunteering options to suit all schedules.

And you won’t be on this journey alone; our team provides the support and resources you need to make your volunteering experience fulfilling and enjoyable.

Ready to make a difference? Scan the QR code below to express your interest and learn more about our volunteering with us.

**VOLUNTEER
TODAY**



Did you know that
40%
of aged care residents
across Australia
don't get frequent visitors?

That's why this Christmas,
the best present
is your presence. 



Every hour volunteered is more than just time – it's a life-changing moment for an aged care resident.

Residents love to see new faces and our team are always welcoming to volunteers.

If your new to volunteering that's ok. We have a dedicated team to support people into rewarding opportunities.

So reach out today and find out how this Christmas you can make a real difference!



Read a book



Teach arts and craft



Have a chat



Start a new program



Bring your instrument



Tell us what you would like to do!

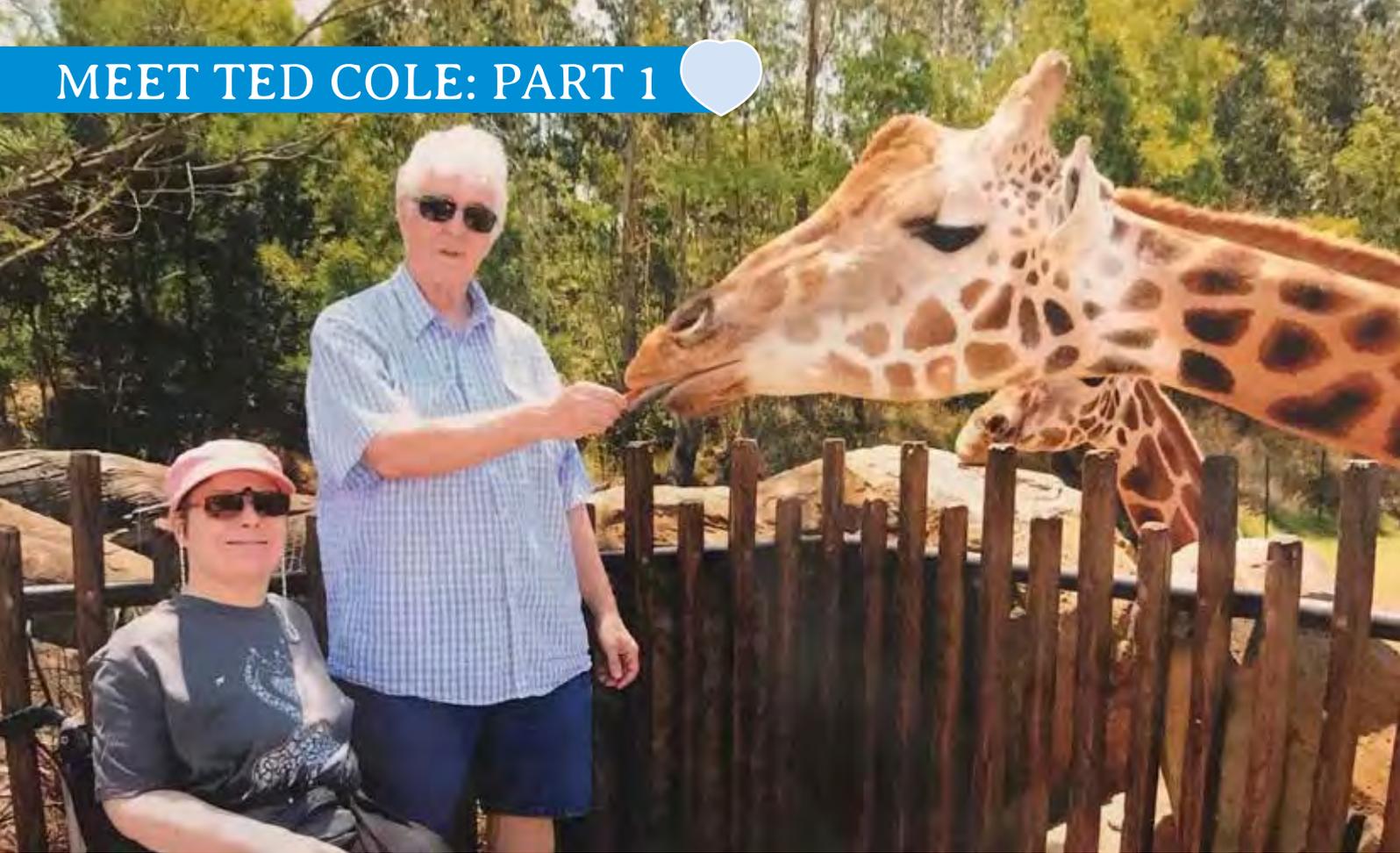
**VOLUNTEER
TODAY**



1800 778 767 | svcs.org.au



ST VINCENT'S CARE



My name is Ted Cole, and I am a resident at St. Vincent's, Carina. I am a baby boomer who grew up in East-end Toronto, Ontario, a bustling multicultural city and the largest in Canada. My sister Joanne was three years older than I was. So, we were a family of four living in a small walk-up flat, with our world centering around being proud east-enders.



Carol, my teenage sweetheart and I married in 1962 and were blessed with three children (Lisa, Curtis and Jason – Photo on my daughters, Lisa's Wedding day in 1987).

I have five grandchildren and a great-grandson. Some of my best memories are playing video games with my kids, camping, exploring caves and touring the magnificent Rocky Mountains on the west coast of Canada.

Carol and I divorced in 1990, and then two years later, I faced another major

challenge when I became redundant due to downsizing with a Company I had been employed with for 30 years. However, this unexpectedly opened a new path for me in IT consulting in Toronto and Kingston. This was Kingston, Ontario, not Jamaica. I wish!

So, for the first 57 of my 80 years, I lived and worked in Toronto and Kingston. Then everything changed when I visited Australia in 1999. Here, I met my future wife, Cate, in Coffs Harbour. Cate and I were already good friends, having collaborated on writing articles together. In 2000, I made the life-changing decision to live in Australia. It was fairly easy to get a work visa back then, and my first contract was in Canberra with the Department of Education. I commuted back to Cate in Brisbane from Canberra every weekend. After that contract, I consulted in Brisbane, with one last contract in Canberra at ATO, finishing in 2005.

Cate and I shared many of the same interests and values, and we married in 2007 and lived in a unit in Morningside.

After three attempts, I finally retired in 2018 and became a full-time carer for Cate, who had been a paraplegic since birth. The picture shows us at the Australian Zoo with Forest, the tallest Giraffe in captivity.

I was fortunate to have enough time between contracts to visit all states and territories and their capital cities. I was granted permanent residency and then citizenship in 2010, and I am proud to hold citizenship in both Australia and Canada.

I am incredibly blessed to have had the opportunities and to have encountered the people who have been such a positive influence in my life. Volunteering, especially in advocacy roles, has been and will always be the most meaningful way for me to give back and express gratitude. During retirement, I became heavily involved in disability advocating related to upholding human rights for the vulnerable and disabled (QAI). I am still on the Board of Directors for that Not for Profit.

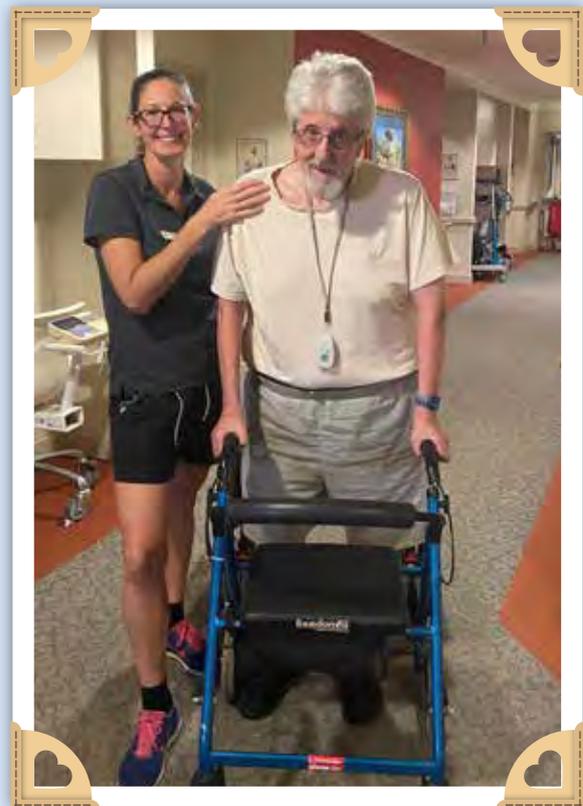
I was fortunate to have good health except for arthritic knees, which worsened as I aged. It was inevitable to have surgery, and early in 2021, I underwent a double knee replacement. I made excellent rehab progress and could walk with a cane. But life threw me a huge challenge when I contracted Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) in July of 2021.

GBS is an autoimmune syndrome that attacks the Myelin sheathing on nerves. The immediate result was that I lost all mobility. With the possibility of succumbing to respiratory failure, I was admitted to ICU. My recovery was very slow, and it became obvious that if I did recover, it could take years, with a diminished chance of recovery over time.

After six months in rehab in the hospital, the harsh reality was that I had regained

only minimal mobility and remained a partial quadriplegic. As a result of that, I was classified as having high care needs, including requiring an overhead full-body hoist for transferring. I became a resident of St. Vincent's Carina just before Christmas 2021. Then, early in 2022, overwhelming feelings of defeat and despair started to creep in, which eventually left me in a very dark place.

That completes the first part of my journey. I am eager to continue sharing the rest of my story, which will be in the next Newsletter. A spoiler alert: the picture shows me recovered to the point of walking again.



How can that be considering the bleak prognosis coming into care at Carina? I drew my strength from my faith and self-determination. It was also due to the exceptional care and support I received from St. Vincent's Carina team and the unwavering dedication of the physiotherapists, which truly made a pivotal difference. More on that in the next Newsletter.

“SIMPLE THINGS CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE.”

At St Vincent’s Care, we are dedicated to providing the highest quality of care and this goes beyond physical care to include caring for your wellbeing, happiness, and overall quality of life.

We want all of our residents to enjoy activities and hobbies that support their wellbeing and give them enjoyment each day. Engaging in meaning activity and

hobbies is a type of care called diversional therapy.

Diversional therapy can include art and crafts, music and singing, pet therapy, gardening and puzzles or games. These activities provide valuable opportunities to socialise with other residents, provide mental stimulation, and an outlet to share your feelings.

Award-Winning Artists illuminate St Vincent’s Mitchelton Madonna Villa

Eleven years ago, the talented artist Noleen Webb graced the halls of Madonna Villa, painting two magnificent murals on its walls. As she worked her magic, the residents gathered, captivated by her artistry, showering her with questions. Inspired by this interaction, we invited Noleen to share her skills with our residents through painting classes.

Today, a dedicated group of 12 residents gathers weekly at Madonna Villa. The sense of community and creativity is palpable within these walls.

“Painting has a serene effect. What’s wonderful is that anyone can do it! Despite my fading eyesight, I find solace in painting,” shares Cath.

Every July, our painting enthusiasts participate in The Samford Show, submitting their artworks for judgment. This year, our residents won 3 first-place ribbons, 2 second-place ribbons, and several other commendations. The Samford Show isn’t just a showcase of talent; it fosters a sense of community, achievement and pride.

Trish echoes the sentiment, saying,

“I cherish the sense of togetherness and the creative energy of painting. The camaraderie among residents and staff, who share their wisdom, is heartwarming. For many of us, painting is a newfound passion, a joy we missed in our school days. It’s a delightful experience.”

One remarkable resident, the late Eunice Taylor, also had her work featured at the prestigious Brisbane EKKA, where she claimed first, third, and a highly commended award.

Trish Corby
Countryside & Bird



Nancye Gamble
Silver Fox



Cath Ferguson
Door



Barbara Giles



Don Heap

The Transformative Power of Music: Bringing Joy to Residents at Boondall

Music has the ability to rekindle memories, evoke emotions and elicit smiles. For a group of residents at Boondall, they were keen to hear the joyous melodies of a piano fill the air in their home. With unwavering determination and the support of St Vincent's Foundation Queensland,

they raised the funds needed to acquire a new piano.

Now, thanks to their efforts, residents at Boondall can immerse themselves in musical activities. The piano has brought immeasurable comfort and happiness to the community.

We wholeheartedly believe that every phase of life should be filled with joy, fulfilment, and opportunities to learn and grow, regardless of age. However, providing a wide range of diversional therapies requires significant resources, including trained staff, specialised materials, and suitable spaces.

This Christmas, we kindly ask for your support to help us continue and expand our diversional therapy programs. Your generous donation will directly contribute towards training and development, activity materials and supplies, and specialised equipment.

Your contribution, no matter the size, will support all residents to explore their passions, build friendships, and enjoy the moments that make life truly special.

To donate, please use the QR Code below or phone 1800 161 197. Alternatively, you

can visit our website at helpstvincentsqld.org.au to make a secure online donation. We also welcome any in-kind donations or volunteering opportunities you may wish to offer.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for your consideration and support. Together, we can create a nurturing environment where we can all continue to thrive, explore new hobbies and make the most of each day.

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and joyful holiday season

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lincoln Hopper'.

LINCOLN HOPPER
Chief Executive Officer



St Vincent's Foundation
Donate today

INTRODUCING OUR FEEDBACK COLUMN!



Welcome to our newest column Feedback Focus, where your voice takes centre stage!

At St Vincent's Care, we believe that great ideas and suggestions come directly from our community. Through our comprehensive feedback system, we've been actively listening and responding to your valuable input.

This column is all about the positive changes we're making based on your feedback, starting with some tasty improvements to our food and dining experience.

Enjoying Your Meals - A Better Dining Experience

Since 2022, our Mealtime Experience Reviews have been helping us improve the food and dining ambiance across our homes. We know dining is not just a physical necessity but an important part of emotional and social well-being for residents.

Personal food preferences don't diminish with age and residents bring a wide range of tastes and preferences with them when they enter aged care. Respecting these choices can promote wellness and a sense of normality for people in aged care. We're committed to delivering the best food experience we can and this extends to meal presentation, temperature, and overall dining experience.

Our surveys revealed that 86% of respondents (made up of residents and families) are content with food choices on offer, but we want to find those areas of improvement so we looked at our most common food complaints. Lack of variety in menus and texture of food emerged as key areas for improvement.

To improve the variety of food on offer, we now review winter and summer menus every six months, ensuring a rotation of seasonal delights. Our Food Focus Forums, led by Head Chefs onsite, allow for tailored menu

adjustments at each home and monthly food surveys capture resident preferences and concerns.

To improve the texture of food, we introduced precise training for staff on modified texture food and drinks. We also engaged Smooth Dining to provide texture-modified meals for all homes. For residents with specific needs, we've developed resources and training for staff to ensure food is both safe and appealing.

It's not just about the food. We want your whole dining experience to be fantastic. We've introduced dining experience training, Chef mentorship programs, and plating master classes to enhance the skills and consistency of our staff. There is now music in all dining rooms, and menus on display, contributing to a positive overall experience. We've also revamped furniture, fittings, and equipment to create comfortable and aesthetically pleasing dining spaces.

Like any journey, the path to a delightful food and dining experience is an ongoing adventure, and we're committed to making it better every step of the way.

Together, let's keep making your dining experience the best it can be!

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CARE: JOIN OUR CONSUMER ADVISORY BODY!

Exciting news! St Vincent's Care is launching a Consumer Advisory Body to ensure your voices shape the future of our aged care services. This new formal structure connects residents, families and representatives with our decision-making and governance processes.

While your home's individual needs are crucial, the Consumer Advisory Body invites you to engage on a broader scale, aligning our activities with your needs and enhancing the overall consumer experience nationwide.

Goals of the Consumer Advisory Body

- Provide feedback for organization-wide service improvement
- Act as a collective consumer voice for aged care residents and representatives
- Raise key issues for consideration by our governing bodies
- Keep abreast of and provide input to St Vincent's response to Aged Care Royal Commission Reforms and more
- Assist St Vincent's to promote a culture of safe, inclusive, and high-quality care

The group will meet bi-monthly to discuss and provide guidance for our aged and community care services. We'll navigate the industry together for the best outcomes for our 2,630 aged care residents, and over 1000 clients receiving in-home support.

How to Get Involved

We're on the lookout for 6-12 volunteers to join the Consumer Advisory Body. Whether you're a resident, family member or representative, your unique perspective is invaluable.

To apply to join the Consumer Advisory Body, scan the QR code and complete the application form online (<https://survey.zohopublic.com.au/zs/bABt43>).



You can also ask a staff member at your home for an application form to fill in and return to svcs.info@svha.org.au.

Join us in shaping the future of care at St Vincent's – your voice matters!





ST VINCENT'S CARE

Q St Vincent's Aged Care



**Please don't hesitate to call
1800 778 767**

**St Vincent's Care Services
Level 3, East Tower, 25 Montpelier Road
BOWEN HILLS QLD 4006**