

VASEY RSL CARE NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of Vasey RSL Care

Poppy Playgroup Arrives at Brighton East

As we go to print, the final preparations are being made for our new intergenerational Poppy Playgroup at Vasey RSL Care Brighton East! We are looking forward to welcoming pre-schoolers and their parents to get to know our residents with a weekly play date.

"We have been working with Playgroup Victoria to bring this exciting new initiative to our community," said Janna Voloshin, CEO. "If you watched the wonderful ABC documentary 'Old People's Home for 4 year olds' last year, you'll be aware of the benefits to all who participated — there were many special moments."

Poppy Playgroup will go a step further with parents/ carers taking part as well: all three generations will come together to nurture each other.

For residents, it's a chance to pass on their knowledge and experience to a new generation: the Vasey RSL Care community is unique in that around 70% of our residents have an ex-service background.

"This gives our residents a very special role to play," says Janna. "Their personal experience of service, as a veteran or war widow, is respected by the Australian people and it is our responsibility to ensure their legacy lives on."

Poppy Playgroup

Poppy Playgroup Details:

- ✿ Open to children of 3 & 4 years (at 1 Jan 2020)
- ✿ Held every Friday during school terms
- ✿ 10:00 to 11:30am
- ✿ Families are asked to make a gold coin donation and bring a piece of fruit to share
- ✿ Lead by a facilitator from Playgroup Victoria

More Information

Check out the details on our website:
www.vaseyrslcare.org.au/news-and-events/newpoppyplaygroup/

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From Our CEO

Thank you

The beginning of 2020 will be remembered for all the wrong reasons — fire, destruction, smoke haze, loss of human life and wildlife.

Our residents and staff wanted to do something to help, and out of this wish, \$2,000 has been raised towards the Victorian Bushfire Relief Appeal and many joey pouches and fauna balls have been made and sent off.

Thank you all for taking part in these activities, even if it was simply buying a raffle ticket. We are particularly grateful for the lovely items donated as prizes - and congratulations to the lucky winners!

Australia has seen an outpouring of support for all those affected by this summer's disasters right across the country, and we appreciate and admire our fire fighters, the ADF personnel brought in to help, the wildlife experts, charities and individuals helping in whatever way they can.

Poppy Playgroup Starts Soon

As you may have seen on the front page, our new intergenerational playgroup is ready to go! We are looking forward to welcoming the littlies and their parents to Vasey RSL Care Brighton East this month.

This is an exciting new initiative for us and as much as we have planned and prepared, there will no doubt be some learning for us.

The playgroup is open to 3 and 4 year olds and there are no restrictions other than that, so do pass on details to friends or family who may be interested.

Our Vision for the playgroup is that old and young will nurture each other, and that all three age groups — children, parents and residents — will gain from it.

Royal Commission Continues

Prior to Christmas, the Commissioners for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety published their interim report, called 'Neglect', which outlined their findings so far and drew some preliminary conclusions. The report also outlined



key areas for the Commissioners to focus on for the remainder of the Royal Commission.

It is hard to read some of the content and disappointing in the extreme that our industry has failed in so many ways.

The Commissioners identified three areas where action can be taken immediately:

- Providing more Home Care Packages to reduce the waiting list for higher level care at home
- Responding to the significant over-reliance on chemical restraint in aged care
- Stopping the flow of younger people with a disability going into aged care and speeding up the process of re-homing those young people who are already in aged care

Public submissions are still open and are being taken up until 30 April. Submissions can be made anonymously if desired.

Duke of Edinburgh Bowls Shield

At the beginning of April, we will once again sponsor this Victorian RSL state bowling tournament which brings around 1,600 bowlers together at venues across the state. Good luck to all teams — I hope the weather is kind to you, but don't count on it!

ANZAC Day Services

ANZAC Day services will, as usual, be held at all our residential care homes. Please see the back page for details. I look forward to seeing you there.

Janna Voloshin

Flu Season Approaching: please prepare

What is one word that comes to mind when you see a new baby?

As humans we are programmed to have an automatic protective reaction to babies, so one word that might come to mind is 'vulnerable'.

As we move into autumn, protecting the vulnerable people in our community from this year's flu strains is a priority, especially given our increased awareness of viruses thanks to the novel coronavirus.

Babies are vulnerable — but they are not the only ones.

Older people are vulnerable to infection: as we age, our immunity decreases and our resistance to infection drops considerably.

Those in the group in between have the responsibility to do everything possible to protect those at both ends of the age spectrum.

Get Vaccinated

1. Please don't delay — as soon as this year's vaccine is available, get yours. (Leaving it until later means you have zero protection and allows the virus to spread.)

2. If you have any signs of illness, please DO NOT visit. Your loved one will understand.

3. Wash your hands - regularly.



Hand Washing: Ordinary yet Effective

How often do you wash your hands? Just take a moment to think about it...

- 40% of Australians don't always wash their hands before touching food
- 20% of Australians admit they don't always wash their hands after going to the toilet
- 25% of Australians do not always wash their hands after handling raw meat
- 80% of infections are spread by touch

Hand washing is the simplest and most effective method for reducing the spread of infection.

The simple act of washing your hands can help keep you and your family healthy.



Our hand washing policy requires that staff at residential homes wash hands before and after physical contact with a resident and in between various actions. Known as the **'Five Moments for Hand Hygiene'**, this helps protect our community from infection.

Hand hygiene continues to be one of the most ordinary, yet effective ways we can all help reduce infection.

Please remember to wash your hands.

Changes to our Board of Directors

After almost five years as Chair of the Board and a total of 27 years' service to Vasey RSL Care, Mr David Paroissien OAM FCPA AGIA, stepped down from his role in December and Mr Michael O'Meara OAM was elected to the role.

New Chair, Mike, has served on the Vasey RSL Care Board since April 2015 and has a wealth of experience in the veteran health sector: Mike was Deputy Commissioner, Victoria, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) from 2007 to 2012, and prior to that, he worked as Director Health and Client Services and as National Manager, Community Health, spending a total of 44 years with DVA.

Mike has also served on the Board of the Weary Dunlop Foundation for 18 years, and as Chair from 2012 to date. He recently stepped down from Deputy President of the Board of Carry On Victoria, after serving on their Board for 4 years.

In 2018, Mike was awarded an OAM in recognition of his services to Veterans and their families and to the community of Kilsyth. In 2000 he received the centenary Australian Sports Medal for services to Australian Rules football.

Mike has put his professional experience to use on the Board's Quality and Risk, Finance, and Audit sub-committees and will continue to do so as he takes over the Chair from David.

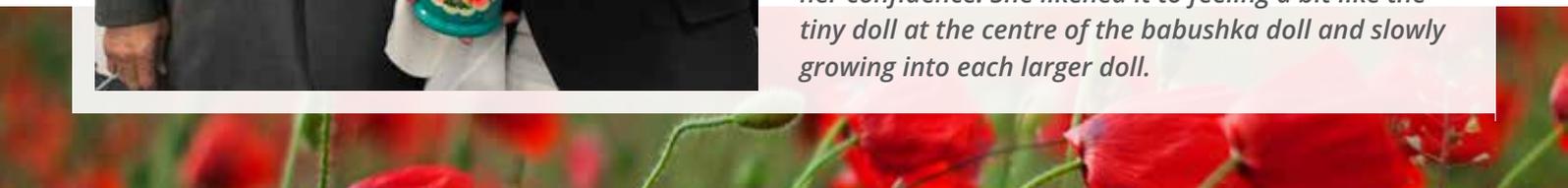


Mike O'Meara OAM (left) is taking over the Chair from David Paroissien OAM FCPA AGIA who has given almost three decades of service to this community.

"I would like to extend our most sincere thanks to David for the significant contribution he has made to the organisation," said Janna Voloshin, CEO. "David has served on the Board since Vasey RSL Care was formed in 2004, and served on the Board of Vasey Housing Victoria for twelve years prior to the amalgamation, a total of 27 years' service. He has shared his expertise and worked hard to 'Serve Those Who Served' and we are very grateful to him."

"I would like to congratulate Mike on his appointment to the Chair," she continued. "Mike will be able to use his extensive knowledge and understanding of the ex-service community to help our organisation achieve its new Strategic Plan (2019-2021) as we continue to support existing and changing needs of our veteran and war widow populations. I look forward to working closely with Mike as we strive to provide the best possible service and support to the ex-service community."

Janna Voloshin explained how David's support had been invaluable to her in her role as CEO, helping build her confidence. She likened it to feeling a bit like the tiny doll at the centre of the babushka doll and slowly growing into each larger doll.



Gwen Paxino Returns to Frankston South

If you are familiar with Vasey RSL Care Frankston South (previously RSL Park), the name 'Paxino' will be ringing bells for you. A year ago, Gwen Paxino, now 95, the widow of Andrew Paxino, moved into our Frankston South home — but it was not the first time she had lived there. Bob Evans chatted to Gwen.

Gwen was around 40 when she first moved to 'RSL Park', the wife of Andrew.

Andrew had served as a bombardier in the 2/14 Regiment, enduring the Japanese bombing of Darwin before seeing action at Kokoda in New Guinea and Borneo during World War II. Andrew enlisted in 1941, as soon as he was old enough to do so without his father's permission.

Gwen first met Andy at church before he enlisted, but it was when he walked into the local dance in his uniform that something happened.

"I thought, 'Oh beaut!' and I don't know what it was - maybe it was the slouch hat — but from that moment on I was madly in love."

Gwen worked at AG Healing during the war — an importer of electrical goods and radio receivers. Andy returned from the war and they made their home together in North Balwyn and later Kew.

Following his service, Andy maintained close links with the RSL and was involved in their welfare programs and the State Council, often arranging groups to donate blood at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

It was this connection that took Andy to Frankston South, where he became Superintendent of the 'RSL War Veterans Homes Trust', taking over from Frank Sewell, better known as 'Bluey', a World War I veteran who had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for conspicuous bravery.

Gwen thought Frankston was a nice place for a holiday but she didn't want to live there.

She was far from delighted with her husband's new role, initially hoping he would travel from their home in Kew, but eventually agreeing to move to Frankston South.

On arrival it didn't get much better. Gwen thought they could buy a nice house on the Nepean Highway, but it turned out that they were expected to live on the premises. She thought she would be consulted on their new home, but no! "When I saw it, I thought, 'I can't live there, it's too small!'"



Gwen says that she hated it and twice she packed her cases to leave, but with two young boys she found herself busy, and "eventually I got used to it," she says.

She often spent what little spare time she had visiting the older men and driving into Frankston to round up the younger vets to make sure they got home safely from sessions at the pub.

Apart from the Paxino wing, another of the Paxinos' legacies was a lawn bowling green which was well used by the residents. As women began to arrive, Andy and Gwen set up a competition for them: "We had an excellent women's pennant bowls team," recalls Gwen.

When Andy retired, having now made their home and friends in the area, they moved just a short distance away to Overport Road. After Andy died, Gwen moved to the Long Island Retirement Village for many years, and just last year she came full circle to live at Vasey RSL Care Frankston South.

Thank you to Gwen for sharing her memories.

This is an abridged version: the full article can be found at www.vaseyrslcare.org.au — click on 'About Us' and then 'Our Stories'.

Home Care Welcomes Monash Students

Our Home Care Team, headed up by Mishelle Ansems, cares for older Australians who continue to live in their own home, either with their spouse or on their own. Home Care provides the supports they need to be able to live at home with confidence.

Over the past year, we have been delighted to welcome a number of social work students from Monash University to do their work placements in our Home Care department.

We caught up with two of them as they came to the end of their placement just before Christmas.

Emily Mak and Zen Andra both chose to do their work placements in aged care.

Emily explained that for her, it was important to find work that was meaningful and where she could help and advocate for people in need, while Zen commented that he was looking for a role in the non-profit sector that focused on people. A friend of Zen's was working at Vasey RSL Care and that encouraged him to find his work placement with us.

Emily has previously had experience working with people living with dementia and enjoys the company of older people: "Their experience of life can teach us a lot," she says. "They often joke and are very encouraging."

Zen has previously worked with an NGO researching the needs of people living with HIV. He was keen to understand more about aged care and what could be done differently to improve quality of life. However, at this stage he sees his future in public health and is particularly interested in the LGBT+ environment.



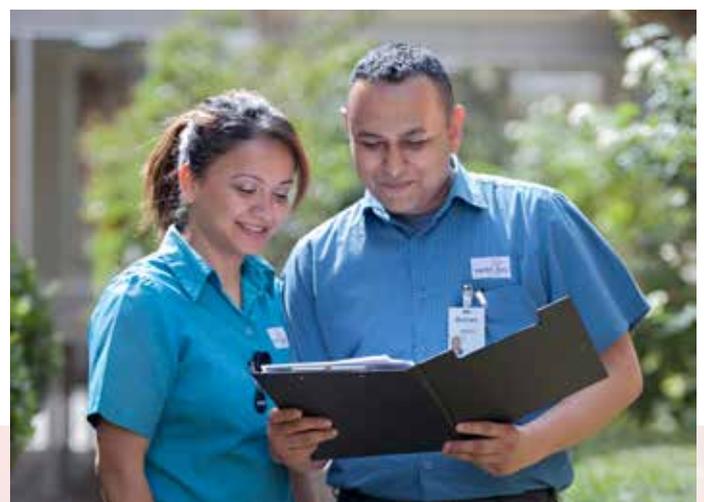
Emily is open to a future in aged care and is interested in the area of wellbeing and the possible transfer of research from other areas to improve wellbeing for aged care residents, although she has yet to decide whether she will go into practice or academia.

"We have appreciated having Emily and Zen here during their work placements," says Mishelle. "We wish them the very best of luck in their studies and their futures. We hope their time at Vasey RSL Care has given them a greater interest in the ex-service community as well as aged care."

Join Our Team!

Vasey RSL Care employs a wide range of people in caring and support roles, as well as administrative positions, at our central office in Hawthorn and at our five residential aged care homes in Brighton, Brighton East, Bundoora, Frankston South and Ivanhoe.

If you are interested in finding out more about working here, full time or part time, or joining our team of volunteers, visit our website: www.vaseyrslcare.org.au and click on the 'Join Our Team' link.



“Happy Staff, Happy Residents”

Vasey RSL Care supports around 900 people in residential aged care, home care and our ex-service accommodation. To do this, we have around 520 staff (the majority in residential care), and our Human Resources Team, under the leadership of Rom Vidmar, works hard to attract and retain staff who share the values and ethos of the organisation.

Providing high quality services to our residents and clients requires good people — people who are good at what they do, who are caring and considerate of those around them and who have a positive approach to life.

“Creating a welcoming and happy environment for our residents is so important: this is their home,” says Lee-Anne Suryn, General Manager Aged Care Services. “Staff can only support this aim if they feel fulfilled and happy in their work.”

Vasey RSL Care strives to nurture a workplace environment where staff are provided with compelling reasons to join and even more compelling reasons to stay.

“For those we support, getting to know the staff who they see or speak to regularly helps them to feel settled and comfortable,” continues Lee-Anne. “This is especially true for those with dementia who may not know names, but recognise a familiar face.”



“66% of our staff have been with us for more than four years”

Over the past seven years, the percentage of staff choosing to leave has reduced from 13.71% PA to just 7.92% PA, which is substantially better than the industry average.

“This indicates that overall, our workforce is satisfied and staff members enjoy their roles,” says Rom Vidmar. “In fact, 66% of our staff have been with us for more than four years!”

When staff reach 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 (or even more) years, they are recognised with a certificate presented to them by their manager, and depending on the number of years, they also receive a little something extra. In the last financial year, 130 employees were acknowledged in this way.

“I am very proud of our workforce,” says CEO Janna Voloshin. “Our staff make a difference every day: their skills and expertise, and above all, their care and compassion help us deliver the best possible services for our vulnerable community.”

Congratulations to Simone, Meri and Jill and to all staff who reached these important milestones.

From top:

Simone Flynn is congratulated by her colleagues and residents on her 15 year anniversary, at Vasey RSL Care Brighton East.

Meri Timos, who many will have spoken to on the phone, receives her 5 year award from her team at Central Office, Sharon, Stephen, Peter and Lisa.

Jill Smith reaches 10 years at Vasey RSL Care Frankston South, a member of the Lifestyle Team, pictured with Ruwan (Lifestyle Coordinator) and Jane (Residential Manager).

