

matters

AUTUMN 2021

mecwacare



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Caring for Victorians since 1959

It's full steam ahead despite the pandemic

Refurbishments, construction and a new acquisition – these major projects are well underway as we prepare for another busy and progressive year despite the challenges of managing a pandemic.

We are factoring COVID-19 into all our plans as we seek to ensure everything is in place to respond to whatever developments may occur this year.

As well as the rollout of the Pfizer vaccine, February's unexpected lockdown resulted in all areas of the business immediately resuming COVID-19 emergency management protocols. We made numerous changes to protect our vulnerable residents, clients and staff. I want to thank all staff and volunteers in our residential services, home care and disability services, community centres and opportunity shops for their rapid response; this unplanned event triggered a lot of work on short notice.

While our services could easily adapt, our annual charity golf day had to be postponed, in line with lockdown restrictions. We are hopeful of teeing off with our valued sponsors and supporters on the rescheduled date of March 15.

Despite COVID-19, we are gearing up for significant developments. Refurbishing our 45-bed boutique aged care home, Calwell Manor in Safety Beach, will bring the mecwacare touch to this seaside home. In Richmond, more beds are in the pipeline as we finalise plans to convert the Richmond Hill Hotel in Church Street into a modern residential aged care facility.

We are excited to begin construction of a new three-storey facility for the mecwacare Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert, which started in January 2021. *See story, page 9.*

Our other big accommodation news is mecwacare Squires Place.

We took ownership of this 60-bed home in Mason Street, Altona North on March 1 and will be redeveloping the facility to bring it up to a standard that our residents deserve. This is our 14th aged care home – and the name proudly honours our long-serving Treasurer and Board Member Colin Squires.

On February 1, we were reminded how much we love and appreciate our volunteers. They returned to our care homes and it was a joy to see the smiles on the volunteers and residents' faces alike when they were reunited after such a long period.

I hope you and your families stay safe and well.

Michele Lewis
Chief Executive

Pictured on the front cover: Michael and Sandy at mecwacare's Rivendell House in Pakenham. *See story, page 7.*

Looking for **RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE?**

We have over 60 years' experience in providing care and support to the elderly. If you are looking for residential aged care that feels like home and provides genuine, safe and respectful care, then mecwacare is perfect for your next stage in life.

Our residential aged care locations:

- Altona North
- Caulfield North
- Glen Iris
- Hamlyn Heights (Geelong)
- Hoppers Crossing
- Malvern
- Mornington
- Mont Albert
- Prahran
- Richmond
- Safety Beach
- Shoreham
- Traralgon
- Westmeadows



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TODAY**

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mecwacare

www.mecwacare.org.au



CARING ABOUT OUR CARERS

**Who cares for the carers?
We do – and it is one of mecwacare’s most important roles to support people like Linda Jarman.**



We know the role of primary carer can be emotionally and physically demanding. Social isolation and chronic tiredness are some of the challenges that Linda must manage, on top of her caring responsibilities.

According to the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, carers have the lowest mental wellbeing of any large group, so providing them with regular connections and support is a priority for mecwacare. Some research even suggests that as many as 30 per cent of caregivers die before the people in their care, which is why maintaining good health and wellbeing is critical.

Linda – from the Bass Coast Planned Activity Group – has been caring full-time for her husband Ian for the past seven years.

Catch-ups with other carers are an essential part of her personal management. But COVID-19 took away many of the opportunities to share precious time and talk with fellow carers. She is very keen to get back to normal in 2021 as social restrictions are eased.

For Linda, the group is a lifeline to psychological support. When asked what she enjoys most, Linda says she doesn't feel judged by the group and is very comfortable spending time with them. They understand her situation because they are in it themselves.

This little group has established very close ties over the years.

“Most of the people I catch up with through the carers’ support group I’ve known for a number of years,” Linda said. “There’s four to five of us who have stayed in touch and we always have a laugh together.”

Linda’s quick to give credit to her program coordinator Tina Leonard for assisting the group to make the most of its break from care duties and the pressures of the role.

“Tina is marvellous – she makes it fun for us all; she’s such a special person and really understands us and the situation we are all in,” Linda said.

Linda’s carer group meets at the Community Centre in Cowes (Phillip Island) – a great starting point for regional outings, such as visits to Wilsons Prom and Wonthaggi Coal Mine.

Carers like Linda are truly special people – selfless, committed and giving – and one of our most important care partners.



For information about the Bass Coast Carers’ Group and other social activities at mecwacare’s Cowes community centre, contact 8573 4980.

Respite and overnight care

RESPITE: A short period of rest or relief from something difficult.

This definition of “respite” points to the importance of supporting home carers. They live their work and ensuring they can take a break is a vital part of mecwacare’s services supporting vulnerable people and their carers.

Our respite services give carers a break for a few hours, overnight or even weeks. We provide longer live-in care to clients whose regular carer cannot be there or who may require a higher level of support or supervision.

Respite care is also available at all mecwacare residential facilities and in the community, through our community centres.

A person can access up to 63 days of subsidised care in a financial year. In special circumstances, an extension of 21 days may be granted at the discretion of the federal government-run My Aged Care.

Respite care placement in our care homes is available throughout the year, subject to availability. Bookings are confirmed closer to the requested entry date.

We maintain and monitor an active waitlist. Feel free to contact our friendly Admissions team on **03 8573 4812** or via email admissions@mecwacare.org.au for updates.

Requesting an aged care assessment

The first step to accessing government subsidised respite care is to contact the federal government-run My Aged Care by phone on **1800 200 422** or online at www.myagedcare.gov.au to check eligibility and to register. A representative from the Aged Care Assessment Team in the person’s local area will then make contact and schedule an appointment for a face-to-face meeting to complete the assessment.

Respite care is for short-term stays only and is not encouraged for people who cannot return home and/or who have been assessed clinically as requiring permanent care.

WHAT MAKES RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE A GREAT OPTION?

How do we age well in this changing world?

What are the decision points and choices that can make a difference?

For many people in their senior years who are interested in positive ageing, residential aged care is a great option.

Aged care promotes independence in a community setting with the benefits of security, safety, care and companionship.

mecwacare residential aged care offers a lifestyle balance that supports residents to pursue positive ageing that keeps life fulfilling and purposeful.

Our values – **Caring, Accountable, Respectful and Ethical** – drive everything we do to support our residents.

There are eight key factors that make residential aged care with mecwacare a great option for people wishing to age well.



1 A welcoming community

Our homes offer a real sense of community, with friendly and welcoming staff and residents. This welcome is extended to family members and others who care for you. Our welcoming approach is part of everything we do and is at the heart of life in our homes.



2 Fresh, nutritious food

Nutritious and delicious food cooked fresh by on-site chefs daily is a service that is essential to ageing well.



3 Peace of mind

Our Registered Nurses and carers offer 24-hour care and support for your health and wellbeing. Relax, knowing you or your loved one is well cared for and has mecwacare's resources at their fingertips.



4 Enjoy life

Our lifestyle programs are curated to stimulate, entertain and even just pass the time, if that's what you choose. Our activities reflect the diversity and needs of our residents – such as learning new skills, staying in touch with the wider world, reaching for new goals, adapting to changes in physical and cognitive function, or simply relaxing.



5 Safe and secure environment

To keep you or your loved one safe, mecwacare's homes are fitted with a range of systems designed for each home. These include CCTV, security alarms and 24-hour emergency response systems. Most importantly, know that our staff will give you and your loved one great comfort.



6 A trusted provider

With more than 60 years' experience, we are one of Australia's most trusted aged care providers. We have earned our reputation for excellence. Our communication is always empathetic and thoughtful. Our partnerships are honest and fair. We are always listening and learning – and we are committed to continuous improvement.

Pictured: Lifestyle Coordinator Wendy Colverd and resident Denise enjoying a game of chess at the mecwacare Noel Miller Centre.



**WE INVITE YOU
TO BOOK A TOUR
TODAY**

**☎ 8573 4812
TO FIND OUT
MORE**



It's all about you

As a not-for-profit organisation, we invest resources back into your care and services. Our focus is to achieve the best results for you, our resident.



We're here for you

At mecwacare, we know that starting the conversation about residential aged care can be emotionally challenging. We are here to help and our experienced and dedicated team is available to answer all your questions, advise you about the mecwacare options and arrange tours of our homes.

TAKE A TOUR

A tour can provide you with a snapshot of daily life in a mecwacare home.

It's a quick, convenient way to find out whether aged care is the right option for you.

Our Admissions team can arrange tours and advise you on how to apply for a place.



To book your mecwacare tour, call our friendly Admissions team on **8573 4812** or email **admissions@mecwacare.org.au**

Are you eligible for subsidised care?

If you decide to enter aged care, you may be eligible for government subsidised permanent care.



To check your eligibility, contact the federal government's My Aged Care by phoning **1800 200 422**.

An Aged Care Assessment Team will arrange a face-to-face meeting to complete your assessment for subsidised care.

staying connected DURING PUZZLING TIMES

They might have been working in their own homes on individual puzzle pieces, but there's no mistaking the togetherness of the 40 artists behind Rivendell House's Puzzle Project.

The lockdown artwork, now with all puzzle pieces joined together, has pride of place in the hall at the mecwacare community centre in Pakenham.

It's an eye-catching display of 40 different approaches to decorating one jigsaw piece.

Featuring the framed artwork prominently reflects the popularity and effectiveness of the "We are connected" project.

The Rivendell House team came up with the idea when the activities program was put on hold due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Centre Manager Sarah Bailey said everyone was excited to tackle the project.

"It was symbolic that even though we were apart, everyone was still together working on the project," Sarah said. "It mattered so much to them."

The puzzle project is now a regular reminder of the community spirit that kept Rivendell House participants in shape during the long challenging time when they could not visit the centre.

It also featured in mecwacare's annual calendar, which showcases the many artistic talents of our residents, clients and participants.

The project was supported by a comprehensive program of centre staff keeping in touch with their community.

Sending out activities to do at home, daily phone calls, group chats and driving by to drop off items at participants' homes were all part of Rivendell House's action to care for everyone during the pandemic.

Community centred health

mecwacare's community centres offer programs that assist the elderly and people with a disability who are physically isolated to remain connected, active and emotionally and socially supported.

By staying active, eating well, maintaining social connections and a positive outlook, participants are on the way to living a long and healthy life.

These programs are offered at the Barry Fenton Centre in Malvern East, Rivendell House in Pakenham and satellite sites across regional Victoria, such as Cowes (Phillip Island), Garfield and Koo-Wee-Rup.

The varied programs include planned activity groups, strength training, day trips, a men's shed, activities for people with an acquired brain injury and carers' support groups.



For more information about mecwacare's Community Services, call **8573 4980** or email community@mecwacare.org.au

"It was symbolic that even though we were apart, everyone was still together working on the project..."

Sarah Bailey





Pictured: Great mates Michael and Sandy in the shed at Rivendell House.

HAMMERING HOME THE FRIENDSHIP

When Michael and Sandy get the hammer and nails out, woodworking is a team sport – with a lot of jokes thrown in.



Pictured: A sample of the woodworking group's handiwork.

Productivity and friendly fun mark the partnership of these two regular Rivendell House men's shed members.

It is this teamwork, with Michael on the hammer and Sandy on the nails, and other members happily weighing in with advice, that ensures every nail is straight.

This close-knit team is in top form as they embark on their new project, which has been dubbed the "Taj Mahal of bird houses".

The free-standing Taj Mahal will take a few months to complete. The project started from a picture given to the group by a staff member and from there, they drew up their own plans.

Rivendell House's woodworking group is just one of the programs offered at the Pakenham community centre for people aged over 65 or who have a disability and live in the Shire of Cardinia.

The shed – at the rear of the centre – is a light-hearted and light-filled workplace.

Noisy it may be, but woodwork has been one of the most popular programs since the centre was established. Members meet once a week, enjoy a cuppa and a chat, then head out to the shed for the afternoon.

Centre Manager Sarah Bailey says both National Disability Insurance Scheme and Commonwealth Home Support Program recipients attend the group.

Many items of furniture in Rivendell House are products of the woodwork team's artistry, such as bookcases, stools, bookends, shelves and children's toys.

Rivendell House is a hive of activity each day with well patronised community services that include planned activity groups, strength training classes, day trips and activities for people with an acquired brain injury.



Friends first, now neighbours

After a friendship of nearly 70 years, Geoff and Scott have moved a step closer – they're neighbours in mecwacare's Robin Syme Malvern retirement living village.

Living only a floor apart makes it easy to keep the friendship going strong – like heading into the city for lunch at the RACV Club.

As members of the first group of residents in the boutique village, they are full of praise for the luxurious accommodation.

Scott was the first to move in. He had lived in Glenferrie Road and wanted to downsize; the new village was in the neighbourhood and it was the quality accommodation he was after.

Geoff had an equally practical reason – his wife is in care next door at the mecwacare Malvern Centre, so joining Scott at Robin Syme Malvern was an easy choice.

A former Hamilton Road resident, he moved in a week after Geoff, on the day of the village's official opening in December 2020.

Geoff and Scott make two great salesmen for the outstanding features of the village. They know the layout like experts and take pleasure in showing off things, such as the electric fireplace in the luxurious ground floor lounge.

They both delight in showing visitors around their new apartments (Scott has a two-bedroom apartment facing Malvern Road and Geoff has a two-bedroom unit with views out to the Dandenongs) and pointing out the design features and "mod cons" in the village.

The light-filled spaces and highly functional kitchens are among their favourite features, as well as the spacious lounge and living areas.

This gregarious pair, who are also long-time members of the Melbourne Cricket Club, are both looking forward to getting to know their new neighbours as the village continues to welcome new residents.



These luxurious apartments are selling fast. For more information or to arrange an inspection, call 9831 9876 or visit www.robinsymemalvern.com.au

Pictured: Good neighbours Geoff and Scott.



Excitement builds at Mont Albert



A residential aesthetic, luxurious rooms and suites – and a whole new identity awaits our residents at the Simon Price Centre in Mont Albert.

mecwacare is proud to unveil the design of our state-of-the-art ageing in place* environment for the new home that will accommodate 100 residents – double the original site.

It will feature a variety of public and retail spaces designed for residents and their guests to enjoy. As part of the carefully planned design, carparking and hospitality services will be located on the lower ground level to minimise their impact on the leafy property.

On the third level, continuous large balconies off resident rooms will allow the top level to be set back to maximise sweeping views to the east.

This design philosophy breaks up the building into vertical and horizontal elements, providing “a rhythm of articulated facades”.

With an emphasis on residential aesthetic, typical of the contemporary Mont Albert home, the project will see the centre blend into the surrounding landscape and character of the suburb.

Its facade treatment will nestle into the street at the north-west

end, enhanced by two beautiful eucalypts standing tall on the corner. Retaining these significant trees at the front and rear setbacks highlight the importance of landscape in the design, allowing the new building to settle into the confines of this significantly sized site.

According to architect PTA Architecture, the proposed facade materials are “a palette of vibrant face brick treatments, forming a base to the rendered facade and broken up by translucent glazing”.

Demolition works next to the current Simon Price Centre were recently completed, with the first of two development stages set to begin soon.

Excitement is building across the centre as residents and their families keep a keen eye on the development of their new home.

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* Ageing in place means a resident does not have to move to another facility when their care needs change or increase.

BIGGER and BETTER bathrooms

Bathrooms and building are the centre of conversation at mecwacare Simon Price Centre.

Our Mont Albert aged care home is in the midst of extensive redevelopment, inside and out.

A bathroom transformation to improve infection control and increase convenience for residents is well underway.

This \$500,000 project is adding bathrooms and upgrading existing facilities to ensure each resident has their own bathroom. This infection prevention initiative is part of mecwacare’s proactive COVID-19 management strategy and represents our CARE approach in action.

Eight existing beds were removed to make way for the new bathrooms and the residents are delighted to have their own bathroom.

ADRIAN'S NIGHT WATCH

There's no need to ask Adrian Gordon what makes a great Registered Nurse – just follow him around for a shift. The secret seems to be keeping an eye on everybody and everything – and building an incredible understanding of aged care.

Growing up in the industry put Adrian on the caring path and contributing to what people love about mecwacare. His mother managed an aged care home for many years and Adrian began working as a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) at mecwacare's Trescowthick Centre at age 16, straight out of school. He's still there – and his knowledge, capability and passion light up the night shift.



Leading the Night Duty team, Adrian is responsible for all aspects of running the home after hours, as well as providing clinical care for residents. From working closely with his team members to fostering health and safety awareness, and participating in internal auditing, Adrian is a positive force in keeping the workplace in top shape. His leadership was recognised in 2020 when he was named mecwacare's Employee of the Year.

His colleagues describe a professional whom everybody loves to work with – and whom residents and their families value immensely. In palliative care, Adrian is a source of comfort and strength. He has been strongly commended by residents' family members for his compassion and clinical skills.

Recently-retired Facility Manager Maria McIntosh said Adrian's leadership in palliative care was crucial. During what can seem very dark hours at night when family are with their loved one, Adrian's warmth and wisdom are there to support them.

“Nursing has exceeded my expectations as I didn't realise the value caring for people would have brought to my life...”

“Nursing has exceeded my expectations as I didn't realise the value caring for people would have brought to my life,” he said. “It has been a very humbling and soul moving journey.”

The journey began when Adrian started working in the Prahran home's laundry when he was 15, before working as a PCA.

“I guess I initially pursued nursing as it was familiar to me and I enjoyed looking after and helping people,” Adrian said. “As an adult, I'm grateful for having these opportunities when I was younger as I don't think I would have pursued this career otherwise.”

He knows exactly why he finds the work fulfilling.

“I have always loved aged care as you have the same residents for months and years. Not a different

patient every day, as is the case in a hospital. Because of this you can really develop beautiful relationships with the residents that you couldn't otherwise develop in other areas of nursing. Many residents have felt like family,” Adrian said.

“The elderly have so much life experience and wisdom and I have always loved to hear their stories and have them impart some of their wisdom onto me as well.”

Away from work, Adrian likes to enjoy life in as many different ways as possible – playing guitar, gardening, racing cars, skateboarding, snowboarding or diving.

He has solid tips for managing the demands of night shift: Keep your life balanced and look after yourself, which means eating well, exercising and ensuring you have a good sleep routine.

mecwacare Trescowthick Centre is a 60-bed facility in the heart of cosmopolitan Prahran. With its charming architecture and landscaped courtyards, residents enjoy a welcoming and peaceful home environment.

ROMAINE'S CARING CAREER



Romaine Peck knows what it's like to be treated as one of the family – the smiles and the sadness.

But this year Romaine can smile with satisfaction as the recipient of *mecwacare's* 25-year service award. She has been with us during an exciting time of expansion and growth across the organisation.

Romaine, a Direct Care Worker with Home Care Services in the South East Metro Region, has built special connections with clients through her empathy and commitment to caring.

As an example, she can point to a very moving relationship with a family that began soon after she

started work with *mecwacare*, back in our Darling Road days. At the time, she was one of just 11 DCWs employed by the organisation. Now, there are 650 DCWs across Melbourne and regional Victoria, supporting our home care clients.

Romaine grew close to the family over several years while providing respite care for the "lovely gentleman" of the house two days a week. This relationship ended when he died, but not for long – when the gentleman's wife became ill, their daughter knew there was only person she wanted to care for her mother.

She rang *mecwacare* to find out if Romaine was still working for us. Everybody was thrilled when arrangements were made for Romaine to again assist the family in a professional capacity.

"It was nice to go back to their home," Romaine said. "But sad to see such an independent lady, who was a lawn bowls champion, get dementia and need care. I provided care for her until she went into a nursing home and visited her until she passed away; she was very special to me."

Romaine is well aware of the many facets and importance of a DCW visit.

"Sometimes, DCWs are the only people the client sees and they can get very lonely; it's lovely to see a smile on their face when you visit," she said.

Romaine started her working life as a secretary for an insurance company, but soon realised she wanted more rewarding work and to give back to the community.

She says she feels very privileged to have been part of *mecwacare* for 25 years. She loves her job and takes pride and joy in the care she gives. Her long contribution is typical of the staff dedication that has supported *mecwacare's* extraordinary growth in that period.

mecwacare is committed to supporting people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. If you would like to know more about our Home Care Services, please contact **03 8573 4980**.

Who we are

mecwacare is a not-for-profit, non-denominational charitable organisation that has been supporting Victorians for more than 60 years. We are a values-based, care-driven organisation that provides residential, community and in-home nursing, care and support services for the elderly and people living with a disability.

mecwacare was founded by a small group of volunteers concerned about the elderly and vulnerable in their local area and formally became the Malvern Elderly Citizens Welfare Association (MECWA) in 1959. In 2007, MECWA changed its name to *mecwacare* to better represent the organisation's focus as it grew into a major provider of aged care and disability services across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.



If you would like to know more about working for *mecwacare*, visit the Careers section on our website at www.mecwacare.org.au

I would like to support *mecwacare*

Please complete and return this donation slip to support *mecwacare*'s life-changing work.

Please find enclosed my tax deductible gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$250 \$500 My choice \$ _____

Where would you like your donation to go?

- Elderly people
 People with a disability
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Payment by:

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(optional)

- Please send me information about remembering *mecwacare* in my Will.
 Yes, I'd like to know more about volunteering at *mecwacare*.
 I do not want to receive further correspondence from *mecwacare*.

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Fill out the donation form and post your cheque or card information to us in the reply-paid envelope enclosed or mail to *mecwacare*, 1287 Malvern Road, Malvern VIC 3144.



Simply call us with your payment details (freecall) 1800 163 292 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. We accept AMEX, Visa and Mastercard.



To make a secure online donation using your credit card, visit our website at www.mecwacare.org.au

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

mecwacare service network

Corporate Services

1287 Malvern Road
Malvern VIC 3144
P 03 8573 4888
P 1800 163 292 freecall
E enquiries@mecwacare.org.au
www.mecwacare.org.au

Residential Services

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E admissions@mecwacare.org.au

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mecwacare Rositano House
Richmond

mecwacare Simon Price Centre
Mont Albert

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Altona North

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Pahran

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Community Housing

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Beaumaris

Glen Iris

Sandringham

Retirement Living

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E housing@mecwacare.org.au

Hoppers Crossing

Malvern

Home Care Services

P 03 8573 4980
E intake@mecwacare.org.au

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E homecarepackages@
mecwacare.org.au

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E community@mecwacare.org.au

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Cowes (Phillip Island)

Barry Fenton Centre
and Podiatry Service
Malvern East

Rivendell House
Pakenham

Disability Services

P 03 9572 9000
E community@mecwacare.org.au

Fisher Street Centre
Malvern East

Opportunity Shops

P 03 9571 4221 (donations)
E enquiries@mecwacare.org.au

Hawthorn

Malvern

Malvern East

Windsor

Robin Syme

Malvern

Residences by *mecwacare*

SELLING NOW



Introducing Robin Syme Residences – boutique retirement living in the form of luxury two and three-bedroom apartments in Malvern.

Residents can enjoy stress-free independent living, with a range of communal facilities including a gymnasium, café, dining rooms and business lounge. Residents will live in comfort and style, with the freedom of choice to lead the life they want and the reassurance of access to long-term support, if required.

The time is now! Make the decision to move into one of these beautiful residences and change your life.

TO ARRANGE A TOUR

Contact Pauline and Robyn – 9831 9876
robinsymemalvern.com.au
1253-1259 Malvern Road, Malvern



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