

Three huge steps for lifeAssist disability

November 13 – lifeAssist makes three major announcements

ALL THREE announcements made by lifeAssist in Geelong on November 13 herald new approaches which empower people with disability and meet the needs of the disability community across Victoria today and into the future.

We launched a new range of disability services in the NDIS Barwon Region.

We also launched linkAssist, a free online community noticeboard.

Finally, in a joint announcement with Wesley Mission

Victoria, a new strategic alliance between the two organisations was unveiled.

On hand for this historic event were Federal MP for Corangamite, Sarah Henderson, local State MPs Christine Couzens and Simon Ramsay, the National Disability Insurance Agency, government departments, numerous organisations which deal in disability services and members of the local disability community.

(Read more inside...)



Switching on linkAssist together: (from left to right) Peta Hooke (YMCA Escapes), Sarah Henderson (Federal MP for Corangamite), and Jill Wells (lifeAssist Board of Governance).

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from the **Acting Chief Executive's desk**

WELCOME to this special edition of *The Bugle*.

Firstly, you may be wondering why this column is from the *Acting Chief Executive*.

As reported in previous editions, there is a broad-ranging review underway of the structure of UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania (UCVT) and the 28 agencies which comprise the UCVT.

Our Chief Executive, Gerry Mak, is currently on secondment to that review in the role of Project Director for approximately six months. During that time it is my pleasure to be lifeAssist's Acting Chief Executive until Gerry's return next year.

It has been an extremely busy few months for lifeAssist.

On November 13 at Kardinia Park (Simmonds Stadium) in Geelong we made three significant announcements:

1. The launch of expanded Disability services within the NDIS Barwon Region,
2. The launch of linkAssist – the world's first online community noticeboard designed specifically for the disability community, and
3. A joint announcement by our Chair, Michael Lanyon, and the Chair of Wesley Mission Victoria, Sue Norman, of a strategic alliance between our two agencies.

What this all means to lifeAssist and our clients, current and future, is covered in this edition.



We recently completed a major client satisfaction survey which covered all areas of our service.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those lifeAssist clients who participated in giving us such valuable feedback.

We are using this information to identify ways in which we can further improve the delivery our services to you.

Another exciting project that we have commenced is our *Client Voices Video Project*.

Time and time again, new clients so often express their relief when they find out what help is available.

All too often they tell us that they were reluctant to go looking for help sooner because they thought what they were going through was unique.

Client Voices aims to reassure such people that they are not alone.

Actual lifeAssist clients telling their stories in short, professionally produced videos can provide reassurance to innumerable people who may currently be suffering in silence and can encourage them to seek out the kind of help we can provide.

If you would like to tell your story and become one of our Client Voices, please speak to your lifeAssist consultant. Your story may help many people.

Finally, on behalf of everyone at lifeAssist, I would like to wish all our clients a happy festive season.

This year our offices will close at 1pm on Thursday 24 December (Christmas Eve) and re-open at 9am on Tuesday December 29. We will again close at 1pm on New Year's Eve, reopening on January 4.

You may notice a few new icons inside this edition of *The Bugle*. These icons indicate places where you can go online to find more information, watch videos, connect with others, see more pictures and more. Simply type the URL (the text written in black next to the icon) into your web browser. These icons indicate:



– Facebook



– Twitter



– video (youtube)



– download



– a website



– online document

Wesley Mission Victoria and lifeAssist announce strategic alliance

Wesley Mission Victoria and UnitingCare lifeAssist announce a strategic alliance at the linkAssist launch, deepening the collaboration, efficiency and strength within the entire Uniting Care network.



WESLEY Mission Victoria and UnitingCare lifeAssist announced a strategic alliance at the Kardina launch event.

This was the third and final announcement made at the event. The Chairs of the Boards of Governance of UnitingCare lifeAssist, Michael Lanyon, and of Wesley Mission Victoria, Sue Norman, made the announcement in a joint statement.

In the joint announcement, Ms Norman noted that the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Victoria represents a new way of providing individualised support for eligible people with permanent and significant disability, their families and carers.

"It will transform the way we and other providers deliver valuable community services as an expression of God's mission in the world, to some of our state's most vulnerable people", Ms Norman said.

"As the two largest providers of services for people with disability within the Uniting Church in Victoria, we believe that it is imperative that we work together to ensure that we are fully prepared to offer our services in this new competitive environment."

"It is an exciting opportunity within the Uniting Church Network. We look forward to deeper collaboration with the entire network to enhance efficiency and strengthen the services offered to people experience profound disadvantage," said Ms Norman.

"We are delighted today to formally launch a strategic alliance between Wesley Mission Victoria and UnitingCare lifeAssist," said Ms Norman.

Special guest MC for this event was Tim McCallum, known for both his appearance on The Voice and his advocacy for people with disability. Tim surprised the audience at the launch with a performance of "Nessun Dorma".



Above: (from left to right) Chairs of the Boards of Governance, Ms Sue Norman (Wesley Mission Victoria) and Mr Michael Lanyon (UnitingCare lifeAssist), and Disability Advocate and event MC, Tim McCallum.

lifeAssist – new services, new approach

At the Kardinia Park launch event, lifeAssist unveiled a range of new services to better suit the needs of clients under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

WE HAVE expanded our range of services and a new approach to delivering services that better suit the needs of clients under the NDIS.

Making this announcement was Helen Killmier, Executive Manager – Disability Solutions.

“The move from block to individualised funding represents an exciting opportunity for people to truly be at the centre of and to self-direct their services and, ultimately their lives,” said Ms Killmier.

“The vision of the NDIS is simple and powerful: to maximise people’s independence, choices and social and economic participation.”

The new approach is goal oriented, encouraging people to take positive risks to achieve the things that matter to them the most.

lifeAssist services will work with people to ensure they can access and participate in community

activities, transition from school to the next steps.

“As a person’s needs change, so does our response and level of support – the ultimate goal is for the person to achieve as much independence as possible, and for our involvement to decrease as the person’s capacity and community networks increase,” said Ms Killmier.

Our new goal oriented services will work with people to ensure that they:

- Access and participate in community activities
- Transition from school to the next steps – such as further education or getting a job
- Develop lifeskills that they need to maximise independence
- Develop or implement their whole of life plan
- Develop a circle of support
- Access Homeshare

We also offer specialist positive behaviour support services that assist people to learn behaviours and skills that will help develop positive outcomes.

This means that we:

- Look at what is not working and other ways to understand behaviour.
- Make sure that everyone understands what is written in a plan.
- Make sure that what is in a plan becomes support in everyday life.
- Provide training to support everyone in the picture such as parents, school, community groups that interact with the person and
- Make sure that people help in a way that the person likes.

“You could say that our aim is to do ourselves out of a job by ensuring people gain maximum independence and don’t need to rely on us at all or as much as a service provider,” said Ms Killmier.

We are excited about the opportunity to develop close working relationships with our clients that lead to positive outcomes and independence.



linkAssist – a world first in disability

LIFEASSIST'S NEW online community noticeboard, linkAssist, is believed to be the first of its kind.

It demonstrates our overall approach by providing people with disability, their families and carers tangible empowerment through connection with others and with the community.

“It was clear that there was a real need for people with disability to be able to connect with each other and their local community,” said lifeAssist’s Acting Chief Executive, Emmanuel Gauci.

Paramount in the design has been the protection of the privacy of all users, coupled with ease of use.

Notices cover six main categories: Accommodation, Training and Employment, Community Groups and Peer Support, Travel, Buy Swap Sell, and Does Anyone Know...?.

“linkAssist will be provided as a totally free service, made possible with the support of a very limited number of sponsored link advertisers... This will always be a community noticeboard, not a commercial platform” said Mr Gauci.

“linkAssist will initially go live in the Barwon region on December 3 – International Day of People with Disability, before being extended to other areas from early 2016,” said Mr Gauci.

People will then be able to browse current notices in their area, respond to notices, as well as create their own notices, all with total anonymity.

Businesses which register for sponsored link advertising by the end of December will receive their first 3 months free.

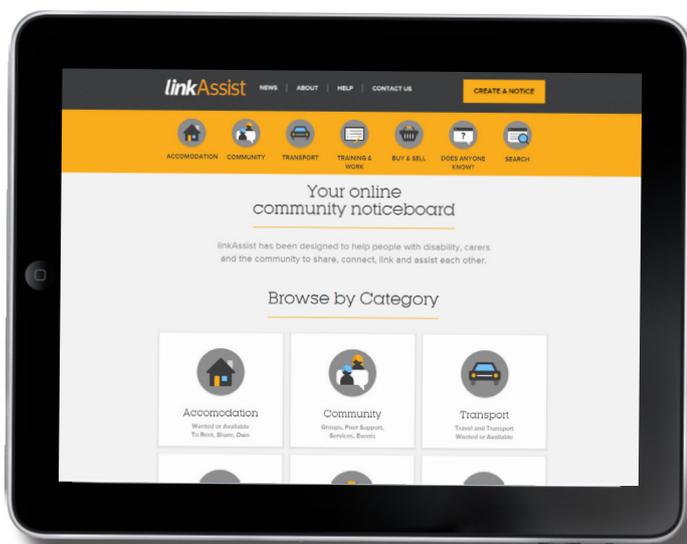
We have a small number of Sponsored Links on the site that cover the ongoing running costs of linkAssist. This helps us keep linkAssist free.

linkAssist has been developed by UnitingCare lifeAssist with Melbourne-based website developers Blocks Global.



Helping launch linkAssist: National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) General Manager Operations, Vicki Rundle and event special guest and MC, Timothy McCallum.

 Visit: linkassist.net.au



**GET READY:
linkAssist is
coming to the
Eastern Region
early in 2016!**

Pathways for Carers Walks

CARERS of people with a disability or a mental health illness are invited to share walks.

The Pathways for Carers project helps connect carers with each other and link carers to support services and networks. Carers unable to attend the walk can connect with the group through the Facebook page.

It has been developed in partnership with a carer, Maroondah City Council, Shire of Yarra Ranges and lifeAssist.

These events are free for all carers. Carers are welcome to participate even if they don't live in the area of the walk. Each walk takes about one hour to

complete and is around 5km long, and is designed to suit any level of fitness.

Guest walkers attend each event to link carers with services and supports and answer any questions. To help carers take a break from their caring role, respite can be arranged through the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222.



Above: Carers enjoy the walk and sunny weather

Maroondah Walk

Start location: Meet at Torrente Cafe, 389 Maroondah Hwy Ringwood

Time and date: Every second Tuesday of the month commencing 9.30am

Yarra Ranges Walk

Start location: Meet at Mount Evelyn Community House, 50 Wray Cres, Mount Evelyn

Time and date: Every first Thursday of the month commencing 9.30am

 **Connect:** [facebook.com/pathwaysforcarers](https://www.facebook.com/pathwaysforcarers)  **Learn more:** www.lifeassist.org.au/pathways-for-carers

Taking Steps with those who Care for others

THE PATHWAYS for Carers project was launched, with carers looking forward to attending regularly.

The launch event was held in Ringwood in October, creating a new opportunity for carers of people with

a disability or a mental health illness to share walks in Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. The event was attended by Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, Gabrielle Williams.

“It was a huge honour to be a part of the Pathways for Carers project launch... it was a beautiful morning for a walk,” Ms Williams wrote.

UnitingCare lifeAssist Acting Chief Executive Emmanuel Gauci also attended the walk.

“When you're someone trying to balance the everyday challenges with the extra challenges that come with caring for a loved one, it can be hard to meet your own needs,” Mr Gauci said.

“This walk will give carers the chance to meet people with shared experiences with whom they can exchange their frustrations, anxieties and ideas for the future.”



Above: Enjoying the walk, (left to right) Gabrielle Williams MP, Carer Mel Spencer and Maroondah City Council MetroAccess Officer, Jack Mulholland

Working together for the 24th annual Christmas Appeal

THE TARGET and UnitingCare Christmas Appeal aims to make Christmas more special for the thousands of Australians who, for various reasons, are unable to celebrate Christmas with gifts.

The appeal is in its 24th year, offering support to disadvantaged people of all ages thanks to the generosity of the Australian community.

The campaign has been launched in all Target stores and runs to 24 December.

Thanks to the generosity of the Australian community, UnitingCare and Target have collected over 2.1 million gifts in the last 24 years.

There were many lifeAssist staff who assisted with

last year's Giving Box appeal, coordinating gift pickups from Target stores, preparing the gifts and distributing gifts to lifeAssist clients.

Last year:

- UnitingCare agencies assisted over 42,000 families with over 98,328 gifts
- \$63,850 worth of gift cards were donated at Target stores across the country last year
- Of this, lifeAssist distributed \$1,500 in Gift Cards to families who would otherwise have to celebrate Christmas without presents
- lifeAssist also helped 269 people from 155 families who received gifts and gift cards.

Donate a gift or buy a \$1 gift tag at Target to help UnitingCare support Australians most in need



Learn more: unitingcarechristmasappeal.com.au



Connect: twitter.com/UnitingCareXmas

Time to review your bushfire and emergency plan

IT IS ALWAYS important to be prepared in the case of emergency. During the summer, there is increased potential for unseen events such as bushfires, heatwaves and storms.

It is important to plan and have a safe place to evacuate, stay hydrated and stay calm. To be prepared for emergencies, you could consider your family, friends and neighbours who would be willing to help, and talk to them about your plan.

If you don't already have a fire and an emergency

plan, there are many good resources online to help you. These resources are listed below. The CFA, MFB, and state government have developed the Fireready App for smartphones and tablets to help you see where bushfire and other incidents are, their severity and what advice the authorities have for that region.

The Fireready App can be set to send text messages to your phone, giving you forewarning about any fire threats you have nominated in your 'watchzone'.



Download the Fireready app: cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fireready-app



For fire advice and support: cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare OR mfb.vic.gov.au OR bit.ly/1RZli8W



For emergency preparation advice: redcross.org.au/files/REDiPlan_booklet.pdf

Hunter realises his dream

A lifeAssist client story

HUNTER IS sixteen years old, and at a young age was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through the Realising a Dream Fund, Hunter was able to purchase an iPad, greatly helping with his communication.

The Realising a Dream fund helps provide grants directly to clients to help fund one-off items and services which will help them realise a particular goal or dream.

"Years ago, Hunter used cards with pictures to communicate his basic needs. iPads were not available then... (since purchasing the iPad) Hunter is more verbal," said Sonia, Hunter's mother.

The iPad gives Hunter the tools to explore his gifts and talents. He is very skilled creatively, and being able to own an iPad has improved his communication and creativity.

Sometimes, people with ASD have difficulty with language skills and understanding what others say to them. An iPad is an invaluable tool to assist with communication.

Not only is the iPad a portable device, it also has a touchscreen, meaning that people don't have to move their eyes from a keyboard to a screen.

iPads also have many useful apps for people with ASD. It breaks information down into small chunks and topics, is full of imagery, rather than words and can help people communicate in their own individual way with family and friends.



For Hunter, this means that he is able to extend his communication skills and creativity, enjoying the language apps and creating and telling his own stories.

"Hunter is a very visual person and learns this way. The iPad has provided lots of visual stimulus for Hunter. Using iMovie, Hunter has been able to make his own version of Thomas the Tank Engine. He also loved superimposing my head onto the dancing Christmas Elf," said Sonia.

"Hunter loves music and music has been crucial in helping with Hunter's language and alleviating his anxiety levels. Hunter loves the piano apps on the iPad and creating his own sounds. The iPad has also helped in lowering his anxiety whilst travelling on the school bus," said Sonia.

"The iPad has been an invaluable source in Hunter's education and a great source of fun and creativity for him," said Sonia.

"Thank you to all who give to the Realising a Dream fund. It has given Hunter the opportunity to own an iPad. I hope others like Hunter get to realise their dreams too," said Sonia.

**“
Thank you to all who give
to the Realising a Dream
fund... I hope others like
Hunter get to realise
their dreams too. ”**

– Sonia (Hunter's Mother)



Learn more about Realising a Dream or donate, at: www.lifeassist.org.au/donate
Donation details for the fund are found on the back cover of this Bugle.

Plan My Future helps people prepare for the NDIS

THE PLAN My Future workshops are helping many people be prepared, informed and ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Sessions were recently held at lifeAssist and were attended by many people with disability, their family and carers, eager to learn how to make the most out of the NDIS.

Topics discussed on the day included: eligibility, planning, setting, reviewing & achieving goals, advocacy, informal & community supports and more.

After each session, lifeAssist consultants spent over an hour in question time with attendees.

"People are eager to understand what the NDIS will

mean for themselves and those they care for," said lifeAssist Consultant and Plan My Future Session Coordinator, Susan Konstantas.

"They are wanting to know how they can best "get ready" for when the scheme is rolled out in the Eastern Regions, including what information and documentation they will be required to provide to be eligible for the scheme."

"They were pleased to hear that many individuals in the scheme in the Barwon area have indicated that they feel better supported under the NDIS."

lifeAssist was awarded funding from State Trustees Australia Foundation to develop and stage the workshops.

Want to attend a FREE upcoming Plan My Future workshop to help plan for your NDIS future?

Call: 1300 277 478 or email: susan.konstantas@lifeassist.org.au



Melbourne hosts International Homeshare Conference

LIFEASSIST WAS a proud sponsor of the 4th World Homeshare Congress. The congress was held in Melbourne in November. Delegates from Homeshare programs all over the world attended.

Helen Killmier (Executive Manager, Disability Solutions) and Tony Cavedon (Program Manager) presented on the Victorian Homeshare project.

Homeshare Coordinators Jeremy Picknell and Peri Penry-Williams facilitated a workshop on Communities of Practice and clinical practice issues in Homeshare.

"It was great to hear all the different homeshare models practiced around the world... despite variations, all programs had a common thread of being passionate about homeshare and its ability to

change people's lives," said Jeremy.

During the conference, State Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Hon. Martin Foley, announced that the Victorian Government will trial the Homeshare model in public housing in 2016.

The 5th World Homeshare Congress will be held in Madrid in 2017.



A Forum of Happy Carers

EARLIER this year, we had the pleasure of supporting 20 Carers to experience the Happiness and its Causes Conference.

Through this opportunity, we initiated a Carer Wellbeing Reference Group to provide us with feedback to shape and improve our services, both in the Southern and Eastern regions.

Carers were invited to reflect on their learnings from the conference and enjoy lunch together. Run by an experienced facilitator, the group provided a safe place to listen to and empower carers.

Do you want more information on how to participate in the Carer Wellbeing Reference Group?
Please contact us by calling 1300 ASSIST (1300 277 478) or email: care@lifeassist.org.au

Support in the South

THROUGH THE Mental Health Respite Carer Support Options (MHRCSO) we have begun a new Peer Support program for to carers of people who have a Mental Illness living in Casey, Cardinia & Dandenong areas.

The group is facilitated by our lifeAssist Peer Support Consultant, Rebecca Margary, who has a lived experience as a Carer.

The group involves informal discussion where carers take time out for themselves, meet other carers and share experiences, learn more information and link to more support services.

Activities are selected by the carers in the group and include art therapy, relaxation, meditation and crafts.

Come to a lifeAssist Social Connect Group

THE FIRST lifeAssist Social Connect groups ran in October. These groups connect our clients with each other and are held at a different Uniting Church premise each time. The first two programs were held at the Burwood Uniting Church and the Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

These groups expand the range of events, activities and community groups that clients can connect to,

The day was an opportunity for the group to re-connect, share experiences and take a short break from their caring role.

They discussed what being happy meant to them, with the feeling “cherished” being a common theme among the Carers.

lifeAssist Mental Health Peer Support worker, Rebecca Margary, spoke about the importance of peer support to one’s wellbeing, sharing her wisdom and story of her own journey as a carer. We look forward to more carers joining the reference group and help with developing our events and services.



Program Details:

The Peer Support group meets weekly on Tuesdays at 10.30am at:

Uniting Place: 1 Coral Dr, Hampton Park.
Lunch is provided and attendance is free.

For more information, including eligibility, contact MHRCSO team on (03) 9705 3932.

linking them in with community and church related support services.

Our next Social Connect group will run in early 2016. If you would like to attend, contact your consultant. Local churches also hold events to connect the community with each other.

Turn to page 15 for more information...

Jacob's Journey – Never Give Up

JACOB is 18 years old and is studying year 11 at his local high school. He is at a transitional stage of life, beginning to consider educational and career options post school.

Jacob requires electronic equipment for all his communication and recording of schoolwork. He walks small distances on flat ground, but uses a motorised wheelchair for long distance. He requires assistance during mealtimes.

“(I’m concerned about) not having much movement,” Jacob said.

Jacob was referred to mylifeAssist through his Speech Pathologist in March 2014. His Consultant at lifeAssist, Gayle, has been working with Jacob to achieve his goals.

Gayle has been supporting his educational and vocational outcomes, coordinating his professional support networks and his personal networks.

“(My consultant is) brilliant. She has taken a lot of pressure away from me and my family,” said Jacob. “Get help. Because it is hard.”

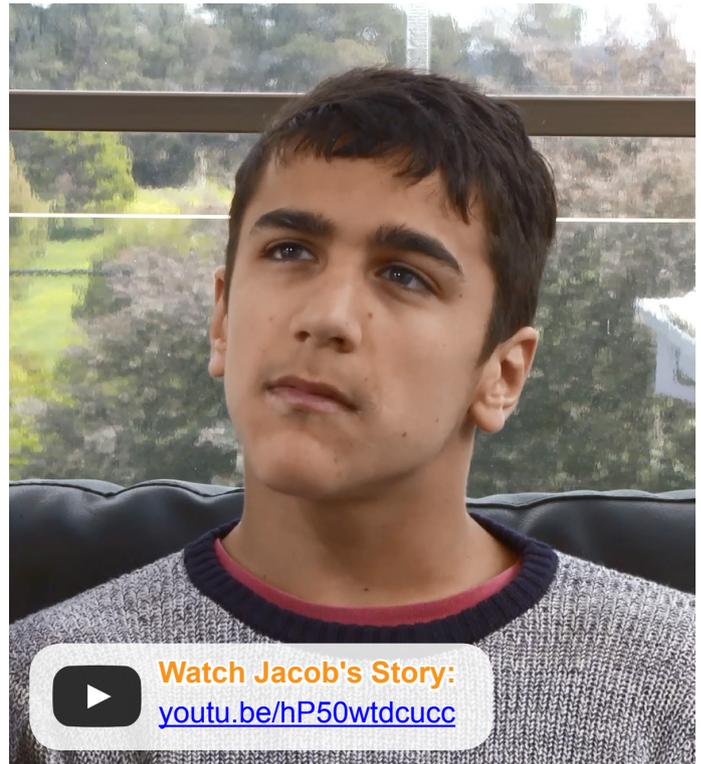
Jacob barracks for St Kilda; he participates in martial arts and he loves to tend his vegetable garden. He studies four VCE subjects.

“I want to go on to drafting. I've always wanted to do construction,” said Jacob.

Jacob enjoys attending school. It was always his goal to be able take the bus to and from school. For this to happen, the bus stops at both ends of the journey required modification.

Two years ago, this goal seemed unreachable because of the amount of negotiation needed with the local council, Public Transport Victoria, the Education Department and Ventura Buses.

During this time Gayle, Jacob and his family advocated for the changes required to make the bus stops accessible. Jacob advocated for himself during this process by writing a letter to the Council.



Above: Jacob reflects on his journey so far and his dreams for the future.

Despite all the hurdles in the journey, Jacob achieved his goal. Both ends of the journey were made accessible and he used the bus for transport to and from school with his schoolmates for the first time in August 2015.

This achievement has given his family two extra hours in their day, no longer needing to transport Jacob to and from school.

Communication between Jacob, his family and Gayle is important. Gayle advocates with Jacob to make sure his High School is meeting Jacob’s interests, educational opportunities and day-to-day needs. This also means making sure the subjects and study Jacob takes at school will help him pursue his future career interests and goals.

Jacob has goals for his future, and is determined to achieve them. He has important advice to anyone facing barriers – “Never give up.”

Tell your story in The Bugle or in a Client Voices Video. Contact your consultant for more information.

Results of the Client Satisfaction Survey

WE ARE pleased to share the results of the Client Satisfaction Survey, which was conducted mid-2015.

Thanks to the client feedback given, we aim to become a more responsive service based on what clients tell us. This will help us be better prepared for changes with the NDIS and Home Care Packages.

A random sample of clients of 115 lifeAssist clients participated in the survey. Respondents were very satisfied with our services and had many useful suggestions about what they would like to see.

lifeAssist scored an average 8 out of 10 in terms of satisfaction. Nine out of ten clients would recommend lifeAssist to others, and a quarter of respondents had done so in the past.

Around nine out of ten respondents were satisfied

with services provided by service providers organised through lifeAssist.

With lifeAssist, clients said they felt like they:

- Were listened to and their needs understood
- Were better able to deal with issues with help from lifeAssist
- Knew lifeAssist cared about their wellbeing
- Were able to provide feedback to lifeAssist

Suggestions for lifeAssist included:

- Improving communication
- Providing more and flexible or new services
- Improving case management and follow through
- Improving operational performance

A big thank you to all clients who generously gave their time to assist with the survey.



Do you have feedback? Tell us online: www.lifeassist.org.au/feedback-and-complaint-form

Successful Audit Outcome



Quality
ISO 9001



THIS YEAR we underwent a rigorous audit process, with each audit being passed with flying colours. We thank all our clients who were interviewed in the audit process.

Quality Reviewers from the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (AACQA) conducted a quality review (audit) of our systems and processes against the Home Care Standards.

A great outcome was achieved as all 18 expected outcomes of the Home Care Standards were confirmed as being met.

We also underwent and were successful in the recertification audit against ISO 9001 standards and Human Services Standards audit, looking at our Quality Management System and our disability services to ensure that our services meet a high level of quality and industry standards.

This means that our services are reliable, safe, consistent, meet customer expectations, continuously improve and comply with the law.

Connect with us on Social Media

WE ARE pleased to announce that we have launched lifeAssist on social media.

Stay in touch with the latest by liking us on Facebook and following us on Twitter.

Connecting with us on social media is a great way to keep up to date with all the latest news, events, programs and more.

We are also on LinkedIn if you'd like to know more about our business news, including job opportunities.

Say hello today!



facebook.com/UCLifeAssist



twitter.com/UCLifeAssist



linkedin.com/company/unitingcare-lifeassist

Seniors Festival celebrated in style

PEOPLE from all over the Eastern and Southern suburbs of Melbourne joined us for the "How to Live a Better Life at Home... For Longer" forum, held at lifeAssist Glen Waverly head office.

The forum included a short presentation, detailing a range of options to assist people to live in their own homes for longer, followed by a delicious lunch.

Information at the forum included details on:

- The help available when you need it immediately, after a 'trigger incident' such as a fall or illness
- How to get a homecare package

- Support available for people who care for someone who is aged
- Self-funded services
- Homeshare and many other services

Attendees were delighted with the amount of government-funded and self-funded help available to them, and felt like they would be 'experts amongst their friends' with the information they learnt.

"The presentation was wonderful, it was just the right amount of information.... I had no idea that there was this much available for me," said Mrs W, a 69 year old attendee.

Attend our next Special Seniors Festival Forum!

Register your interest by contacting (03) 9239 2566 or email info@lifeassist.org.au



Transitioning to the Commonwealth Home Support Program

THE Australian Government launched the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) on July 2015.

This is part of broader changes to aged care that offer frail, older people and their carers more choice, easier access and better care.

The CHSP will deliver the entry-level tier of support by providing a relatively small amount of care and support to a large number of frail, older people to help them to remain living at home for as long as they can and wish to do so.

Older people will be able to access services under

the CHSP previously delivered through the Nation Respite for Carers Program (NRCP).

In recognition of the vital role that carers play, the CHSP supports care relationships through providing respite care services for frail, older people (aged 65 years and over or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) which allows regular carers to take a break from their usual caring responsibilities.

Visit: www.dss.gov.au/chsp for more information on the CHSP, including information sheets and frequently asked questions.

Walking in Another's Shoes

About the author – Peter Toynton is a Consultant at UnitingCare lifeAssist with the Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP). "Walking in Another's Shoes" shares his experiences journeying with a client, working together with them to build connections in the community and prevent future unplanned hospital admissions.

There but for the Grace of God...
What does that mean to you or me?
What if you or I
Walked in another's shoes,
Taking his footsteps through life
In place of our own...
He was born on Christmas Day,
A revered start to life for some,
But soon the perfect gift
Became the victim of the flaws
In himself and those close to him.
Parents drifted in and out of his early years
And he lost himself as they faded away.
Brothers, no better treated than he,
Were no parents to him,
Could not take his hand to guide,
But gripped his arm with venom so strong
His tormented brain fell into submission.
Parents had disappeared by 12,
Smoking in chains by 13,
Living on tough streets by 14,
Veins gorged with heroin by 15,
A hard-rocking Sharpie by 16,
Languishing in jail by 21.
But the child within the man was strong in spirit.
Prison freed him from the shackles of drugs,
And when released,
He survived, his way, for 30 years.

Our paths first crossed around a year ago
As his past excesses revealed themselves
By squeezing his strength and resolve
Into a failing heart and suicidal thoughts.
57 Christmases had passed for him,
But he lingered around the twelfth,
His brain haunted by too many ills
To follow his body into manhood,
And he remained a lost child
Fast to anger, quick to collide,
Internal complexity masked by a misread facade,
Innocence hidden beneath tattoos and scars,
As insight and restraint were locked away,
With no key for him to release, set free.
We sought to uncover that key,
Restore it to his wavering hand
And turn it to unlock possibilities
That had been denied for so long.
There were many doors in which to test that key,
Each reflecting an aspect of his inner self:
One led to illness and nurturing care,
One led to pride in building a clock,
One led to cruel and vengeful neighbours,
One led to the harshness of crime,

One led to ridicule from those who could not know his story,
One led to the fear of persecution,
One led to the vulnerability of a puppy,
One led to the safety of a new home.
Now some new doors have opened
From where a brightness shines into his life,
A new home, a fresh beginning,
A new security with those who understand him,
Who recognise and celebrate his abilities and sameness
No longer veiled by his disabilities and differences,
The person at the centre of our care.
It won't be plain sailing,
He'll make sure of that!
But he will have the chance,
Kept from him for so long,
To be the best that he can.
And as his story continues,
Can you or I walk with him
Holding a deeper understanding,
Enriched through the tracing of his footsteps?
— By Peter Toynton

We welcome client contributions to The Bugle... Whether it is a poem, a picture, a short story or just sharing your journey, we'd love to see your work. Please contact your Consultant to submit your work.

Connections: Why they Matter

A Pastoral Reflection by Siew Kim Lim (lifeAssist Pastoral Care)

Feeling the need to connect is innate. We connect in physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual ways. When God created man, He said "it is not good for man to be alone". One certainty I know is that getting, being and staying connected to my God, my family, friends is the recipe for a good life!

Nothing much happens in isolation. When we smile, people smile back. We talk. We share stories, experiences, knowledge, resources, learn together. We are comfortable in silence. We draw strength from each other. We encourage. We laugh. We become wiser, more humble, understand better and that there are better ways of doing things.

Here are the ingredients necessary to... CONNECT

Communicate— Think about who you'd like to connect and communicate with. You can start with a simple phone call, a card, a text message. Then make a time to catch up. With Christmas coming soon, consider Christmas Carols at various churches, free Christmas meals that are offered in some churches or local councils. It is truly a good time to connect with the story of the Christ child of Christmas and the nativity story – of hope, new beginnings.

Objective – Stay unbiased. If you get 'rejected', it may not be because of you. You may face

obstacles when try to connect, but fight the resistance and embrace the opportunity.

Network – Your network of support and friends will grow slowly but surely!

Notability – Build friendships where you ask after each other if you're 'missing in action'. This is helpful especially when you are socially isolated.

Effort – Commit to connect with another person or interest group. Have a plan of action and ask someone (your consultant can help) to support you to get you there. Make an effort to enjoy social time!

Cheer – Cheer yourself and others up with encouragement. "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing," (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Do activities that bring warmth and hope to your days.

Trust – Trust takes time to build especially if you have been hurt before. To stay in a state of hurt is to deprive yourself from meeting genuine people. Transition forward.

Christmas and the New Year is around the corner. There are numerous local council, church or community events celebrating the season of the best time to initiate contact with others. The lifeAssist Social Connect Program is running in 2016. Check with your consultant for details.



Start building connections today at...

Burwood Uniting Church – For people looking for a safe drop-in space during the day, go to *Barry's Place* to rest, chat, connect with people or relax. Call 0449 751 402 for more information.

Glen Waverley Uniting Church – runs three community connect programs. *The Hub* offers a relaxing place to chat over drink tea or coffee. *Leisure Time* caters to isolated seniors in the community, with weekly Monday meetings to enjoy lunch, games, guest speakers, craft and conversation. *Cooee* is for the community to come enjoy company, support, lunch and games on Fridays. More information: gwuc.org.au/mission/community-hub/

DONATIONS

At UnitingCare lifeAssist, we believe that older people, people with disability and carers shouldn't need to rely on donations for their day-to-day needs, but that doesn't mean we don't still need your help!

There are two ways you make a donation to lifeAssist.

When you donate to the organisation, your contribution helps fund innovation and improvements including research, and new pilot programs.

When you donate to the Realising A Dream fund, you are helping provide grants directly to clients to help fund one-off items and services which will help them realise a particular goal or dream.

Your tax deductible donation can make a lasting difference in someone's life.

YES! I would like to make a donation to:

- Realising A Dream fund lifeAssist
 Please use my donation where it is needed most

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Ph: _____

Email: _____

Please indicate the amount you would like to donate:

- \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100

Other: \$ _____

(all donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

Payment method

- Cheque** (payable to lifeAssist)
 Electronic Funds Transfer
Account Name: lifeAssist
Ref: RealisingDream OR lifeAssistDonation
BSB: 083-214 **Account Number:** 035597732
 Credit Card Please contact Helen Finn on 9239 2500 with your credit card details and payment can be processed over the telephone.

Please mail this completed form to our Head Office.
 Our address is listed under the Contact Us section to the right.

ABOUT US



UnitingCare lifeAssist is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities.

We have been supporting older people, people with disability and the unpaid carers who support them since 1987. Each year we support around 4,000 Victorians.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of circumstances. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for.

We are proud to operate as part of the UnitingCare Australia network which provides social services to over 2 million people each year in 1,600 sites in remote, rural and metropolitan Australia.

Proud member of UnitingCare Australia

CONTACT US

lifeAssist Head Office

Ground Floor,
 Building 5
 Brandon Office Park
 530-540 Springvale Rd
 Glen Waverley 3150

1300 ASSIST (1300 277 478)

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Business Hours: 1800 052 222
 After Hours: 1800 059 059

(03) 9239 2500
 TTY: 133 677

Fax: (03) 9239 2522

lifeassist.org.au

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Interpreters available on request, please call: 131 450