



Well for Life  
The second collection  
of stories

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of stories

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*If ageing is to be a positive experience, longer life must be accompanied  
by continuing opportunities for health, participation and security. Active ageing  
makes the most of these opportunities in order to enhance quality of life.*

(WHO: Active Ageing: A Policy Framework)

These principles developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) underpin  
the initiatives and strategies of Aged Care in Victoria.

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'I look forward to the Well for Life week.'

'We are always so happy and excited that the Well for Life program has made us feel better. After a few sessions with the instructor we all bought t-shirts, runners and exercise trousers. I feel very proud of wearing the exercise clothes.'





# Introduction

Well for Life is an initiative of the Victorian State Government. Since it began in 2003, more than 100 agencies across Victoria have received Well for Life incentive grants. These grants of 12 months' duration were 'seed' funding for agencies to improve the health, through nutrition and physical activity, of older people attending Home and Community Care (HACC) Planned Activity Groups (PAGs) or living in Public Sector Residential Aged Care facilities..

In phase one, 1648 participants and residents, 332 staff, 36 carers, and an unspecified number of volunteers were involved in Well for Life. This included more than 200 people with dementia. Since 2003, participation of aged care residents and PAG members has grown to over 4000, while workforce participation has risen to over 1500. Well for Life continues to expand, with pilot projects conducted in the HACC Active Service Model and in Public Housing sites including Neighbourhood Renewal.

In 2005 the *Well for Life Evaluation: Highlights from the Evaluation – phase one projects* was published, followed in 2006 by *Well for Life: A collection of stories*. Both publications have been popular, with continued requests for the story collection. As a result we have produced *Well for Life: The second collection of stories*. This book has drawn mainly from phases 3 and 4 of Well for Life, but with an open invitation to all funded agencies since 2003 to contribute. For the most part, the stories in this book have been submitted as part of the organisations' overall Project Report to the Department of Human Services.

The inspiration for this publication was the flow-on effect that Well for Life as a physical activity and nutrition program can have on the groups and individuals who participate. We were particularly interested in the emotional impact of being involved in Well for Life. The stories provided by agencies attest to the impact Well for Life has on them as organisations and on the individuals they serve – an impact that goes beyond our expectations. Well for Life is truly becoming an inspiration.

Initially we provided funding to agencies for the implementation of a program to improve physical activity and nutrition. We found however, that Well for Life brought many beneficial **flow-on effects**. We also found that Well for Life sessions provided an **improved social life** for many participants and that Well for Life **sees no limitations**. Well for Life **encourages people with dementia, is motivational** and **helps bring about changes** while **encouraging learning** for all.

Well for Life **contributes to the changing nature of residential aged care, creates opportunities for competitions and celebrations** as well as **encouraging a holistic community** within residential care and PAGs .

Well for Life has **inspired intergenerational activities** and has been the catalyst to change what was once **reluctance into a rewarding experience**.

We hope you enjoy this book. Well for Life is becoming a way of life for many older adults. Again, these are their stories.

# Well for Life *has a flow-on effect*

## Thinking outside the square

Our aim for the Well for Life project was to introduce fresh fruit platters at morning tea and implement chair-based activity sessions.

These first ideas led to many surprising projects. They included a raised herb and sensory garden, a pool table and fishing outings, as well as an outdoor golf putting green, pet therapy with Toby the Jack Russell cross, Fijian Hula dancing and the Sony Playstation Eyetoy. These activities contributed to a varied and holistic program for participants, who have reported positive changes such as weight loss, increased strength improved sleeping habits as well as changes in their general mood and attitude to life.

The Sony PlayStation Eyetoy has had the greatest impact. Originally designed as an interactive electronic game for young people, it tests the physical and mental reflexes of the participant through a series of games that range in difficulty.

By thinking 'outside the square' and by creatively using the funding and existing resources, Well for Life continues to evolve and to inspire older people to try new activities with positive results. Consequently we have been able to develop and implement an innovative, sustainable, and varied activities program in our PAG that is adaptable to suit most members. It takes into consideration all the things that make a person unique: their former lifestyle, work history, hobbies and social interests. The varied activities engage members who have different degrees of physical ability, and contribute to breaking down social barriers within a diverse group of people.

We also introduced fresh fruit platters, which has encouraged members to improve their eating habits. The vegetable and herb garden has also introduced members to the enjoyment of fresh, home-grown produce.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

Tom, 81, has shown an 80 per cent improvement in walking a distance of 10 metres from 130 seconds initially to 24 seconds!



## Feeling better, more tolerant and more patient

After introducing the Easy Moves for Active Ageing (EMAA) exercises and nutrition information sessions at Barwon Health, participants reported improvements such as getting out of chairs more easily, joints feeling better and feeling stronger when moving and walking. Several people also reported feeling better, more tolerant and more patient in their daily life. At Diversitat, two older women attending the high level PAG said that they had started an exercise program at home.

### Sharing recipes becomes creating a cookbook

Participants have been using the filtered water system and have been participating in cooking for healthier eating. They have been sharing healthy food recipes with each other and have decided to develop a cookbook where participants contribute recipes.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*participants' appetites have increased.*

### **Stimulating: physically, mentally and socially**

This is what I do when I go to Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre (CELAS) Planned Activity Group.

**9.00am** Await pick up by CELAS. Chat to my friends on the bus on the way to the centre.

**10.00am** Arrive at the centre, get a cuppa and begin getting ready for morning exercises.

**10.30am** Begin chair exercises to great upbeat music lead by Activity Leader.

**11.00am** Have a rest, listen to activity leader providing update on programs, services and any other news from CELAS and the community. Discuss any relevant topics such as current affairs, history and background to traditional celebrations, national days, depending on the time of year, say Australia Day, Melbourne Cup Day.

**12.00pm** Sit down for lunch. Meals are culturally appropriate, just like I get at home, and nutritionally balanced which takes into account my high blood pressure and my diabetes.

**1.00pm** We have free time to walk around and enjoy the sunshine outside, play bowls or other games, weather permitting.

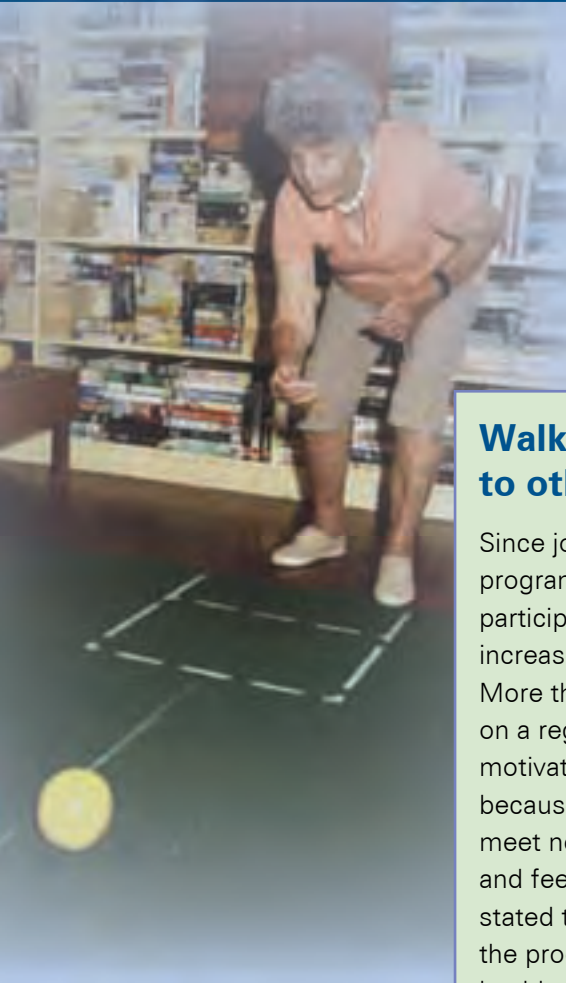
**2.00pm** We do crafts or play bingo. The activity leader will try and engage us in some mentally challenging tasks such as memory games, quizzes and so on.

**3.00pm** We have a light afternoon tea and get ready to go home.

**3.30 – 4.00pm** I take the trip on the bus and return home. I have been stimulated physically, mentally and socially.



# Well for Life *has a flow-on effect*



## Substantial increase

The majority of elders who participated in the program have remained enthusiastic and look forward to the sessions. There has been a substantial increase in elder participation in the low care service and sessions have outgrown the original area set aside for the program.

### Walking program leads to other activities

Since joining the walking program, eight per cent of participants reported they had increased their walking distance. More than half said they walk on a regular basis. They are motivated to participate regularly because of the opportunity to meet new people, keep active and feel well and fit. Participants stated that barriers to walking in the program regularly included health problems, appointments, holidays, other engagements and family commitments. The evaluation found that half of the participants did other forms of exercise – including gardening, bowls, and water aerobics – after starting with the Kangaroo Flat walking program.



## Less smoking

Dorothy has been a long-time smoker. She would sit in her chair and watch activities, moving only to go outside for a cigarette once every two hours. Three months into the program she has reduced her smoking and is breathing and moving more easily. She is now seen talking with a wider range of people than she did before.

*Because of Well for Life . . .*

participants have achieved increased ownership of the program due to their input and direction provided.

## Links from PAG to community

The one male member of the nine PAG participants who took part in an eight week Tai Chi for Arthritis program at the East Keilor Leisure Centre was always very enthusiastic. He is still practicing Tai Chi for Arthritis at home and is keen to return to the Leisure Centre to attend the classes there. We are just seeking a volunteer to be able to assist him.



## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*'I can now walk up a hill that I couldn't walk up before'*  
says Well for Life participant.

We also employed Nicky, an exercise physiologist, to provide a 30-minute gentle exercise program to our Monday and Tuesday groups. Nearly all of the 40 participants took part in the exercises, which is an excellent result. Nicky has been challenging participants to get up out of their chairs and do weight bearing exercises. The best thing is that we have had a few participants requesting weights! Nicky has also provided the participants with a home exercise program and some have started doing the exercises at home as well. Several participants said that they feel they have more energy, and one person said, 'I can now walk up a hill that I couldn't walk up before'.

Staff are also running 30-minute exercise sessions on the remaining days of the week, Wednesday to Saturday. Therefore we are providing all our participants the opportunity to take part in a structured gentle exercise program six days a week. Apart from the structured exercise programs, the Day Centre focuses on increasing the opportunity for participants, including those who are frail as well as those with dementia, to take part in other physical activities out in the community. These activities include ten-pin bowling, pool or billiards, lawn bowls, walking and dancing. So far these activities have been very successful. There was a great amount of clapping and cheering at our ten pin-bowling day, when some of the participants were scoring strikes and spares without the aid of the ramp!

### **Opportunities for ongoing messages**

The 'Good Food, Good Friends' calendar project was extremely successful but very labour intensive. PAG activities were photographed to capture the social aspect and the healthy food. Healthy and culturally diverse recipes were collected and shared amongst volunteers and PAG members. Appropriate health and physical activity tips were sought and included. It was distributed to all Gateway members and volunteers. This aspect of our Well for Life project has been sustained and promotes the Well for Life philosophy in a very practical way.

# Well for Life *has a flow-on effect*

## Still able to look after himself alone

'I began the community-based main exercise program six years ago when my doctor sent me. I had almost no ability to walk at that time. It was at the Leisure Centre. It kept me mobile. Rosemarie (the instructor) began the chair-based program, and I have done the chair program since. I have rarely missed a session. Rosemarie takes us through every muscle of the body taking care to see that no one does more than he or she is able. Every session has left me a little bit better than I was before. Because my spine is broken in four places, I would have been a 'vegetable' without this program, but I am still able to look after myself alone after six years.' **Tom, 82**

'Since joining the exercise class I feel better in body and mind.' **Thelma**

## Georgina's story

A member who attends three Planned Activity Groups said that her ability to perform everyday activities has improved greatly over the past three months. Georgina does some of the exercises at home while watching TV, having learnt that the body needs movement to prevent stiffness. She said that her ability to 'sit to stand' is much improved as her leg muscles are stronger and she commented that she is able to get to the toilet quicker. Improved lower body flexibility means she can now put her own socks on again. Georgina finds she has freer movement of limbs, which has boosted her confidence. She hasn't had any falls in the past six months. Georgina commented, 'my appetite is better now and I am more aware of healthier food choices'.

'We were all very excited when the Well for Life program started, and I went out and bought clothes and runners. I look forward to coming to the program and enjoy the trainer and the exercises.'

## Because of Well for Life . . .

Fred, 78, started doing one set of five bicep curls and now can do four sets of 20!

### Increased stamina and wellbeing

One PAG member, Peter, said he enjoyed sharing experiences with others and learning how they coped with life. He also felt encouraged to set goals. Peter stated that in the beginning he didn't like setting goals, however he went along with the facilitator's suggestions. He increased his cycling on his exercise bike from 5 minutes to 15 minutes and he continues to achieve this goal 6 months later. He said that by setting goals he had made a promise and didn't want to let the facilitator or himself down. He also said, 'I had an exercise sheet from my rehab group and this had 6 different steps on it'. 'I was able to memorise these and continue to do them. I feel I now have increased stamina and wellbeing.' Peter continues to use meditation and relaxation techniques, confirming what he learnt in the sessions and reaffirming his prior knowledge. The dietician used visual prompts, which Peter found helpful. 'The meals were nutritious, economical and easy to prepare', Peter said.


### Enjoyment and fun

A big emphasis of the strength-training program was to make it fun socially while performing the required exercise regime. Discussion and encouraging participants to tell anecdotes about their lives achieved this. For those within the group who were no longer able to stand up, social interaction gave them enjoyment despite their functional limitations.

Liaising with the PAG staff was an important component of running the program. Developing rapport with the staff enhanced benefits for participants by allowing informal discussion regarding best management of their physical and social issues.

### Feeling alive

Providing healthy refreshments after exercise structured the time spent together. The photos show both volunteers and members enjoying themselves. One of the carers, with extensive aged care experience in Gippsland, attended a session. Her comments reinforced the overwhelming positive feeling within the PAG and the 'aliveness' in the group; a far cry from the PAGs she has been running out of a hospital facility.



'I think Well for Life is not just a program for exercising but also about your daily diet. I believe that exercise increases your physical and mental health.'



## Individual preferences can mean a lot

There has been an improvement in knowledge and understanding of the barriers residents face in consuming a certain amount of fluid in a day. Our goal was 1,500 mls per person. After the program, residents reported being more likely to ask for drinks when they were not thirsty and understood that fluids can come from many sources. We also discovered individual preferences mean a lot, such as some people like room temperature water and some like it cooled or with ice.

*June has been positive and enthusiastic from the start, 'I am more confident since undertaking the exercise classes and I feel the benefits of improved mobility and general health and well being'.*

One resident who had frequent urinary tract infections has decreased infection by about half by increasing fluid intake and trying cranberry juice. There has been a definite increase in awareness of the importance of good fluid intake among staff and residents and their families.



*Because of Well for Life . . .*

more water has been consumed, rather than tea or coffee, due to staff providing water on the tables for participants to drink.

## Wanting involvement after retirement

Amy has been participating in Well for Life with the Uniting Aged Care 'A Day Out' Program since October 2006. Amy had not long retired after working into her eighties and wanted to be involved in something where she could socialise and meet people. Since participating in the program she has enjoyed an improved social life as well as receiving physical benefits. 'It has helped with my general physical mobility, especially getting out of chairs, and has helped with my knowledge of diet and exercise,' Amy said.

Before participating in the exercise program, Amy had difficulty getting out of chairs. She had to push down on arm rests or pull herself up from the table. She is now very excited about being able to get out of a chair more easily and without having to use her arms. Amy demonstrated her new found skills to the Box Hill Seniors where she was informed (in jest) that she was showing off. Amy also states that she just feels better in general.

Amy also enjoyed the speakers who attended as part of Well for Life. This included a dietician who Amy reported has helped to increase her general knowledge about food, especially with vitamins. A visit from a competitive power lifter, aged 69, also impressed her very much with what she could do and the knowledge and inspiration she passed on to other seniors.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*Kate, 78, is now walking 10 metres in 13 seconds compared to initially walking this distance in 41 seconds. That's an improvement of over 300 per cent.*

## Exercising with fun and banter

Hostel residents were so keen on the chair-based exercise program and the socialising it provided that they lined up well before staff were ready to commence. If for some reason there was a hold-up residents would get a little anxious or even 'grumpy' and try to get things moving. The residents got great enjoyment out of the exercises and the fun and banter that surrounds them. One staff member commented, 'They see it as a social outing and are quite a cohesive group now'. Another staff member mentioned, 'after the exercises program residents enjoy a cuppa and a chat together'.

Similar improvements in mood were observed with participants who are much more frail, but still enjoy the program with balloons and soft balls.

'Most of all we learnt that being part of a group, the social connectedness, was what was making the difference to our members.'

Well for Life staff member



# Well for Life *improves your social life*

## Music and a home-like atmosphere

The 'Walking and Nutrition' program conducted in Macalister was a success. Carers felt that their loved one benefited from the experience, while participants looked forward to the exercise and more opportunities to socialise. The introduction of music was well received and made for more socialisation in a friendly ambience. Planning for a walking track and sensory garden has united residents, carers and staff in their eagerness to see it up and running.

The formal use of colourful tablecloths has had a positive affect, giving the residence a home-like atmosphere.

## 'Feel Great, Participate'

When Vi first heard about the 'Feel Great, Participate' program she thought it was exactly what she had been looking for. She had always been actively involved in the community, however in recent years she found herself quite isolated due to a combination of poor health and lack of transport. Vi summed up the 'Feel Great, Participate' program as 'perfect' – it enabled her to get out socially and to increase her physical activity. She enjoyed exercising in a group and looked forward to the class each week. As the exercises were all gentle, chair-based exercises it meant that Vi could participate in everything, helping her to stay active in body and mind.



*'Since joining the PAG my fitness ability has increased so much, that I find it hard to believe it myself, that is why I now believe in exercise so much. I also promote exercises to my family and friends.'*

## New people and old friends

Participants had some wonderful times taking part in the Well for Life activities. On the last occasion they laughed all day, met heaps of new people and even caught up with lots of old friends, as previously they hadn't gone out much. They absolutely loved air hockey and especially enjoyed the Well for Life showbag and squeeze balls - which they all said they'd been using every day since. They ended the day saying "Please, we'd love to do it again next year!"

## Walking as a group

Myrtle, 84, lives alone in an independent unit. She has attended the PAG over several years. She had become less active over the past five years and bought a mobility scooter about three years ago to maintain her independence.

Myrtle found her tolerance for activity decreased further about 12 months ago, resulting in her feeling more socially isolated and depressed. As a result of her depression she did not attend the PAG for four weeks.

We encouraged Myrtle to participate in a joint PAG-Health Promotion event that included walking along a recently constructed level-walking track. Participants' fitness levels ranged from young and fit to frail aged and disabled. All participants were able to set their own pace and length of their walk which resulted in several groups forming naturally.

We identified that some community members were not joining the 'Walk and Talk' program as they felt they were unable to keep up with the group. The PAG liaised with Health Promotion, which led to a new group being established to encourage these community members to join and exercise regularly.

Myrtle now attends this 'Walk and Talk' group. She found she was able to complete a pleasant walk without feeling pressured to keep up with the more active participants. 'I now feel much happier and able to cope.'

Myrtle feels that the exercise and social aspect of the walking have helped her to improve her wellbeing. Staff have noted a marked improvement in her mood and she is now interacting with the group again.

'I have been telling all my friends they should join the group.'

Joyce



*Because of Well for Life . . .*  
sleep patterns have improved.

# Well for Life *sees no limitations*



## Pain and joint stiffness

Edna was encouraged to join the PAG by her neighbour, an existing PAG member. Edna suffers severe pain and joint stiffness, which limits her movement most of the time. Since attending the PAG Edna enjoys the gentle exercise and participates in most sessions, being aware of her limitations she works hard within her ability.

## Osteoarthritis does not stop her

Hilda has lived with osteoarthritis for many years. A full night's sleep was a distant memory and her social life diminished as her mobility decreased. Daily life is not easy for Hilda. However, her daughter heard about the new strength training group starting up at the local hall and encouraged her mother to give it a go. Hilda was reluctant, fearing she would hold the group back due to her limitations. So for the first information day Hilda's daughter escorted her to the hall. After some encouragement and talking to her GP, who thought it would be a great idea, Hilda joined the group. She said the biggest reason why she thought she'd try was because of the individualised care plans.

*Because of Well for Life we learnt . . .* that many of our participants love the opportunity to wear their good clothes to come to exercises. For some it's their only outing for the week.

'I love the social contact with the group and reconnecting with people from the area I haven't seen for years', said Hilda. After three weeks of attending the group Hilda said her pain had improved and she was using fewer painkillers during the day. After six weeks Hilda was only taking painkillers at night and was sleeping through the night for the first time in years. 'I can now go shopping with my daughter instead of relying on her to do it for me. I wish I had started strength training years ago.'

### **A game of billiards anyone? Just provide me with the opportunity**

Our billiards day was very rewarding with six memory-impaired members from the Friday Group playing billiards. One member has advanced Parkinson's disease, another has right sided weakness following a stroke, and the remainder have impairments from their memory loss. All enjoyed the opportunity to participate in an activity they felt they were no longer able to do. This gave them a sense of achievement and staff reported they all thoroughly enjoyed the experience.





## Frank walks tall after Well for Life

Frank used a wheelee walker to assist his balance and had a shuffling gait. He walked hunched over and had numerous falls over two months. During the Well for Life program Frank did chair-based exercises on Fridays and a hydrotherapy class for one hour on Mondays, which he particularly enjoyed. Frank was also given a list by the physiotherapist of exercises to complete on his own, which he did twice a week.

After four months of being involved in Well for Life, Frank's walking gait has visibly improved. He now stands straighter when he walks, takes longer steps and has had no falls and less near falls. Staff have commented on how well Frank looks and how he moves more easily in and out of chairs. 'I am very happy with my progress, and I put it all down to my regular involvement in hydrotherapy classes.'

## Music provides a breakthrough in a safe environment

Mabel was socially withdrawn, difficult to engage and spent most of her time sitting in one particular chair with her arms crossed. Despite a coordinated effort from staff of the SRS, Inner South Community Health Service and other health services, Mabel's physical health was declining rapidly. When the exercise class began, with its conducive environment for informal dancing, another female resident was comfortable enough to hold Mabel's hand and offer her an opportunity to dance. Surprisingly Mabel responded. It is thought that this music was familiar to Mabel and promoted positive thoughts for her to dance. Since this 'breakthrough', the leader of the exercise classes, with help from the other female resident (who was also benefiting from the movement to music) has incorporated other strengthening exercises for Mabel. Mabel has responded well and this has resulted in significant improvement in Mabel's ability to move and walk safely without the risk of falling. This would not have been achieved without the music matching Mabel's needs.



# Well for Life *encourages people with dementia*



## The change for Mary has been remarkable!

Mary, 87, has moderate to severe dementia and it can be hard working with her. Mary requires help with walking, personal care and orientation to time, space and place. She can become confused, not understanding what is asked of her and at times she can answer inappropriately to questions. Mary's daughter lives with her in Hastings and she spends regular time with her son.

Mary participates in both the PAG centre-based and community access programs, including Well for Life. If not prompted, Mary will tend not to eat or drink well and most of the time she needs prompting from staff during cognitive activities. Mary has participated willingly in the Well for Life program.

We have found that program evaluation sheets have not been a good indication in monitoring Mary, as she usually responds 'yes' to all questions asked. However, over the last six months of the Well for Life program staff have observed a slow but positive impact on Mary.

Mary now relates immediately to the instructor during an activity rather than to the people around her. Her concentration span has increased and she remains interested for the full period of the activity. She can now follow directions correctly for a longer period of time. Both during and after the program she participates in conversation and she has also initiated conversation. Mary will actively take herself in the right direction to tend to her personal needs without assistance or prompting and has increased her fluid intake during and immediately after the program. Mary has also started to eat more with positive results.

For participants with dementia there has been increased interaction and concentration as well as an increase in their ability to actively participate in activities directly after a program.

### **Life – is dancing!**

One resident with severe dementia had been a dance instructor for many years of his working life. Typical behaviour for him was to wander around the closed facility by himself not interacting with other residents or staff. During a session incorporating music and after several weeks of sitting observing Well for Life sessions, he stood and with open arms invited another participant to join him in a waltz. He continued to do this during subsequent Well for Life sessions.

Another resident's daughter rang a Well for Life staff member and during a tearful conversation, told her that she had not witnessed her father dancing in more than nine years.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*Maude, who is 84, has improved her initial weight by six per cent, looks brighter and now responds to simple gestures.*

## A wry grin!

One of our residents was a medical doctor who has severe dementia. Old habits die hard and he would sit all day with a book in front of him studying the print. He was not at all interested in physical activity if it didn't involve eating. Staff have worked out strategies to encourage his involvement. He now participates willingly in basketball and will have a go at ten-pin bowling. Staff get pleasure out of the wry grin which appears on his face when he scores a point.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*life experiences are now validated.*

## The value of getting out and about

A group of eight participants from the dementia-specific PAG joined a bus excursion to a local venue on a warm spring day. The staff were hesitant at first to take some of the participants as they were unsure how they might respond and whether they would be safe and settled at an open, unsecured venue. One participant in particular had been very unsettled for a while and her care needs were increasing. She was prone to wandering, did not participate in group activities and required more one-to-one assistance with meals, personal care and daily program involvement. She also spoke in a language other than English and would often mutter, especially when agitated. The thought of an open environment was daunting for the staff, taking a group of eight people with dementia of varying degrees. Nevertheless the excursion went ahead.

On return to the centre the staff were over-whelmed with the positive outcomes. A beautiful sunny day by the lake amidst the ducks in an open environment had worked wonders. The lady of initial concern had become calm, smiled and enjoyed her outing. She ceased her constant 'muttering', and sat, walked and ate some lunch. What surprised staff most was that she joined in a conversation that staff had been having about activities, saying, 'I used to play table-tennis'.

Needless to say the value of 'getting out and about', interacting socially in a different environment, providing new opportunities, and taking 'risks' stepping outside the comfort zone brought out the best on this occasion. The idea of the excursion was to present the values of Well for Life through active participation in a natural environment and forego the 'usual' confined indoor session. What a difference four walls can make!



# Well for Life *is motivational*

## Exercise boosts confidence

Eily was not really interested in exercise initially, but after attending the first information session she became very positive and encouraged other members. Unfortunately Eily had a fall at home and had a few weeks in hospital. On her return home she rejoined the exercise sessions. The sessions have contributed enormously to Eily regaining her confidence since her fall. She is aware of the benefits of exercise and how much better she feels when she participates. Eily is an inspiration and encourages others in the group.

Bernie has embraced Well for Life. He attends our men's group and on a recent outing to the Logan's Beach whale viewing platform, took great pride in walking and counting each step. Bernie will often encourage much older men in the group to participate and to have a go.

## Anxiety can turn to dedication

Trudy was so anxious when first starting out on the Well for Life program that she couldn't sleep or eat.

On arrival at the first class she appeared very nervous and actually looked horrified. During the course of the class Trudy seemed to relax a little and although remaining a bit apprehensive, by the end she was laughing and very relaxed and looking forward to the next session.

Trudy is now in her third session of classes and tells her family about everything she has learnt and achieved in class. A DVD was made for each participant and Trudy has almost worn hers out by showing it to family and friends who come to visit!

Trudy now goes walking with her daughter and practises her exercises at home. She takes every opportunity to tell people about our program and encourages them to join in, as she loves the classes, as well as the social atmosphere and the delicious lunch that is cooked and served to her.

Due to Trudy's praise of our program other people have joined and continue to attend on a regular basis.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

Henry, 82 years, had difficulty with using utensils.

Now he uses them himself and enjoys a variety of food of normal consistency. His diabetes is more effectively managed through exercise and nutritional support.



## With time all things are possible

Our Well for Life program involved relaxation and stretching and on the first day Mary only participated because the group was 'doing it.' In the second week she wasn't any more motivated, however by the third week she actually asked if the activity was going to happen. The fourth week was her big turnaround when, as soon as she walked into the centre she went straight to the activity room to see if it was set up. Mary then went and recruited the other members to commence the stretching and relaxation session. Mary has now taken ownership and leadership of the program. An amazing outcome.

## The 'Hydro Hotties'

The 'Hydro Hotties' group is operating very well in terms of the structured activities – warm water exercise followed by healthy refreshments. They are a very friendly and cohesive group of volunteers, PAG members and carers, and this has clearly been a success factor in introducing Well for Life practices. The Hydro Hotties' ability to embrace change has other benefits, such as encouraging new members, which can often be a challenge in a PAG. For example, a recent new member was very hesitant about participating for the first time, but the group was very accommodating and welcoming, which encouraged her confidence and participation.

### Where once there was silence

Each day residents of our facility await the exercise program eagerly. While waiting, residents can be observed holding animated conversations and discussing the day's activities. In the past a smaller number of residents were involved in the exercises and silence preceded the start of the class. Now the session is longer than that held previously and residents require little encouragement, instead encouraging each other.

## Because of Well for Life . . . .

participants can see changes made to programs because of their input.

## The positive effects of open discussion

More activities and closer attention by staff have had a positive impact on participants. Rather than considering the staff interventions as being intrusive, participants now consider the extra attention as affirming. With this atmosphere of positive, shared endeavour participants are forthcoming with comments and suggestions, stating their preferences and dislikes in open discussion. Participants are taking ownership of the PAG activities and know that interventions are available for their benefit.



# Well for Life *is motivational*



## Increased willingness to initiate activity

The best outcome of the Well for Life project at the Casterton PAG was the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participants and their increased willingness to initiate activity where previously they just played cards and chatted. The production of a calendar created a lot of interest and provided ownership for the participants. Other outcomes have included a changed, more positive attitude, with participants now talking to each other more while doing their exercises and other activities.

All the activities they were involved in, including therabands, noodles, pool, quoits as well as general warm-up and cool-down activities were a huge success. The participants loved them and are always keen to be involved. There is definitely no need to 'push!' Overall the exercises have improved participants' stability, balance and grip strength.

Incidentals stemming from the group include some members becoming more vocal about needing more social support and physical activity options during the week. They want to keep active as much as possible and are asking to take part in more physical activities.

## Staff and volunteers

From the beginning, staff involved in program implementation and delivery were motivated to improve the health of PAG members through Well for Life and they remain committed to this approach for all. Volunteers also continue to use opportunities to encourage members to be more physically active during the day and to make good food choices if they have forgotten to bring their lunch.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*there is an increased ability to stand and sit without assistance.*



### Improvements all round

Priscilla is an active woman in her seventies from Sri Lanka who has always enjoyed walking and gardening. A leg operation and knee problems have restricted her ability to walk and swim and she is currently struggling with depression. "The PAG exercise program, in particular the leg exercises, have improved my mobility and enabled me to sleep more soundly. Ideally, I would like to participate in the exercise program more often than once a fortnight."

## Slow start can turn to competition

Iris, 78, has been a member of the Oakleigh PAG for almost three years. Before starting in the Well for Life program, Iris often complained about chronic pain in her shoulders and back.

When the program was being introduced to the group, Iris was extremely resistant to participate, explaining at length why she could not and should not participate in the physical component of Well for Life.

On receiving clearance for participation from her doctor, Iris was assessed for the physiotherapy program. After being convinced to give the exercise program a go, Iris made a complete turnaround in her attitude and continued to participate to the maximum extent possible.

Iris went so far as to not only use the equipment provided for her private use at home as part of the resource pack, she actually purchased additional equipment for home, which is the same equipment as provided for the group sessions by the physiotherapist.

Iris became so involved in the exercise program she started a competition between many of the other members to demonstrate who had made greater progress as a result of the exercise. Consequently many other participants increased their level of involvement and enthusiasm also rose. Iris encouraged her sister, also a PAG member, to walk with her during the week in 20 minute intervals. Iris' sister lost 4 kilograms of excess body weight during the program!

The PAG staff observed a significant change in Iris' demeanour following her participation in the exercise program. She attended PAG meetings with vastly increased enthusiasm and participated in all activities, not just Well for Life, with increased interest. Her enthusiasm rubbed off on other members.

According to the physiotherapist Iris 'has shown a significant improvement in her back and shoulder pain and a decrease in the amount of analgesics required to manage her pain'.

**'By doing the exercises I have become more aware of what my body can still do.' Pat**

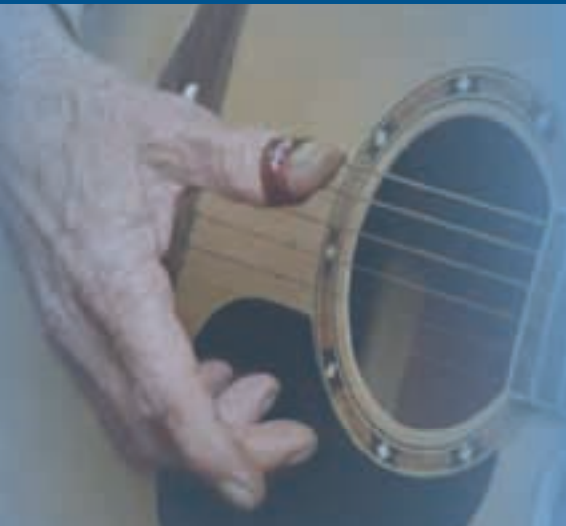
*Because of Well for Life we learnt . . .* that being part of a group, the social connectedness, was what was making the difference to our participants.



### Lifeball brings smiles

Mim lives on her own with family close by, and attends the PAG twice a week. She speaks very limited English but can understand what is said to her. She has diabetes and requires a frame for mobility. Participation in Well for Life introduced Mim to activities she had not experienced before and she has enjoyed every moment. In the past she presented as very quiet and happy to observe her surroundings. Since the introduction of Well for Life, PAG staff say she asks questions about the activities and especially asks, 'When is the next game of Lifeball?' Her daughter could not understand what she was talking about when she was telling her about throwing balls into a ring and wearing bibs! The district nurses thought she had been dancing at the PAG! To see the enjoyment and smile on her face is very rewarding.

# Well for Life *brings about change*



## Listening turns to moving for residents!

We have quite a few musicians who regularly provide entertainment for the residents of our facility. They willingly adopted the concepts of Well for Life and now incorporate streamers for residents to hold while they sway to the music. They have changed their music to suit our residents' ability to move and encourage movement to music with swaying, moving legs, foot tapping and so forth. Musical sessions have changed from a 'listening' event to moving to music sessions.

### **It can be a long journey**

Three years ago, before being involved in Well for Life, a group of seven Elders were taken to Melbourne from an East Gippsland country town for the day, for the Elders Naidoc Luncheon. A three-course roast meal with plenty of bread rolls and carbonated drinks was provided along with entertainment – the Rumbalara Boot Scooters. The Elders 'tucked in' and ate far more than their share of good food and drink. Lots of laughter was had and then it was time to leave for the long journey home.

Unfortunately, the little van broke down on the return trip. Three taxis took the group to a hotel where it was warm, but there were no cuppas and no prospect of an evening meal. This meant the group had to relocate, walking across a park to another venue some 100 metres away. The eldest of the group was 73 and she was the fittest. Every other person in the group struggled to make it across the park without resting. One woman rested five times! Thankfully there were park benches every 20 metres. The spectacle of this rag-tag group struggling to walk an easy 100 metres impacted enormously on the worker.

When everyone had arrived, the worker accompanying them travelled by taxi to retrieve another hire bus, leaving sufficient money for the group to order a drink and a bite to eat. The menu was extensive, offering grills and traditional Australian and Chinese food. When the worker returned the meals were being placed on the table. All but the fit 73 year old had ordered fish and chips and the sugar bowl had to be replenished. Their meal choices were another startling realisation for the worker.

It was after this trip that the worker vowed to bring about some change in lifestyle habits. Through the PAGs, nutrition and exercise have become constant topics. The group rarely eats out now and all meals are prepared on site with the participants' input to the menus. The outings are also planned with the group. Previously, sneaky methods were employed to ensure exercise – parking away from the destination to make people walk. Now parking is still deliberate but is done openly with explanations of why. Every event has a component of physicality to it and all meals are planned to educate and provide good nutrition. The needs of participants with diabetes are the benchmark by which all programs are designed. The woman who struggled three years ago to get across the park is now walking every day. She has lost half her body weight and is a champion of change. Her daughter has joined other Aboriginal women in regular sessions at a women's gym. It is these startling examples that can have a huge impact on others. The 'proof is in the pudding' so long as it is a low fat, low-carb pudding!

*Because of Well for Life . . .*  
there is an increase in choice and decision making.

## Timing, presentation and opportunity

Residents now look forward to the monthly cultural awareness days such as, Italian or Greek, since we assisted them to trial a variety of new foods. The trial resulted in residents being more accepting of alternative meals offered on the menu. We also made changes to the presentation and timing of fruit and nutritional snacks, assisting in healthier eating for a number of residents.

## Innovative strategies

To help with nutrition we bought a blender to make smoothies. These have been a huge hit, with participants also making them at home. It has been the same with the soup. Participants also increased their intake of water, using an innovative strategy introduced by the PAG Coordinator of six buttons or bread ties. Each time a person drinks a glass of water they remove a button or bread tie. This acts as a reminder to increase one's fluid intake. Some participants have even started doing this at home as well!

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*there is more stimulated conversation – reminisce, storytelling, life review.*

## Well for life – challenging the stereotypes

Active seniors enjoying healthy food is the order of the day as part of the Well for Life program begun by Bayside City Council and Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service in the Kingston Bayside area. This PAG project challenges some of the stereotypes regarding ageing and provides practical support to enhance the wellbeing of participants.

Some fantastic changes have already occurred, including introducing new activities such as strength training and tai chi and gentle exercises and laughter therapy. Sometimes small changes can introduce an opportunity for activity such as adding a gentle walk to existing bus outings or encouraging participants to enjoy the garden more. The groups are also improving nutrition with fruit for morning teas and special food celebration days.

Some group members are already noticing improvements in balance, confidence, and strength as well as enjoying a healthier diet.



# Well for Life *brings about change*



## **Adapting to participants' needs**

Each of the six PAGs received some funding from the project and they decided what equipment they would like to purchase for either physical activities or nutrition programs. Some examples of purchases included five blenders, outside chairs, pots, mosaic stones, pool table, quoits, bands and noodles, sets of indoor bowls and the best of all was the hire of a water machine and enough water bottles for a year's supply. So each group applied their strategies to their participants, adapting to their needs, with the participants then owning the project!

## **Pie and cake becomes salad sandwich**

Joan is a PAG member and she carries some extra weight. In the past Joan preferred to sit and watch the group activities and usually forgot to bring her lunch from home and would ask a volunteer to buy her a pie and a cake from a local shop. She would help herself to numerous cups of tea and biscuits throughout the day.

Three months following the program's completion, Joan now usually brings a healthy lunch from home or, if she hasn't, requests a salad sandwich. She has cut down on biscuits and appears to have lost some weight. Joan is moving more freely and involves herself in the physical activities provided in the PAG program.



## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

participants have improved their nutritional input during programs and have taken this knowledge with them and influenced their nutritional intake in their daily lives.

## A welcome intervention

In the past, PAG members stayed in the same chair for the entire day except when attending to their personal needs. Staff waited on members for everything and were going home exhausted and frustrated. Morning and afternoon tea consisted of dry biscuits with tomato or cheese or sweet cakes, with rarely any fresh fruit. Water was only available to members when they requested it.

Intervention was definitely needed. We had staff attend training and update training for chair-based exercises through Arthritis Victoria. Staff also received in-house training from a physiotherapist to discuss the importance of exercise, and help from a dietician to discuss food for the elderly. Occupational therapists showed how to incorporate incidental exercises and physical activities into the program, leading to the development of activity plans. Hotel service staff advised on morning and afternoon tea options and monthly planning to include fresh fruit, fruit scones and muffins. We bought water jugs and glasses and placed them on the table within reach of members. Resources for physical activities were also purchased.



## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

**participants have an increased awareness of hydration.**

Now physical activity or some form of exercise is a component within each group every time they meet. Activity plans have been developed and reviewed. Water is always on the table and members are encouraged to drink the water regularly. A plan has been developed to introduce a variety of foods and fresh fruit into the groups and give staff structure and routine.

After initial reluctance, members now participate in and expect the exercise component. Staff are becoming creative with activity ideas and building in incidental exercise like visiting parks or places of interest and parking the bus a little further away from the activity. Staff were surprised by the reaction to the fresh fruit platters and how much is eaten and have also commented on how nice the platters look. They have also noticed how often they have been filling up the water jugs on the table and that people are beginning to refill their own glasses!



The Well for Life program had a positive response from our staff, our members and from health professions and community groups especially the Macedonian, Finnish and Arabic communities. Members learnt about nutrition, healthy eating and physical activity, and the impact these have on their health in general.

# Well for Life *encourages learning*

## **Reinforced confidence for volunteers**

The training provided under Well for Life has certainly reinforced the confidence and leadership of the volunteer instructors. There has also been a shared process allowing PAG members a certain level of expertise and participation in determining the program's design and delivery. Our main volunteer leader has flourished in his role, and he has become a guest exercise instructor at other Gateway programs (and in other agencies) in recent months. This is something that is going to continue as other groups discover the joys and benefits of physical activity. Our volunteer leader will be back, by popular demand.

Recently, our other volunteers appeared in a media story prepared by both Gateway and Westbay Alliance, promoting the training opportunities for volunteers in Physical Activity Leadership courses available through Westbay. These volunteer voices, small but significant, are a perfect example of members of the community influencing the level of physical activity of older people.

It is also indicative of the organisation being a supportive environment for volunteers to maintain a leadership role.



*Because of Well for Life . . .*  
there is an increase in the number of participants.

## Volunteers up and running

The volunteers said they were now keen to run specific activities that were part of the education days as they had learnt how to run the programs. They felt that the explanation sheets with diagrams to follow were particularly useful. They enjoyed being included and thought the re-usable cotton bags and squeeze balls were a great idea.

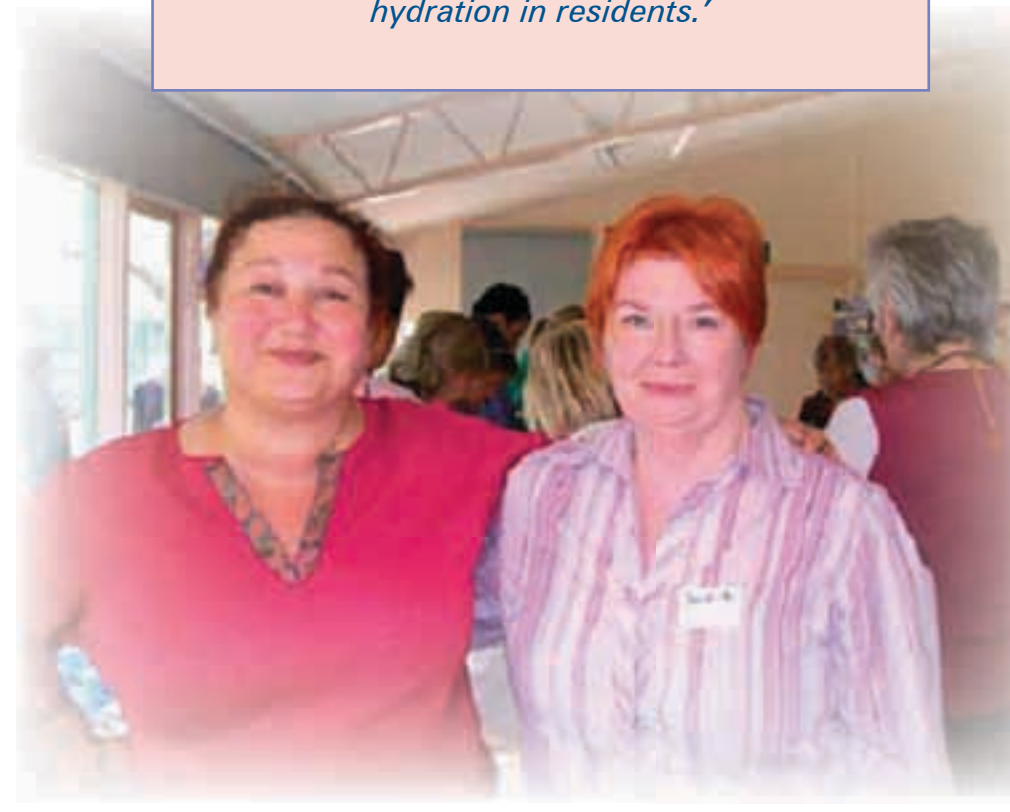
### **Nutrition and hydration ambassador**

With part of our Well for Life funding we trained a Division 2 nurse as a nutrition and hydration ambassador for our high care facility; she was the liaison between nursing home staff and the dietician. This has resulted in fewer referrals to the dietician. We also provided an in-service at the facility on managing food and fluids. Some comments we received included:

*'I feel more confident in my work and in approaching other staff about nutrition and hydration issues.'*

*'I found it very informative. Any questions I had were answered.'*

*'I have more of an awareness of the need for hydration in residents.'*



# Well for Life *encourages learning*

## Learning about age, improving practice

Recreation and leisure staff have been able to learn more about ageing, dementia and various health conditions, giving them greater knowledge and broader experience working with an ageing population. There has been a marked difference in maintaining individuals' health, resulting in less illness over the winter months.

### Oral health ambassador

The local private dental clinic helped to deliver oral health training. This partnering with the local private dentist enabled the training of an oral health ambassador for the nursing home. Ongoing support from the dietician and the dentist for the nutrition, hydration and oral health ambassador is part of our workforce development.

## The value of education

We have built Well for Life philosophies, such as the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise, into our program strategy and delivery plans.

After a period of adjustment, comments have been positive about the changes in meals and snacks at the centre. Showing participants how to identify the nutritional components of store-bought produce was a revelation to some and may well have influenced their subsequent purchases. It is difficult to assess the impact of improved nutrition on participants' home lives, but some now include regular exercise in their lives. Almost all have a better sense of the importance of exercise and the value of strength training.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

*there has been a very positive response to the healthy food changes to the program.*



## Improving staff relationships

Well for Life has allowed staff from the Stawell Hospital, Macpherson Smith Nursing Home and Bennett Centre for Community Activities to work together on a joint health promotion project. This has led to improved staff relationships and built the foundation to continue promoting physical activity, social connectedness and nutrition in older adults well beyond the 12 months of the funded project.



## A variety of training opportunities

All staff members and volunteers within the PAG at Seymour and one staff member from Nagambie have been trained to deliver a chair-based physical activity program. Two staff members have also been trained in chair dancing activities as an added dimension. The physiotherapist has trained the activities staff to deliver the physical activity program to complement the chair-based courses that staff attended.

One staff member completed the cooking-for-one course and has been running this session within the group on different days to enable as many people to attend as possible.

# Well for Life *contributes to the changing nature of residential aged care*



## 'They don't just sit there'

We include competitive games such as ten-pin bowling and basketball and we actively involve residents, staff, volunteers and families. On one occasion the elderly legally blind spouse of one resident, who has not participated due to his lack of sight, was encouraged to join in a game of ten-pin bowling. This was difficult but he participated by following the voice prompts of staff. After much hilarity on everybody's part, he actually won the game. He now participates regularly in activities and spends a lot of time in the facility. We see this as a positive step as we feel we are keeping families together. This gentleman now tells all his friends and neighbours what a great place the nursing home is: 'they don't just sit there all day and sleep!' We have received this feedback from quite a few families and we feel we are improving people's perception of residential aged care.



*Because of Well for Life we learnt . . .* that Gym instructors talk fitness not health. When you're aged or disabled health is the priority.

# Well for Life *creates competitions and celebrations*

## Graduation ceremony to celebrate achievement

Members have enjoyed participating in our program and like the new activity and information provided. Several participants said they felt more relaxed following the session and one participant said she tried to practise at home. Members have enjoyed a new activity and experienced different taste sensations, with morning teas organised around a food group theme. Information has been provided on the theme for participants and caregivers. A graduation ceremony and afternoon tea were held to conclude the program, with caregivers invited to attend the ceremony and observe a session. Participants have really enjoyed themselves.



### Strapping on walking shoes

Well for Life enabled Lotus Lodge Hostel to construct a specialised walking track surrounded by a sensory garden and implement a hydration awareness program that promoted the importance of daily fluid intake.

Every week for the past six months, the residents have been strapping on their walking shoes and making their way around the 50 metre-walking track. Residents in wheelchairs built up their upper body strength by wheeling themselves around the track. The completion of the 'Walk Around the Bay' journey was celebrated with a congratulatory afternoon tea. Olympic and Commonwealth Games gold medallist, Debbie Flintoff-King was on hand to present certificates to those who took part in the journey.

# Well for Life *encourages a holistic community*



## Greater connections

Since starting Well for Life we have had more PAG attendees in the activities at Sheridan residential facility and more Sheridan residents participating in PAG activities than we had previously. The programs are now better integrated. The Men's Club was a new initiative enjoyed by the men attending the PAG and Sheridan residents to give them some 'time out'. Well for Life has also brought about a reduction in falls which are monitored through quality activities every six months. Other benefits of the project include: the development of a vegetable garden for use by Sheridan residents and PAG members; a craft group; health talks; special afternoon teas; cooking classes; a regular newsletter and the introduction of a notice board.



## Improved links

There has been an increase in physical activity with our participants. Hopefully the increase in physical activity will be a platform for growth and help us make links with community programs which also target physical activity. We hope to be able to encourage participants to attend local sports centre sessions, such as fit ball and planned walking groups.

*Because of Well for Life . . .*

Harold, at 82, has improved his reach from 30 cms to 45 cms.

# Well for Life *inspires intergenerational activities*

## Children request the same buddy next time!

Three PAGs have established solid relationships with Year 6 students at the local primary school in two key aspects of Well for Life. Students have visited the PAG programs twice to help plant herbs into pots. They also participated in program activities through a 'buddy' system at Tai Chi classes, serving of meals and various games and activities. The PAG participants in return have attended the primary school to join in their outdoor education and physical activities, including tree planting.

The real benefits of this partnership were realised when the students asked to 'buddy' with the same person as in previous activities. The students and PAG participants are in many ways the main drivers of this program.



### **Children and adults having fun together**

At Stawell Regional Health we conducted an inter-generational picnic. We worked with the local primary schools to enable school children to attend the event, which we believed would greatly add to the atmosphere and general enjoyment of all involved.

We sought input from older members of the Bennett Centre in planning the picnic resulting in games and food that were known to be enjoyable and also likely to elicit childhood memories. Wimmera Racing generously provided the Stawell Racecourse venue free of charge, allowing us to spend more on other aspects of the event.

The Aged Care Division of Northern Grampians Shire helped distribute promotional flyers to Meals on Wheels and Home Care recipients, thus encouraging a group of older adults outside the nursing home and the Bennett Centre to attend the picnic. Our inter-generational picnic was a huge success and much fun was had by all!

#### **What older adults liked most about the picnic ...**

*'Being all together, watching the children. It's great and marvellous.'*

*'Mixing with young people and older folk we don't see very often.'*

*'The line dancing...I might even join!'*

#### **What brought back childhood memories ...**

*'The egg and spoon race reminded me of Sunday School Picnics.'*

*'The food and activities- it was very enjoyable.'*

*'Playing quoits, egg and spoon racing- all childhood activities.'*

*'The cream and jam sponge that my Mum used to take along with jelly cakes and egg and bacon pies.'*

#### **What the children thought about the day....**

*'We talked to the older people. We played egg and spoon race, tag, quoits, 'pin the tail on the donkey' and line dancing. I had a great time at the picnic.'*

*'Line dancing was fun!'*

*'I learnt that older people can have as much fun as us!'*

# Well for Life *changes reluctance to reward*

## Helpful all round

Molly was born in 1920. She's seen a few changes in her lifetime! In recent times her lifestyle was getting pretty sedentary.

Molly was a bit sceptical about the Well for Life project at first but she agreed to participate and volunteered to undertake the assessments.

Molly felt that the exercises were 'quite good' and helped with her mobility, especially around the house. The classes provided some helpful tips, such as leaning forward before standing up. They also helped with her general movement and confidence in walking.

These days, when Molly sits and watches TV, she also does some hand and feet exercises.

Molly also found the sessions on healthy eating very useful, especially the information about food labelling. 'It was interesting to learn about what is actually in the food products.' Now, when Molly is shopping, she looks at the labels. Her awareness has increased.

Well for Life has helped make a difference!

## A lunch program called 'Bites'

Following a training session from the dietician, a PAG staff member observed that a PAG participant, Fred, appeared to have lost weight and looked increasingly frail in appearance. An assessment officer talked to Fred about his general health, home situation, eating habits, and other issues.

Fred gave permission for the assessment officer to contact his family and local doctor to discuss the weight loss. The doctor assured the staff member that Fred's weight was stable and had not decreased over the past six months. Fred admitted that he felt lonely and didn't always bother to cook a proper meal.

After further discussion, Fred was invited to attend a lunch program 'Bites' at a local restaurant as an additional activity. Fred's family said this would help to put their minds at rest, particularly as their father would receive healthy meals and occupy his days in a positive way. However, Fred was initially reluctant. Staff reassured him that familiar people attended 'Bites', including staff and bus drivers. This news changed Fred's demeanour, and he agreed to try the lunch group. Fred now regularly attends the lunch group and is thoroughly enjoying the meals and company.

**Gardening and pet therapy**  
and an increased variety of outings  
have attracted additional residents  
who are unable or unwilling to  
participate in the exercise groups.  
Volunteers, staff and family  
members have assisted residents  
to participate in and enjoy these  
activities which are a constant  
source of negotiation  
and conversation.



## *Because of Well for Life we learnt . . .*

about poverty and the inability to pay for access to private gym facilities.



### **Medical tests were once preferable to exercise**

Here at the Day Centre we provide many activities associated with our Well for Life project. One such activity is our daily gentle chair-based exercises. Some of our participants are not particularly enthusiastic about these and are quite cheerful if they have another appointment to attend instead, such as a visit to pathology for blood tests. These days it's always a great joke when pathology phones us to collect such participants, always asking if exercises are finished yet.

Staff have recently completed a Tai Chi for Arthritis Leader course and these very gentle warm up exercises have become quite a hit within our daily routine, alternating with the chair based exercises. Now even those participants who avoided the exercise times are participating freely and happily in the Tai Chi. They say it's because they are very gentle, and no matter what their ability, they can still keep up due to the slowness of the movements. I personally think it's because of the quiet, soft music we play while doing them which is extremely relaxing, or the laughter that overcomes them all when some of the coordinated movements don't go quite to plan!

All in all, most participants have become very adept at the movements and enjoy the fact they can all join in and be part of a good light hearted gentle exercise group.

## *Because of Well for Life . . .*

exercise instructors have initiated and implemented greater dimensions to the program through the involvement of children and pets.

## Conclusion

Well for Life remains an innovative and life-enhancing approach to improving the health and wellbeing of older people in aged care settings. This book attests to the dedication and commitment of the aged care workforce in seeking out and attempting new approaches and practices at a time when older people are demanding more. The enthusiasm of Well for Life managers, staff, volunteers as well as that of the participants, is making Well for Life a way of life for many people.

Thank you to all Well for Life funded agencies and participants, particularly those who contributed to the making of this book. It is your stories that bring Well for Life to life, so that everyone is keeping well – for life.



*Because of Well for Life . . .*

Harold, at 82, has improved his reach from 30 cms to 45 cms.

*Because of Well for Life we learnt . . .*

that the 'Gym Monster' wears a leotard.



*Because of Well for Life . . .*

there has been more stimulating conversation – reminisce,  
storytelling and life review.

*Because of Well for Life . . .*

there has been an increase in choice and decision making.

# Acknowledgements

Thank you again to all Well for Life funded agencies and participants for making Well for Life a way of life for older people. We would like to acknowledge all those who contributed to this book. It is your stories that reinforce that these projects are all about people keeping well for life.

## **Barwon South-Western**

Barwon PCF, *including*  
Barwon Health, Bellarine Community Health  
Service, Diversitat  
Koroit Health Services

## **Eastern**

Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House Inc  
Knox Community Volunteers  
Manningham Centre  
Polish Community Council  
St Vincent's Hospital  
Uniting Aged Care Victoria and Tasmania

## **Gippsland**

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Planned  
Activity Groups and Public Sector Residential  
Aged Care Facilities  
Central Gippsland Health Service  
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal  
Co-operative Ltd  
Gippsland Lakes Community Health  
Latrobe Community Health Service  
Latrobe Regional Hospital Nursing Home  
South Gippsland Hospital  
Yarram and District Health Service (YDHS)

## **Grampians**

Ballan District Health and Care, Moorabool Shire  
Council, Djerriwarrah Health Service  
Ballarat Health Services  
Golden Plains Shire Council  
Stawell Regional Health  
Western District Health Service

## **Hume**

Seymour District Memorial Hospital

## **Loddon Mallee**

Central Goldfields Shire Council  
Kyabram and District Health Services  
Mallee Track Health and Community Service  
Red Cliffs Aged and Community Services  
Robinvale District Health Service  
Sunraysia Community Health Services Inc  
Well for Life Kangaroo Flat Public Housing Project

## **North & West**

CELAS – Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre  
Essendon Adult Day Centre Inc  
Gateway Social Support Options  
Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS)  
Wyndham City Council

## **Southern Metro**

Bayside City Council  
Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service  
(BBCHS)  
Mornington Peninsula Shire  
The City of Greater Dandenong and The Cambodian  
Association  
Inner South Community Health Service  
MECWA Cardinia Care  
Peninsula Health – Rosebud Residential Aged Care  
Services

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