

The Companion

EST. 2007

OUR PEOPLE ARE WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

WINTER 2011



Yarraville Village staff and students from Kyoto Central Nursing School

Aged care reform.

Winter is well and truly here and, as we turn up the heaters and snuggle up under plenty of layers, there's no finer read than your trusty *Companion*! With the end of the financial year, talk of aged care reform and carbon pricing has been all over the news. This is a good time to reflect on the past 12 months and consider where the aged care industry is heading.

The two (state and federal) elections and the release of the Productivity Commission's *Caring for Older Australians* draft report have certainly heightened hopes of aged care reform, with the ultimate goals of improved services for residents and a more sustainable industry. While we wait for the release of the final report and the Commonwealth government's response, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, has already begun introducing initiatives. These include a new national phone number to simplify access to and navigation of the Australian aged care system and an increase in translation and interpreter services available to aged care residents. Both are steps in the right direction.

A long term provider of aged care services to ethnically and socio-demographically diverse

communities, Dousta Galla has actively campaigned for a more flexible and fairer aged care system. This period of more intense interest from the federal government in aged care is pivotal for the sector's progress.

While advocating for change, we were also busy throughout the year with new initiatives such as the development of Harmony Village Dandenong. Now in its finishing stages, the first lot of residents will move in on 2 August 2011 followed by an open day on Saturday 27 August 2011. For more information, visit www.harmonyvillage.com.au. Meanwhile, across the group, plenty of activities have kept residents in high spirits – among them social events, royal wedding celebrations and a very emotional family reunion.

Residents at Yarraville Village were recently taught how to fold origami when student nurses from Japan visited the facility. The nurses were here to observe Australian nursing practices and are donating money towards the facility's activities program. It was a chance to practice a little Japanese, starting with 'Arigatō' (thank-you)!

Mark Anderson
Chief Executive Officer



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Reunited via Facebook.



Jimmy and Fevzi

TV is great entertainment, but there's nothing like the real thing. In Dousta Galla's own episode of 'Find My Family', Grantham Green resident, Jimmy Aslan, was reunited with his son, Fevzi, this July.

Turkish-born Jimmy had not seen his son for over 20 years. The two lost contact when Jimmy and his wife divorced, and she moved to South Australia, taking their young son with her. Every single day, and despite the many years that passed, Jimmy never stopped thinking about his son. It was this deep wish that propelled family friend, Kerime Cokelek, to set out on a long journey with a very happy ending.

After unsuccessful attempts to locate the young man through the Australian Red Cross, luck stepped in when Kerime met a woman from South Australia who knew Fevzi's mother and was able to offer information on where they were living. Armed with his new knowledge, Kerime turned to Facebook and it wasn't long before she'd made contact with Fevzi.

A meeting was organised; father and son nervously awaited the day of reunion. It was beautiful and emotional – not just for father and son, but all Jimmy's friends and carers at Grantham Green. The two began the happy task of catching up on two decades of events. Jimmy explained how happy he had been when Fevzi was first born.

"When he was born, I couldn't see anything but him. I couldn't stop looking at my son in the hospital as he slept behind the glass and, when my family visited, all I could say was 'look', 'look at my son!'".

Masquerade!



June Seydel and Jim Waldron

As a limousine pulled up and photographers scrambled to take shots of its passengers, diners at The Carrington thought they were about to be joined by a group of celebrities. Little did they know that behind bejewelled masks and glittering gowns were the residents of Harmony Village Shepparton – much more important than your run of the mill TV star!

Organised by the staff at Shepparton, residents enjoyed a masquerade dinner at the swanky restaurant. With its opulent decor, lush gardens and Victoria Lake views, it was the perfect setting for a night of luxury.

Harmony Village Coordinator, Mary Pell, said they've set the bar high, with residents eagerly awaiting the next dinner at The Carrington. "This night will take some beating!" she said.

The dance floor a scene from ancient Venice, romance and intrigue were right at home in regional Victoria. Hidden behind masks, the identities of the fleet footed and the sartorially gifted, remain (almost) a secret!

After finally reuniting with his son, Jimmy said, "When I die, I won't go with my eyes open." He was evoking the ancient Turkish saying, 'when I leave this world, I will leave with my eyes closed', which means in peace.

Family now found, before that final day, there are many more stories to share with his son over afternoon tea.

Kon'nichiwa!

The city of Kyoto sits slightly south of middle Japan. Once the imperial capital, it was spared the fate of Hiroshima because the then American Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, spent his honeymoon there and took it off the target list.

Today, we're extremely glad he did, because the city of Kyoto, also famous for the first global climate change pact, is one of Japan's most important heritage sites, home to over 2000 temples, tranquil valleys and a rich art and cultural scene. It's also the base of top technology firms like Nintendo and some of Japan's top universities.

It's this last attribute that saw Yarraville Village enter a five-year program with the Melbourne Language Centre (MLC) and receive 22 Japanese nursing students in July. Each year, students from Kyoto Central Nursing School and their interpreters come to Australia to observe local nursing practices and improve their English.

After a tour of the Village, students sat down with residents to share the 400-year-old art of origami. Paper was magically transformed into cranes, hats and balls.

Sharon Scott, Yarraville Administrator, said the partnership with MLC was first started to support the activities program. "The residents love sharing their stories with the students; it's an experience many would never have considered possible just 50 years ago."

The Kyoto Central Nursing School made a \$500 donation towards the Yarraville activities program which will pay for a visit from the ever popular Mobile Animal Farm. Another student group will visit this August and receive a warm welcome from old friends.



A touch of Royalty.



Lim (Dinah) Lain Woen

When Will and Kate, greeted by royal fanfare, walked the crimson carpet of Westminster Abbey, millions around the world celebrated with their own royal soirees.

Among them were the residents of Doutta Galla Grantham Green, who, dressed in their finest, vied to take home the title of 'Bride of the Day'. Donning tiaras and wielding sceptres, princes and princesses enjoyed High Tea in true English fashion while entertainer 'The Hat Man' performed.

A game of trivia brought back memories of royal occasions past; this was not the first time our residents had enjoyed the beginnings of royal matrimony – although all hoped it would be more successful than the last!

Gratham's 'Bride of the Day' was the beautifully dressed Lim (Dinah) Lain Woen. Dinah had a unique royal story to tell: working as a hairdresser in Hong Kong, she had the privilege of setting Princess Margaret's hair during her official nine-day tour of China in 1987. Beautiful in her own right, we think that a touch of royalty must have stayed with Dinah over the years!



Pricing carbon in aged care.

You'd have to be living inside a cave not too have noticed the raging carbon price debate in national news. And those of you who've followed the debate since its beginning may have considered moving into a cave just to get a break! As attractive as that may sound, Dousta Galla does not offer a cave respite service, and as the carbon 'tax' is a very likely reality, we need to plan for its eventuation.

The aged care industry has posed the question: 'how will this tax affect Australia's aged care providers and residents?' The aim is to put a price tag on every tonne of carbon pollution released into the atmosphere by the country's 500 biggest polluters as a forced incentive to lower carbon emissions. Among them are energy producers, transport companies and coal miners. Living costs are expected to rise as the tax is passed onto consumers. In response, the Gillard government has announced a \$15 billion package of tax cuts to provide assistance for households, including increases in pensions and benefits.

A new Clean Energy Supplement (CES) amounts to \$338 per year for a single pensioner or Senior's Card holder. The assistance will be shared fairly between aged care providers and residents through an increase in the basic daily fee from 84% to 85% of the total basic pension amount from 1 July 2012. The distribution of payments to aged care providers will help offset rising costs associated with electricity and food. The CES payments will be indexed in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and directly implemented by Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs so there is no need to claim payments.

Aged care residents ineligible for the age pension, service pension or the Seniors Health Card – and who are living in an aged care home on 30 June 2012 – will not see their fees increase due to the carbon price. A new subsidy will be paid to aged care providers to ensure residents avoid an increase in the daily fee.

In summary, should the bill pass through both houses as planned, aged care should prevail unaffected. That's something industry will be watching closely. If you're not quite ready to follow the hermit into the hills, you too can keep a vigilant watch. Visit www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au.

Say what? New interpreter services.

While we're eagerly anticipating the release of the Productivity Commission's *Caring for Older Australians* final report, the Gillard Government has begun rolling out programs aimed at improving some of the simpler issues facing Australia's aged care sector.

While we await a formal response from the government to the final report later this year, it's clear the cabinet is listening. Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, announced \$2.2 million in funding to provide translation services and on-site interpreters to aged care residents. This was one of the Commission's recommendations and a key issue raised by Dousta Galla before the commission.

Mr Butler said the new service will include on-site visits and telephone interpreting services and that services will be available around the clock every day of the week. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) will provide the translation and interpreter services.

Before forming minority government last year, Julia Gillard announced that aged care reform would be a second term focus. Now in term one, it seems the government is moving in the right direction. However, much more important and deeper reforms are still required around aged care funding and regulation.

Ultimately, we all look forward to a comprehensive response that ensures Australia's ageing population has more choice in accessing care, and not-for-profit providers such as Dousta Galla can keep getting the best health and wellbeing outcomes for those who need it most.

For more information, visit the TIS National website (http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/help_with_translating/).