



Southern  
Cross Care WA

Your extraordinary starts here.

# Southern Star Newsletter

Winter 2025 Edition



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A note from  
the CEO

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A house that feels  
like home

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A lifetime of stories,  
a day of celebration

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## Five tips for managing diabetes

Nurse Consultant, Diane Piper

Careful management of diabetes can help to improve your well being and reduce the risk of other health complications. Here are five helpful tips to help manage your diabetes.

### 1. A balanced diet is key



Eating a balanced diet is crucial for managing diabetes, particularly for older people. Focus on incorporating plenty of vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains into your meals. Consider speaking with a healthcare professional who can assist you with meal plans that suit your lifestyle to ensure a balanced diet to help keep your blood sugar levels stable.

### 2. Stay active in your own way



Physical activity doesn't have to be strenuous to be effective. Gentle exercises like walking, gardening, or even chair yoga can help improve insulin sensitivity and manage blood sugar levels. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week. Remember, finding activities you enjoy is important, making it easier to stick with your routine.

### 3. Regular monitoring



Keep track of your blood sugar levels regularly to understand how different factors affect your blood glucose levels. It is important to schedule regular check-ups with your healthcare team so they can assist you in managing your diabetes.

### 4. Stay hydrated



Proper hydration is often overlooked but is essential for managing diabetes. Dehydration can lead to higher blood sugar levels, so aim to drink water throughout the day. If plain water doesn't appeal, try adding a slice of lemon or cucumber for a refreshing twist that can encourage more intake.

### 5. Taking medication



Managing diabetes can be challenging, and an important aspect is taking medications that are prescribed by your healthcare team. Medications, when required, can result in fewer long-term complications of your diabetes. Remember, tablets or insulin injections should accompany your healthy eating and physical activity.

## A note from the CEO



### Welcome to the winter 2025 edition of Southern Star.

This edition is a celebration of the people, places and stories that make our Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) community so extraordinary. It also marks the launch of our new brand, Your extraordinary. Our new brand is more than just a new look. It's a renewed commitment to our purpose: helping people live extraordinary lives, every day, connected to communities. Every person's journey is unique, shaped by the moments that matter most - moments of joy, purpose, connection and belonging. This theme shines through in every story in this edition of the Southern Star.

Across all our locations and services, our residents, clients and teams continue to inspire with their achievements, stories and kindness.

In this edition, you'll meet people like \*Donald and Barry, whose stories show the extraordinary power of care and connection. You'll discover the green thumbs of our resident gardening groups, enjoy a glimpse of the camaraderie among our Donovan

Village ping pong players, and see the impact of our Mental Health Week initiatives and Family and Carer Support programs.

You'll also read about our commitment to improving communication through our Consumer Advisory Committee workshops, and see how occupational therapy, respite care, and home care services are supporting independence and wellbeing across Western Australia.

From anniversaries and milestone birthdays to updates on aged care reforms and the difference our volunteers are making through the No One Dies Alone (NODA) program, this issue is filled with reasons to feel proud.

The Southern Star is our way of sharing our everyday extraordinary moments with you. I hope you enjoy this look into life at SCCWA and the extraordinary people who make our community so special.

**Warm regards,**  
**Clare Grieveson, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Southern Cross Care WA**

## Introducing our new brand: Your extraordinary



**You may have noticed we look a little bit different. In April, Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) launched a new brand.**

While we have made some changes to the way our organisation looks, our commitment to you and what we stand for remains the same. Our new brand identity, Your Extraordinary, reflects our continued focus on discovering what matters most to the people we support.

“It’s the little moments that turn the ordinary into the extraordinary, like a warm ‘hello’ in the morning, a shared meal, a familiar face offering reassurance or a cup of tea made just the way you like it,” Chief Executive Officer Clare Grieveson said.

“We wanted our brand to reflect this, to show that every person’s version of extraordinary is important to us. Because we don’t just care for people, we care about them.”

### **Honouring our story and looking to the future**

SCCWA has been part of the Western Australian community since 1966. Inspired by our founding values and connection to the Knights of the Southern Cross, our mission has always been to support people in need with dignity, compassion and respect.

Over time, we’ve grown and changed, expanding our services while keeping people at the heart of everything we do.

Our new brand identity honours that legacy, while embracing a future focused on connection, purpose and personalised care. As part of this change, we’ve also retired the Southern Plus name, bringing all of our services together under Southern Cross Care WA. It’s a simpler, more unified approach, one that reflects who we are and makes it easier for the community to recognise and access our services.

### **What’s changing?**

You may have already noticed updates across our sites and services, including: new logos, colours, signage and soon our employees will have new uniforms that will make it easier for you to identify their roles.

So, whether you’re living in one of our residential communities, receiving support at home, or accessing one of our services, you can expect care that is anything but ordinary.

**Southern Cross Care WA -  
Your extraordinary starts here.**

## Consumer voices shaping our communication.

Improving communication at Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) is being assisted by the voices of our consumers. Feedback and open conversations are helping to drive meaningful change as the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) is working closely with SCCWA teams to explore what better communication could look like across residential aged care, home care, retirement living, mental health and respite services.

The CAC membership consists of people with lived experience as consumers or loved ones of SCCWA’s services, who meet quarterly to workshop key themes that arise through consumer feedback channels.

“That feedback is brought to CAC, and we discuss from a consumer point of view what we would like to see in an ideal world,” CAC member Marg said. “We’ve previously looked at things like the dining experience and meals, and activity programs.”

The CAC has collaborated with multiple departments and internal teams through workshops to better understand how communication practices differ across SCCWA services and co-design potential improvements.

“We’ve had lots of great support from different departments with our workshopping,” Marg said.



### **Community Options**

In Community Options, SCCWA’s residential mental health program, Marg said residents had asked for more timely, consistent updates about daily schedules and program changes. This led to the introduction of visual communication boards at sites and a consistent approach to house meetings. While employees already provide verbal updates, Marg said having visual information available was especially helpful for people living with mental health conditions.



### **Home care and community mental health support**

Home care and community mental health clients shared similar feedback, particularly when it comes to scheduling updates and service or employee changes. In response, the organisation is working to update consumers’ communication preferences, whether by phone, SMS or email, to ensure information is timely and relevant.

On Monday 28 July, as part of a broader service improvement, SCCWA introduced a new care and scheduling platform called Sandwai. This system will improve reliability, consistency and personalisation by better matching team members to clients based on their needs and location, while also streamlining appointment coordination. A mobile app will also be available later this year, giving clients a simple way to view schedules, access plans and message their support team.

As part of improving communication, a recent assessment of SCCWA’s phone system has been completed and is now under review. The upgrade is designed to simplify how people connect with the right person quickly and with confidence.

The aim is for people to have access to the information they need to feel more certain about what’s happening with their services,” Marg said.



### **Residential aged care**

In residential aged care, the CAC has helped address how residents and their support people receive clinical updates. Marg said the organisation is now developing a prompt sheet – a simple template to guide employees on when and how to deliver both routine and urgent clinical updates.

“People want to know how they’ll be updated and who’s responsible for giving those updates,” Marg said. “It’s about giving employees the tools to provide more comprehensive information.”

The work is ongoing, but Marg hopes the CAC's efforts so far empower more people to speak up and provide feedback.

"The whole loop of consumer feedback, action within the organisation and our input, it'll always be an ongoing piece of work, but we've seen that whole feedback loop in action now," Marg said.

**"I really hope the CAC helps consumers feel more heard and empowered to bring up issues and to provide feedback, whether it's positive or negative."**

"Sometimes people think, 'Oh, I'm one person,' but the fact that one person is joining lots of other single pieces of feedback means we can see themes and trends, and act on them."

That belief in collective impact is also reflected in the committee's push to refresh its membership over time. Three new members have joined in the past year, including a community options client and two volunteers in residential aged care.

**Expressions of interest are now open to join SCCWA new Consumer Advisory Committee.**

If you are passionate about improving aged care and want to share your voice, we invite you to get involved.

To learn more or express your interest, visit [scrosswa.org.au/about-us/our-consumer-experience](http://scrosswa.org.au/about-us/our-consumer-experience).



## A house that feels like home



**"When I met the lovely Sharon Gayski, Admissions Coordinator, she was absolutely awesome. She made me feel welcome and as if I was a person, not just a number," she said.**

Helen was impressed by how the SCH team didn't just hand her a set of keys. Instead, they took the time to listen to Helen's wants and needs, ensuring every detail was taken care of before she even moved in.

Helen said her new home was more than just a change of address, it was a fresh start, one where she felt safe and at ease.

"I love it because it's all level, it's only a little yard to maintain, we've got a gardener coming in to do the lawns, and it's central to everything," she said. "I'm just in awe because I'm in a beautiful place and I can maintain it."

As a community housing provider, SCH takes care to match people to properties that suit their needs, considering location, design, and support so that tenants like Helen can feel truly at home.

**A home is more than just a place to live, it's where we find comfort and ease. For Helen, her three-bedroom duplex on top of a hill had become a source of stress instead of comfort. The steep driveway made getting in and out of the car risky, and tasks she once did without thinking began to feel overwhelming.**

"I've had a pacemaker put in, so sometimes I still have trouble getting around," Helen said.

"For long distances, I use a rollator walking frame, so I can sit down if I get short of breath.

"The place I was in was virtually on a hill. If I dropped something out of the car, I had to go all the way down to the back fence and pick it up."

Helen knew the house no longer worked for her life, so she requested a transfer through Homes West. That's when she connected with Southern Cross Housing (SCH), a community housing provider working in partnership with the Department of Communities to provide affordable living options for low to mid-income earners over 55.

From the first contact with SCH, Helen said things felt different.



## Extraordinary care that inspires



A simple idea at Victoria Park Nursing Home (VPNH) has made a meaningful difference in the life of one resident, showing that aged care is more than just clinical support.

\*Donald has been facing serious health challenges stemming from diabetes. Despite ongoing support from dietitians, GPs and wound specialists, his condition continued to decline. A persistent leg wound raised serious concerns, with fears it may eventually lead to amputation.

When the team at VPNH noticed a pattern emerging in \*Donald's frequent outings into town on his mobility scooter, his family proposed removing the scooter and his in-room fridge to reduce temptation. It was a well-intentioned suggestion, but VPNH Manager Cheryl believed a different approach was needed. She wanted to understand the reasons behind \*Donald's choices and address them, rather than taking things away from him.

"One day, out of the blue, he mentioned feeling bored and cooped up in his room," Cheryl said.

"But he attends all the activities, and we involve him in everything possible, then I asked what he enjoyed doing in his younger days, and he told me he liked tinkering with things at home and used to make things in his shed."

That conversation sparked an idea. Cheryl asked whether \*Donald had ever built things with a Meccano toy set when he was younger. His eyes lit up as he recalled how much he had loved building things as a child. Recognising an opportunity to support \*Donald in a more meaningful way, Cheryl took action. She bought a classic Meccano set and organised a dedicated room with an accessible table where \*Donald could build in comfort. The team even created a "Workshop" sign for the door.

**"Donald is full of gratitude and can't stop saying thank you," Cheryl said.**

"We are working on his boredom, and so far, this keeps him busy and brings him joy. "We will continue engaging with him and will work on his progress, one step at a time."

While his health journey is ongoing, offering \*Donald something meaningful to focus on has helped restore a sense of purpose and joy.

In aged care, moments like these are powerful reminders that extraordinary care isn't always clinical. It's often personal, creative, and rooted in truly knowing the people we support.

\*Resident's name has been changed to protect privacy

## Ping pong and the power of connection



**When you meet someone who is thriving well into their nineties, you can't help but wonder, what's their secret? For a group of residents at Donovan Village in Forrestfield, the answer is ping pong.**

Among them is 94-year-old Pat, who credits the game with keeping both her body and mind sharp. Pat has been playing alongside fellow residents Betty and Jack, both aged 90, daily for the past 17 years.

The group says the benefits go beyond physical fitness and that the game has become a powerful source of connection, laughter and lasting friendships. For Pat, it's a winning combination she's not giving up anytime soon.

**"It keeps your mental agility because you have to respond very quickly, it keeps you physically fit because you've got to fetch balls, and it's a good socialisation," Pat said.**

"I'd like to keep doing it as long as I possibly can."

With rates of depression and loneliness among older Australians on the rise, Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) CEO Clare Grieveson says staying active and connected is more important than ever.

"Retirement living offers a wonderful balance, providing older adults with the chance to engage in communal activities while still enjoying the freedom of independent living."

SCCWA has seven retirement villages across the Perth metropolitan area offering a variety of homes that differ in size, style and services, to suit a variety of budgets and needs.

Discover how retirement living can help you stay active, connected and thriving just like Pat, Betty and Jack. Learn more about our villages today. <https://www.scrosswa.org.au/retirement-villages/>

## Celebrating love and life in aged care

In residential aged care, it's easy to focus on medical needs and routines, but at Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA), we believe the true measure of care lies in understanding what makes life meaningful for our residents. It's about creating opportunities that bring joy, connection and purpose, no matter what stage of life someone is in.

For Phil and Margaret, residents at Frank Prendergast House (FPH) in Success, that meaning is found in each other. The couple recently marked their seventh wedding anniversary with a celebration organised by the FPH team, complete with decorations, their favourite meal, and a surprise that left them both smiling.

**“Margaret is a hopeless romantic and always looks for opportunities to celebrate with Phil, especially as she can see a decline in him,” FPH Lifestyle Coordinator Vanessa said. “So, it is very important to make every opportunity count.**

“The therapy team set everything up and decorated his room, then surprised them with a special lunch of pork ribs and chips. Margaret was wearing the dress she got married in, which made it even more special.”

A former florist who once specialised in wedding bouquets, Margaret enjoys pottering in the garden or in her room and often attends activities at the home, sometimes with Phil, sometimes on her own. But Margaret said her favourite place is by his side.

The couple first met through their church. They married in 2017 while living in Coogee and spent five years there before Phil's health declined, prompting his move to residential aged care at FPH. Margaret, facing her own health challenges, moved into Success Village, the retirement village co-located with FPH.

Six months later, when a room became available, Margaret moved into FPH, and the team worked to place the couple in the same wing, a move that became especially significant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now under the same roof once more, Phil and Margaret continue to enjoy what makes life meaningful to them - sharing meals, conversations and time spent simply being together.



## Extraordinary care, wherever you call home

**At 95, William is determined to continue living in his own home until he is 100, and with the support of Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA), he's on his way to doing just that.**

“I've been a home care client with Southern Cross Care for a year and three months. I've found it wonderful,” he said. “Someone comes and takes me shopping once a week, that's been very good. I get three showers a week, which is very helpful because I'm always frightened of falling in the shower. And I've got a cleaner once a fortnight.”

William is one of more than 1,800 Western Australians who choose SCCWA's home care services to support them in living independently, safely and comfortably at home as they age.

Our home care provides flexible, tailored support, from personal care and help around the house to transport, meal preparation, or simply having someone to chat with over a cup of tea. We work closely with clients to get to know the people we support and to understand the little things that matter the most to them.

William has a large, loving family, but with everyone leading busy lives, home care has helped him feel supported between visits.

**“I've got a lovely family, four boys and a daughter. They all come when they can, but they're not always available,” he said. “My wife died five years ago, and it's a very lonely life when you're on your own. So just having someone come in and help you is a blessing.”**

He's also formed close bonds with his support workers.

“I had a girl come on Wednesdays and Fridays for a year, and we were just like brother and sister. These people become really special to you because you see them often.” William said.

### Now welcoming new clients

SCCWA currently offers home care services across the Perth metropolitan area and regional areas, including Broome and the South West. Whether you're exploring options for yourself or a loved one, we can guide you through the process and help you get the most from your government-funded package.

#### Home care can include:

- Personal care, like showering and grooming
- Help around the home, such as cleaning
- Grocery shopping and meal preparation
- Transport to appointments or social outings
- Medication support and clinical care
- Companionship and social connection
- In-home respite

#### Get in touch today

Take the first step toward living your extraordinary life at home.

Call 1300 669 189

Visit [www.scrosswa.org.au/home-care](http://www.scrosswa.org.au/home-care)



## Extraordinary support that works for you

**Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) Health and Wellness Centre in East Fremantle is designed with a simple purpose - to support people over 55 to stay active and connected, whether they're recovering from injury, managing a chronic condition, or simply aiming to live well for longer.**

For John\*, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2017, the Centre has become an important part of his weekly routine.

While he initially received support through the Fremantle Parkinson's Unit, the program only ran for a limited period, leaving a gap in the ongoing support he needed.

Determined to find something more consistent, his wife, Susan\*, turned to My Aged Care to apply for physiotherapy and hydrotherapy support. Now, John attends one-on-one hydrotherapy at the Centre twice a week under the guidance of his Exercise Physiologist, Joanna.

"He's made some amazing improvements, it was difficult for him to stand without using the sides of the chair, and now he's doing squats in the water and can sit-to-stand from a chair several times without holding on," Jo said.

More than 20 sessions in, Susan has noticed a positive change in John. She said getting out of chairs is less of a struggle, and navigating stairs at a recent concert he attended seemed much easier.

Hydrotherapy provides a pain-free environment where people with Parkinson's can safely work on strength, balance and gait. But what stood out most to Susan was the thoughtful and holistic approach taken by the allied health team.

"I noticed when he walks with his noodle in the pool, Jo asks him to name kitchen items or capital cities while he moves, which is great cognitive stimulation," Susan said.

**"It's a blessing that we got this program and that he enjoys it as well. We feel very lucky."**

Beyond physical progress, Susan said what makes the Centre truly special is its welcoming community feel.

"The employees here are very helpful and friendly, from the Manager to reception and the Physio Team. The very first day we walked into the building, the first thing that both of us noticed was the friendly, homely atmosphere," Susan said.

SCCWA's team of allied health professionals, including physiotherapists, exercise physiologists and occupational therapists, are passionate about helping their clients achieve their health goals, no matter how simple or complex.

In addition to hydrotherapy and physiotherapy, the Health and Wellness Centre offers a range of services including one-on-one sessions and small group classes in strength and balance training, falls prevention, occupational therapy, and pain management. The Centre also supports clients recovering from injury or surgery and those managing chronic health conditions, all in a supportive, tailored environment.

**For more information, visit [scrosswa.org.au/our-services/health-and-wellness/](https://scrosswa.org.au/our-services/health-and-wellness/) or call 6424 7443.**

*\*Note: Client names have been changed to protect their privacy.*



## How refurbishments at Success Village are creating homes that feel extraordinary

**Step inside a refurbished villa at one of Southern Cross Care WA's (SCCWA) retirement villages and you'll find more than just a fresh coat of paint and new finishes.**

Creating high-quality, comfortable homes is just one of the ways SCCWA supports older Western Australians to live extraordinary lives, every day. Through refurbishment works, we deliver housing that is not just functional, but also welcoming, modern and reflective of the way people want to live.

At Success Village, more than 10 refurbishments have been completed this financial year. When a resident exits a village, their unit is assessed to determine what works are needed. Common upgrades include new kitchen cabinetry, appliances and benchtops, updated flooring and lighting, internal and external paintwork and finishing touches like window treatments and landscaping.

"The primary goal behind refurbishing our units is to ensure that every home meets modern standards of comfort, safety, and functionality, so our residents can enjoy their homes with ease and pride," Retirement Living Manager Garry Holmes said.

Refurbishments also play an important role in supporting the long-term appeal and sustainability of SCCWA's retirement communities.

"Modern, fresh and well-equipped units significantly enhance the overall appeal of our villages. By maintaining a high standard of accommodation, we preserve the overall value of the community and ensure that current and future residents continue to experience quality living in well-maintained surroundings."

The refurbishment program is already showing a positive return, with refurbished homes attracting more enquiries and typically achieving faster turnaround times when listed.

"This reinforces the value of our investment and helps to ensure a thriving and dynamic village community," Garry said.

"Through this refurbishment initiative, we are investing in the future of our residents and our villages - creating homes that are not just places to live, but places to love."



## Community support helps garden project bloom in Kalgoorlie

In Kalgoorlie, something extraordinary is blooming. Not just in the garden beds, but in the spirit of community support, which continues to grow at Victoria Park House (VPH).

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the local community, residents are enjoying a newly built garden, designed to be accessible for all residents, including those who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility.

The accessible garden was made possible by a generous \$5,000 donation from the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Inner Wheel Club, who spent a year raising funds through sausage sizzles and community events. Their support enabled the purchase of six raised garden beds, which were carefully sourced in collaboration with the nursing home to ensure they suited the needs of all residents.

**“Gardening often makes residents feel like they’re at home,” VPH Manager Cheryl said.**

“So, having the garden accessible for everyone creates an environment they may have been in before they moved to aged care.

“To be able to raise \$5,000 is amazing, and our little community here were just taken aback by the generosity of what they wanted to do to help us.”

Other local businesses also got behind the project. Bunnings Kalgoorlie donated soil and plants, and two garden centre employees attended the home to help on planting day.

The accessible garden is one of many recent improvements at VPH, inspired by community partnerships and resident feedback.

Earlier this year, wood rot forced the removal of a few trees lining the home’s driveway. During a residents’ meeting, many expressed their disappointment at the loss of greenery. So, the VPH team suggested brightening the space with some new trees. They partnered with local business, Goldfields Little Loads and Gardens, who generously offered five new trees at a discounted price.

“The residents chose jacarandas as the replacement because they liked the colour and thought they would look pretty at the front of the home,” Cheryl said.

“These projects mean so much to our residents. At the end of the day, this is their home, and we want to do everything we can to make it feel just that.”



## Empowering our communities through mental health support



Darcy Love, Senior Manager Disability & Mental Health services celebrating mental health week.

**Every October, Mental Health Week in Western Australia is a reminder of how important community connection and access to the right support are, whether you’re managing your own mental health journey or helping someone else through theirs.**

In 2024, Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) marked Mental Health Week (MHW) with two events: our Community Options Open Day in Mount Claremont and the Client Community Expo in Belmont. The Open Day, on 8 October, welcomed community members to learn more about our services and how our clients are working towards their recovery journeys. On 11 October, our mental health clients hosted the Client Community Expo with art and craft stalls, interactive wellness activities, games, and plenty of tasty treats.

### Support for the ones who support others

About one in five Western Australians experiences mental health challenges each year. For every person navigating their Mental Health journey, there’s often a family member or friend quietly supporting them in the background. These unpaid carers play an enormous role in the recovery of their loved ones while juggling their own lives, work and health.

Monica, one of SCCWA’s Family and Carer Support Program Recovery Partners, is dedicated to supporting carers across Perth’s South Metro region.

**“People just aren’t aware of how much responsibility carers actually take on,” she said.**

“We come in and help these carers shine a spotlight on what their needs are, and get them to prioritise things like self-care, which is so important because they’re always prioritising everyone else above themselves.”

The recovery-based program works holistically, helping carers build goals, access local support services and reconnect with their own sense of self.

“We encourage them to have two to three goals to start with,” Monica said. “It just gets so overwhelming, so we try to help them break everything down so that it’s more meaningful and more actionable.”

Monica said many of her clients fondly refer to her as their “fairy godmother”, a nickname she feels proud of, given her personal experience as a carer. “I’ve experienced it. I’ve been a carer myself and I’ve experienced burnout,” she said. “Sometimes people feel like they can’t talk about these issues with family and friends, particularly when you’re caring for a loved one, maybe you don’t necessarily want everyone to know about it, so there’s the reluctance there.”

**“So it’s also just having that safe space to be able to talk to someone who understands what you’re going through.”**

Whether it’s providing coping strategies, encouraging self-care, helping navigate the NDIS for a loved one or linking into further psychology support, the program is there for as long as needed, and at no cost to the carer.

“The program is fully funded by the Mental Health Commission, and there’s no end time, which is one of the positives,” Monica said. “Often with other programs, they only run for six months or 12 months, whereas for us, they stay with us as long as they need to. The goal is obviously to get them to the point where they feel confident in the strategies we’ve given them and they don’t need us anymore.”

Importantly, clients can self-refer or be referred through their GP or other health providers.



“It’s really important that they do reach out for that support,” Monica said. “The sooner they can get access to those supports they start to feel a sense of self, which they’ve kind of lost.”

“Even if it’s just little things. Recently, one of my clients I’ve been helping navigate her mum through aged care, she was finally able to go on a holiday. She really enjoyed it and was able to reconnect with friends, and that’s something she’s not been able to do in a long time.”

**Looking ahead to Mental Health Week 2025**

The MHW theme this year is all about power. Having the power to take charge of your own mental health journey and recovery, having the power to support yourself and find purpose through meaningful employment and having the power to support others within their community, to stay mentally healthy.

SCCWA will once again be proudly involved in the state-wide campaign, with a refreshed focus and a new way to engage with the community. This year’s events will look a little different to previous years, so keep an eye out for more details coming soon.

Whoever you are, and wherever you are in your mental health journey, we’re here to support your extraordinary.

To find out more about our mental health services and the Family and Carer Support Program, visit [scrosswa.org.au/mental-health-services-and-support/](http://scrosswa.org.au/mental-health-services-and-support/)



**A lifetime of stories, a day of celebration**



**One hundred extraordinary years Patricia, Frank Prendergast House**

On 7 February 2025, Frank Prendergast House resident Patricia celebrated her 100th birthday.

Before moving into the residential care home, Patricia lived in our co-located retirement village, Success Village, for nine years and regularly volunteered her time at Frank Prendergast House to connect with residents and share stories about her service in the Australian Army Corps.



Patricia has four daughters, 14 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Our team put on a fantastic birthday party, decorating the home and preparing a delicious meal for all the residents.

Logan Howlett, the Mayor of the City of Cockburn, also presented Patricia with a letter from King Charles and a bouquet of flowers.

**An extraordinary century plus five! Myriam, Joseph Cooke House**

On 12 November 2024, we celebrated our oldest Joseph Cooke House resident. Myriam, turning 105! Born in 1919, Myriam grew up in the Mauritius Islands. Myriam is proud of her large family, which includes four children, 14 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Myriam speaks three languages, has lived in multiple countries, taught sewing lessons, and has now resided at Joseph Cooke House for four years. Our team put on a fantastic party for Myriam, decorating the home and preparing a delicious meal for all the residents. One of WA’s oldest residents. Her advice, “To listen and to try to be the best”.



# Celebrating NAIDOC Week and our journey to reconciliation



Olman Walley, Clare Grieveson, John Chegwidan celebrating NAIDOC Week in Rivervale

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that calls for shared commitment, respect and understanding. Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) is committed to walking alongside our First Nations residents, clients, and employees to work towards a more inclusive future.

Over the past 12 months, SCCWA has made meaningful progress in our reconciliation journey by engaging with communities, hosting cultural events and developing our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), set to launch later this year. The RAP formally outlines SCCWA's goals to build meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples and create environments where everyone feels culturally safe, included and valued.

These efforts are already being reflected in our homes and services, where cultural connections are embraced and celebrated through activity programs. At (GKH) in Broome, for example, the smell of Cypress Pine during a Family Campfire

Cookout activity sparked fond memories for many residents. Cypress Pine is commonly used around camps by Aboriginal people and is said to keep bad spirits and mosquitoes away. Volunteer Luke smoked a Cypress Pine log and walked around so residents could enjoy the familiar scent. This commitment to cultural inclusion is also reflected in the way SCCWA celebrates significant events, including NAIDOC Week.

## Celebrating NAIDOC Week on Yawuru Country

Life in residential aged care can sometimes create barriers to staying connected to community. SCCWA is committed to supporting First Nations residents and clients maintain strong ties to culture, Country and community through culturally appropriate care, meaningful activities and cultural celebrations. In July, SCCWA hosted a NAIDOC Week Family Fun Day at Germanus Kent House (GKH) and Bran Nue Dae (BND), located on Yawuru land. The Yawuru people are the traditional owners of the lands and waters in and around Rubibi (the

town of Broome), and it was a privilege to celebrate on their Country.

The event provided a meaningful opportunity for our employees, First Nations residents and clients, and the broader Broome community to come together to honour and celebrate the cultures, stories and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Attendees shared stories and enjoyed live music, traditional dance, food, and a range of family-friendly activities. This year's NAIDOC Week theme, 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy', celebrates not only the achievements of the past but the bright future ahead, empowered by the strength of young leaders, the vision of communities, and the legacy of ancestors. Our elders at GKH and BND come from all corners of the Kimberley. They hold an important role in our community and a prominent place in our aged care homes. Through events like NAIDOC Week, we honour their stories and their strength, walking alongside them to create a more inclusive future.

## Meet some of our elders



### Winnie

Winnie belongs to the Ngaanyatjarra cultural group of the Goldfields region. She was born in Wanarn, WA, and later moved to Kalgoorlie.

Winnie likes to sit around the campfire, cooking kangaroo tails while talking to her friends.

"The best way to cook kangaroo tail is to put it on the ashes, then turn it around until the fire is gone down," she said. Winnie is a mother of three children: Colleen, Carl, and Cassandra.

Some of Winnie's passions include watching the AFL and 'Home and Away', listening to gospel music and going to church.

### Pat

Pat was born in Beagle Bay. At the age of five, she lived in the Beagle Bay Mission after being separated from her mother and grandmother.

She was part of the Stolen Generation and lived in the mission until she was 20. She has two foster children, Paul and Tyrez.

Pat enjoys watching 'Sunrise' in the morning and 'Home and Away' in the evening on TV. She likes to play cards and participate in group activities while having a yarn.

### Damian

Damian was born in Western Australia and grew up in the Lombading and Diarindin communities. He speaks both English and Bardi. Damian is married with six children, 25 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He used to work on stations mustering cattle and maintaining the station fencing. Now, he likes to spend time outside enjoying the warm weather and having a yarn.

Some of Damian's passions include watching country and western movies and listening to Goolari Radio.

## Reopening of the Barrgana Wing at Germanus Kent House

In October 2024, SCCWA reopened the refurbished Barrgana wing at Germanus Kent House (GKH) in Broome. The reopening was marked with a smoking ceremony led by Yawuru Elder Dianne Appleby. The Barrgana wing takes its name from one of the six seasons (the cold season) in the Yawuru calendar, reflecting SCCWA's commitment to culturally inclusive care and our close ties with the local community. The reopening was a proud moment for our team at GKH and the Broome community after closing the wing due to workforce challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reopening of the newly refurbished wing responds to the growing need for residential aged care in the Kimberley region.

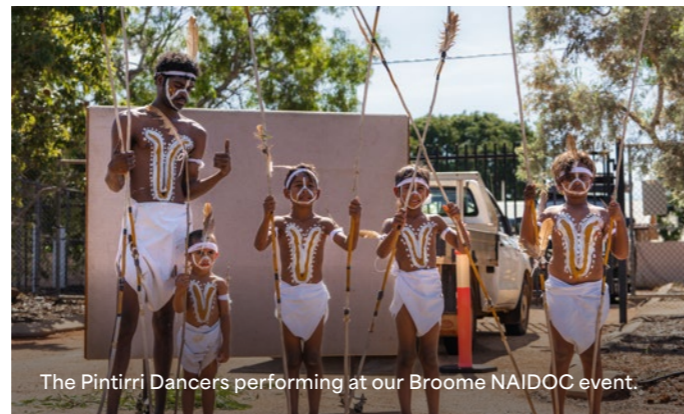
**“As GKH is the only residential aged care home in Broome and the surrounding communities, there is a high demand for our services,” CEO Clare Grieveson said.**

“By reopening this wing, we can fill a significant gap in the community and support an additional 14 residents.” In preparation for the reopening, the Barrgana wing underwent a thoughtful refresh designed to make residents feel truly at home.

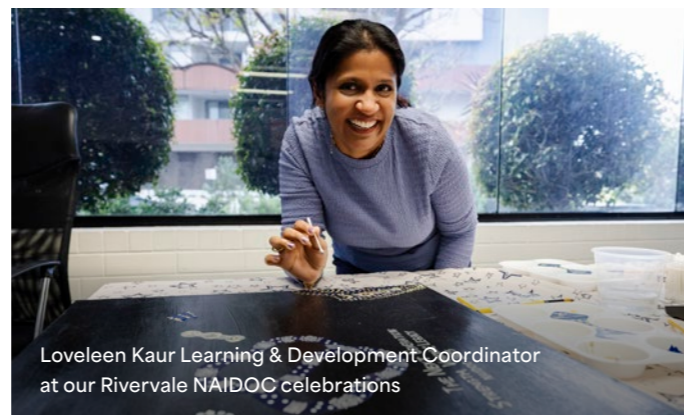
“The walls have been painted, the air-conditioning system refurbished, and we purchased new beds, overbed tables, and bedside cabinets, which have been added to each room. There are new dining tables in the lounge area, along with fresh linen, crockery and outdoor furniture,” Chief Operating Officer Residential Sandra Waters said.

To mark the occasion, SCCWA purchased a stunning piece of Aboriginal artwork from artist Renee Clifton, which now hangs in the Barrgana wing.

This milestone would not have been possible without the collaboration of our residents, employees, the local Broome community and the Nyamba Buru Yawuru organisation.



The Pintirri Dancers performing at our Broome NAIDOC event.



Loveleen Kaur Learning & Development Coordinator at our Rivervale NAIDOC celebrations



The broader community of Broome in attendance at our NAIDOC event



Staff of Germanus Kent House at the NAIDOC Celebrations in Broome

## Heartfelt volunteers bring comfort in life's final moments

In a quiet room at one of Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA)'s residential aged care homes, a volunteer is gently holding the hand of a resident nearing the end of their life. These volunteers are part of the No One Dies Alone (NODA) program, a compassionate initiative designed to ensure that no one faces their final moments alone.

The NODA program addresses the harsh reality that about 40 per cent of older people die without anyone by their side. Whether the person's family lives far away or circumstances prevent them from being present, NODA volunteers aim to provide companionship, comfort, and dignity during those last moments.

Since its launch, the program has already made a meaningful difference across four of SCCWA's residential aged care homes Frank Prendergast House, Joseph Cooke House, Villa Pelletier and Margaret Hubery House where volunteers have accompanied 15 residents in their final hours.

Volunteer Agnes, who lives at Success Village and is one of 40 trained NODA volunteers, has seen firsthand the impact of sitting with someone at the end.

“If no one can be there with them, we step in to be that person, to hold their hand, so they know they're not alone,” Agnes said. “Whether they know us or not, sometimes they just want to reach out and know that somebody's there.”

The NODA volunteers often receive a short profile about the resident so they can offer a personal touch playing a favourite song, singing, or simply chatting about something familiar. But often, it's the quiet presence that makes the biggest difference.

For fellow volunteer Shelby, being part of NODA is both confronting and rewarding.

“It's definitely quite a confronting thing to be sitting with someone at that time in their life,” Shelby said. “But it is a really nice experience as well.”

“Although these people are strangers, I think everyone can empathise with how it would feel to be at that stage. It's nice for me to know that I'm giving comfort and connection to someone else because everyone deserves that.”

For Marg, whose father was a resident at Joseph Cooke House, the NODA program provided peace of mind. Although her family chose not to use it, just knowing the program was available made a meaningful difference.

**“To know that option was there was really important,” she said.**

“It's particularly helpful for those who don't have a lot of family, or if you can't spend 24 hours a day there for an unknown time. So, the volunteers will go in at night, during the day or whatever time they have available. I can't speak highly enough of it.

“I think it's very important for the employees too because as much as they want to spend more time with each resident when they're going through end of life, it's quite stressful for them to still care for every other resident at the same time.”

What makes SCCWA's approach to NODA unique is its collaboration with researchers. With funding from Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA), SCCWA partnered with Edith Cowan University to both evaluate the program and develop an innovative tool to improve end-of-life care.

The tool, known as the GRAD instrument, aims to help clinical employees recognise the signs of imminent dying and engage volunteer support through NODA. Head of Pastoral Care and Volunteer Services Ian Simms said employees were trained to use GRAD during the study period, and although relatively few deaths occurred during the evaluation, early feedback was encouraging. Employees reported that the tool was easy to use and assisted them in activating volunteer support at the right time.

SCCWA hopes to roll out the NODA program to all of its residential aged care homes and will continue to use and refine the GRAD tool to help ensure timely, dignified end-of-life care.

If you're interested in becoming a NODA volunteer or learning more about how to support this program, visit <https://www.scrosswa.org.au/about-us/careers/volunteering/>.

## Extraordinary support for everyday independence



### How occupational therapists help aged care residents feel more comfortable, independent and at home.

Extraordinary care means paying attention to the little things – a favourite hobby, a familiar routine or even just a more comfortable chair. Our occupational therapists (OTs) aim to help residents feel at home while empowering them to live life on their terms.

Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, OTs take the time to get to know each person, their past, their preferences and how they like to live.

“In a nutshell, what I’m looking at is the psychosocial wellbeing of a person, and what makes that person them,” Senior OT Delbar said. “So, looking at their past occupations and interests, how much of that can we bring here? How can we make them feel connected back to the world again, so that they feel like it’s their home?”

Delbar said every small detail or adjustment contributes to a bigger picture of purpose and belonging. For resident James, that meant finding ways to hold onto his independence after moving into aged care.

### “One of the big things for James was that he wanted to be as independent as he could,” Delbar said.

“So, we got him a raised toilet chair, seat, a shower chair and then looked at the heights of all those things and how we could make it easier for him to transfer off his wheelchair. We even looked at different wheelchair options. Those little things made a big difference to him.”

James now enjoys more freedom in his day, thanks to a few simple adjustments and the support of someone who listened.

“I like the electric wheelchair, I can push the button and off I go,” he said.

“Delbar, she’s great – a real helping hand.”

Behind the scenes, Delbar is supported by a passionate team who all share the same commitment to our people and their stories.

“We are a multidisciplinary team here. So, we all have our own areas of expertise, which we bring to the table, and at the end of the day, we’re all here to care about these residents who’ve worked all their lives.

“I consider it a privilege to be part of that journey and to enable them to maintain as much independence as possible.”



## Peace of mind with support across life’s stages

Navigating the many stages of aged care can be daunting, especially when needs shift or decisions need to be made quickly. But at Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA), that journey doesn’t have to feel like starting from scratch.

Whether it begins in a retirement village, progresses through home care and respite, or leads to residential aged care, SCCWA offers a wide range of services designed to support older people through every chapter of aging. The broad offering allows for more than just care; it allows for connection and familiarity.

“If someone starts with us in a retirement village and then later needs home care, respite, or residential care, there’s often already a connection with our employees and our services,” Chief Operating Officer Sandra Waters said.

“That familiarity and trust can make the transition a lot smoother, and there’s a bit of reassurance for families knowing that, if needed, their loved ones can potentially stay with the same organisation”.

While eligibility for services such as respite or residential aged care still requires an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessment, already being part of the SCCWA community can make those next steps easier to navigate.

“If someone already receives home care through SCCWA, they attend one of our day respite centres or live in our retirement villages, we’ll do our best to accommodate them within our residential services, provided there’s availability,” Sandra said.

“We do try to give preference where we can and where it’s appropriate. However, some homes are already oversubscribed and have a waitlist, so it can be challenging. In those cases, we might look at a home nearby, but we always try to support people as best we can.”

Even with a wide range of services available, planning ahead can make a significant difference, particularly when care needs change quickly or unexpectedly.

### “We really encourage people to have those conversations sooner rather than later,” Sandra said.

“Whether it’s with family, My Aged Care or our admissions team, it’s helpful to understand what services are available, what their current needs are and options for future care.”

#### Tips for starting the aged care conversation

##### 1. Start planning early

Don’t wait until a crisis arises. Aging and aged care can be difficult to discuss, but avoiding the conversation often puts extra pressure on your loved ones later. Starting early helps prevent stress and conflict when decisions become urgent.

##### 2. Gather information

To understand your eligibility and explore available support options, contact My Aged Care at [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au), or speak with SCCWA admissions team on 1300 669 189.

##### 3. Create an Advance Care Plan

An Advance Care Plan formally records your health and personal care wishes. It guides future decisions based on your preferences, not just urgent needs, and ensures your voice is heard even if you can’t communicate.

##### 4. Involve your family

Develop your care plan with your immediate family or trusted inner circle. Sharing it with them means everyone understands your wishes and can act confidently on your behalf.



## Understanding the Aged Care Reforms - what's changing and what it means for you

You may have heard about the next round of significant changes to aged care happening this year. These changes, known as the Aged Care Reforms, are based on recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which aim to deliver more personalised support for older people, improve the experience for workers, and build a more sustainable aged care system.

At Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA), we know that change can feel overwhelming, but we're here to help you understand what's happening, how it affects you, and what support is available.

Here's what you need to know.

### A new approach to home care: Support at Home program

Starting 1 November 2025, a new national program called Support at Home will begin, replacing the Home Care Packages (HCP) Program and Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) Program with one, easier-to-navigate system.

Our goal remains the same: to support you in living an extraordinary life, every day. And under Support at Home, you'll have more flexibility and better access to the services, equipment and care you need to live safely and independently at home.

### New features under Support at Home include:

- **Quarterly budgets:** Instead of one annual amount, your budget will be split into four equal parts throughout the year. Unused funds can be rolled over, with limits to ensure you still get the care you need
- **No admin fees:** Admin costs will be included in service prices, with no separate charges
- **Clear service lists:** Services will be clearly outlined so you'll always know what's included and what's not

- **Dedicated care management:** 10 per cent of your budget will go to planning and coordinating your services
- **Separate funding for equipment and home changes:** You'll have a separate allocation for approved equipment or home changes, including mobility aids, rails, and other modifications

### Several new pathways to better support:

- **Restorative Care:** Access to health professionals who can help you maintain or improve your independence, focusing on wellness and reablement
- **Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme:** Funding for equipment, products or home modifications tailored to your needs
- **End-of-Life Pathway:** Extra support for those who wish to remain at home during end-of-life care

### Who will be affected?

If you currently receive care through a Home Care Package (HCP), you'll transition to the Support at Home program on 1 November 2025. You'll keep the same level of funding, and if your needs change, you can be reassessed.

If you receive services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), your care will move to Support at Home from 1 July 2027 at the earliest. Until then, your services will continue as usual.

You won't be worse off if you're eligible for or waiting on a package as of 12 September 2024. Your contributions will stay the same, or less, than you would have under the current program.

And no matter what stage you're at, we'll guide you every step of the way.

### Strengthened Quality Standards and Consumer Rights

As part of these reforms, the government is also updating the Aged Care Quality Standards under the new Aged Care Act to give you more choice and control over your care.

### These changes include:

- A stronger focus on your rights  
The strengthened standards place even greater importance on upholding your rights and ensuring you are treated with dignity, compassion and respect. Providers will be required to engage with you more closely when planning and delivering services.

- A new standard for dining and food experience  
We know that mealtimes are about more than just food. They're about comfort, routine and a sense of home. That's why a new quality indicator is being introduced that focuses solely on your dining experience, emphasising choice, enjoyment and nutrition.

### Need more information?

Visit [www.health.gov.au/aged-care-reforms](http://www.health.gov.au/aged-care-reforms)

Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422

Talk to your Southern Cross Care WA Wellness Partner or email the SCCWA Support at Home team via [supportathome@scrosswa.org.au](mailto:supportathome@scrosswa.org.au)



## A little extraordinary care when you need it most



Caring for someone you love is one of the most selfless acts, but it's also one of the most emotionally and physically demanding. Many carers sometimes feel guilt or hesitation around seeking help, but respite care isn't just a break. It's a vital support system for carers, and a meaningful experience for those they care for.

Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA) respite services are designed to provide just the right care when you need it most.

For Bev, whose husband Greg was diagnosed with early-onset dementia at just 62, respite has been nothing short of a lifeline.

Greg had already faced a tough road. He's experienced bleeding in his brain caused by a rare condition called cerebral amyloid angiopathy. It affected his ability to speak and eventually led to his dementia diagnosis seven years ago.

"In the last six months, there had been a real deterioration, and it got harder for me to feel like I wasn't burning out," Bev said

Whether it's for a few hours, a regular day a week, or short overnight stays, respite care gives carers the freedom to rest and regroup, knowing their loved one is in safe, compassionate hands.

SCCWA has three dedicated day and cottage respite locations:

- Donovan House Respite Centre in Forreestfield
- Tony Quinlan Respite Centre in Hilton
- Bran Nue Dae in Broome (day respite only)

Each location is purpose-built to feel warm and homelike, so every individual feels comfortable, supported and at ease during their stay. Day respite services run from 9am to 3.30pm, unless prior arrangements have been made. For those requiring longer care, our overnight or 'cottage style' respite is available in single bedrooms with shared bathrooms.

For Greg, a calm and structured environment makes all the difference, and that's exactly what he found at SCCWA.

"What I liked about the centre is it's a calm, quiet environment, which is good for Greg. It was always lovely temperature-wise, and the staff were pretty consistent from one week to the next," Bev said.

"Greg spends a lot of time pacing because he likes to keep busy. He likes it there because he has his comforter, and then he's got his activities, or he's walking around, or being at the courtyard, and has a nice home-cooked meal. So, it's been really good."

And when things didn't go to plan, Bev said the team always listened and worked with her to find the right solution. When Greg became agitated during an overnight stay, Bev was worried he might be turned away. But the team responded with compassion, flexibility, and understanding.

"I was very grateful that they didn't blacklist him because of that one tough night," she said.

But respite isn't just about comfort and care for the person receiving support. Respite allows carers to have some time to themselves. Whether it's attending appointments, catching up with a friend, or simply enjoying a moment of quiet, that time is essential.

"It's so important just to have time to myself and to know he's in good care, he's having quality social activities with people that can relate to him in the right way. He's safe, he's stimulated, he's being well fed," Bev said.

**"So, if people are a bit scared of taking that step, know it's worthwhile and so reassuring."**

### Need support?

You or your loved one could be eligible for government-funded respite care. Start by booking an assessment through My Aged Care by calling 1800 200 422.

Want to learn more about SCCWA's respite services?

Call 1300 669 189 or visit [www.scrosswa.org.au/respite](http://www.scrosswa.org.au/respite) to explore our locations, services, and how we can support you.

**Donovan House Respite Centre**  
138 Lewis Road, Forreestfield WA 6058

**Tony Quinlan Respite Centre**  
36/84 Collick Street, Hilton WA 6163

**Bran Nue Dae Respite Centre**  
20 Dickson Drive, Broome WA 6725





T 1300 669 189

E [info@scrosswa.org.au](mailto:info@scrosswa.org.au)