



Southern
Cross Care WA

Your extraordinary starts here.

Southern Star Newsletter

Spring 2026 Edition



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the CEO

Supporting
wellbeing across
our services

Breakfast Club
brings connection

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A message from CEO Clare Grieveson

Welcome to the spring 2026 edition of Southern Star.

This year is especially meaningful as we celebrate 60 years of Southern Cross Care WA (SCCWA). Over six decades, we have grown and evolved, introduced new services, and families and communities across Western Australia have welcomed us into their lives. What has remained constant is our purpose, and the care, commitment, and compassion of our people.

This edition reflects those enduring values while also looking towards the future. You will read about how we have marked important moments such as NAIDOC Week, International Nurses Day and volunteer milestones, alongside stories that highlight cultural connection, inclusion and community across SCCWA.

At the heart of this issue are the people who make SCCWA what it is. You will meet residents like Winnie at Victoria Park House, whose story reminds us of the importance of belonging and connection at every stage of life. You will also see how our teams continue to support independence and wellbeing, from dementia retreats to initiatives such as the Breakfast Club at Frank Prendergast House.

You will read about the many ways we are supporting people at home, including practical guidance on everyday wellbeing, respite care and finding support when it is needed most. This is particularly important as we continue responding to the aged care reforms, with a strong focus on helping people remain connected, informed and supported through Support at Home.

This edition also marks my final message in Southern Star as I prepare to depart for a new opportunity in October. It has been a privilege to serve as CEO and be part of SCCWA’s ongoing commitment to improving lives across Western Australia.

As we reflect on 60 years of service, Southern Star remains a way to share the moments, milestones and stories that shape our community. I hope this edition gives you a sense of pride in all that has been achieved, and confidence in the path ahead.

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



Five tips to support everyday wellbeing

Looking after your mental health can feel challenging, especially during times of change or stress. As Recovery Partners across the Community Options program experience every day, it's often the small, consistent habits, not big changes, that make the biggest difference. Here are five simple, practical tips they recommend to support your wellbeing.



1. Start with a routine

Having a regular structure in your day creates a sense of stability and control. It doesn't have to be strict. Simple consistencies like waking up at the same time, eating regular meals, and winding down in the evening can help regulate your mood, sleep, and energy levels.



2. Focus on small steps

Progress doesn't need to happen all at once. Breaking tasks into manageable parts can reduce overwhelm and build confidence. Small achievements matter and can help create positive momentum.



3. Move your body

Physical activity can improve mood and reduce stress, but it doesn't need to be intense. A short walk, gentle stretching, or everyday tasks like gardening all count. The important thing is to start with easy, gentle movements; some movement is always better than none.



4. Stay connected

Reaching out can feel difficult when you're not feeling your best, but small interactions can make a big difference. A quick message, a short conversation, or saying hello to someone can help you feel connected and more supported.



5. Be kind to yourself

Take time for activities that bring comfort, like listening to music or spending time outdoors. Recovery is personal, and it's okay to move at your own pace. Even one small positive action each day can help.

You don't need to do everything at once. Every small step forward matters.

Winnie's wish

At SCCWA, we help people live extraordinary lives, every day, connected to communities.

For Victoria Park House Manager Cheryl Hahn, that purpose came to life when an extraordinary opportunity arose to honour the wish of a much loved resident.

Aboriginal resident Winnie had lived at Victoria Park House for several years while managing complex health needs, including renal failure that required regular dialysis. Despite these challenges, Winnie held one wish above all others: to return to her family lands and live back on Country.

Known for her strong spirit and deep connection to culture and faith, Winnie is deeply loved by employees and fellow residents.

For more than two years, Cheryl and her team worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help make her wish a reality.

Returning to a remote community while dependent on dialysis was far from simple. Dialysis chairs in remote areas are extremely limited, and suitable aged care accommodation is rare.

Eventually, a once in a lifetime opportunity arose. A dialysis chair became available, along with a bed at a small aged-care facility in Wanarn, a remote Aboriginal community. Getting Winnie there would be no easy feat. Her health meant she was unable to fly, so a carefully planned bus journey was organised. As her condition became increasingly fragile, the clinical team worked closely with Winnie to stabilise her health so she could safely make the journey.

On the day of her departure, employees gathered to say an emotional farewell. The Chef arrived at 5.30am to prepare sandwiches and snacks for the long trip, while Cheryl helped pack Winnie's belongings and ensured she reached the bus on time. No small task, given the complex logistics and Winnie's determination to take everything that mattered to her.

Winnie's journey is a powerful reminder of what is possible when we live our values and go above and beyond to deliver the extraordinary.



Winnie on her way back to Country



SCCWA employees with Aunty Phyllis Winmar and resident Andy Ryan at Shortland Jones Park.

With various celebrations held throughout July, SCCWA celebrated NAIDOC Week, bringing people together to recognise the culture, history and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year's theme, '50 Years of Deadly' marked five decades of NAIDOC Week, recognising the resilience, survival, culture and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout the celebrations across Western Australia, activities included dot painting, damper bread making, musical performances, armchair travel experiences, storytelling, movie afternoons and tasting locally inspired treats such as wattle seed scones.

On Yawuru Country in Broome, more than 80 people came together at Bran Nue Dae to enjoy performances by Mary G, the Karajarri Dancers and Greg Tait, with a tasty NAIDOC-inspired lunch.

At SCCWA Rivervale, on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja, more than 70 people gathered for a Welcome to Country by Aunty Phyllis Winmar, featuring a cleansing smoking ceremony. Afterwards, employees created ochre decorations, learnt Noongar language, and learned about key moments in history.

A highlight of the day at Rivervale was an art exhibition by Villa Pelletier resident Andy Ryan, whose paintings offered a powerful insight into family, culture, memory and connection to Country.

Andy has been drawing and painting since childhood, but for him, art is a way of honouring family, preserving stories and maintaining a connection to his late mother, also an artist, who passed away when he was six months old.

“I have always been into drawing and painting. Even when I was at primary school, I was painting,” Andy said.

Many of Andy’s works are inspired by family memories and real places from his past, including stories passed down through generations and memories of family members who grew up on cattle stations in regional Western Australia.

His connection to Country remains a strong source of inspiration.

“Everything keeps calling me back to my Country here in WA,” Andy said.



Residents painting at Margaret Hubery House.

Recurring symbols throughout Andy's artwork tell stories of identity and belonging. Trees represent his enduring connection to culture and Country.

Family is another central theme. Andy explained that many circular symbols in his artwork represent relatives living across Western Australia, reflecting family ties and the distances that can separate loved ones.

Traditional knowledge also remains an important part of his story. After the passing of his parents, aunts and uncles helped carry on cultural practices that continue today.



Employees celebrate at SCCWA Rivervale, WA.

“They carried on the tradition of going out looking for emu eggs and getting bush medicine,” Andy said.

Andy paints almost every day, drawing inspiration from memories, life experiences and the people who have shaped him. Through his artwork, Andy shares stories of family, Country, culture and memory.

Across WA, the celebrations created meaningful opportunities to connect, learn and reflect, reinforcing our commitment to listening to and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and stories.



Andy Ryan with his painting.



Andy Ryan with his painting.



NAIDOC celebrations in Broome.



Chief Executive Officer Clare Grieveson with Aunty Phyllis Winmar.



Aunty Phyllis Winmar performs a smoking ceremony at Shortland Jones Park.



Resident activity at Joseph Cooke House.

Celebrating extraordinary care on International Nurses Day



Southern Cross Care East Fremantle residents and nurses celebrating.

SCCWA celebrated International Nurses Day across 10 locations in Western Australia, recognising the dedication, compassion and expertise of our Nurses.

Residents, colleagues and team members came together to express heartfelt thanks, creating colourful crepe flower displays and sharing messages of appreciation in honour of the vital role Nurses play in delivering high quality aged care.

This year's theme, *Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives*, reflects the impact Nurses have through person centred, compassionate care. This includes early recognition of changing health needs, support for families and preserving dignity at every stage of life.

Across our facilities, Nurses spoke about the importance of listening, advocacy and being a steady, non judgmental presence for residents during some of life's most vulnerable moments.

Many highlighted the deep relationships they build with residents and families, and the privilege of walking alongside people during key transitions.

Registered Nurse Pawandeep Sandhu said nursing in aged care is driven by respect, compassion and understanding the person behind the clinical needs.

“Caring for older adults aligns with my personal values of patience, kindness and truly listening to each individual’s life story,” Pawandeep said.

“I strongly believe every person deserves dignity, respect and care that honours who they are, not just the conditions they live with.”

International Nurses Day provided an opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary contributions of nurses and the wider teams who work alongside them, and celebrate the difference they make every day to the lives of residents and families across SCCWA.



Celebrations at Joseph Cooke House.



Celebrations at Margaret Hubery House.



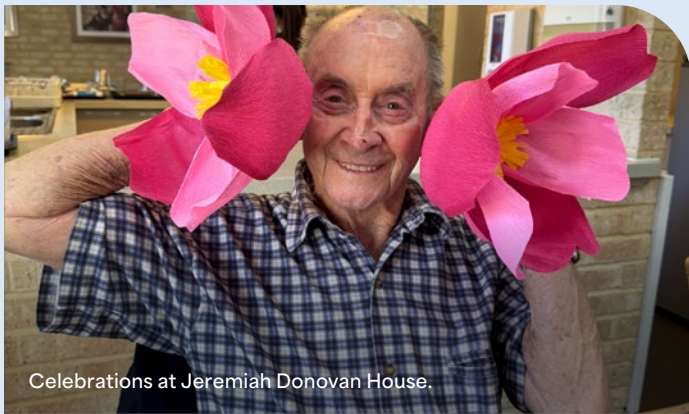
East Fremantle morning tea.



East Fremantle morning tea.



Celebrations at Germanus Kent House.



Celebrations at Jeremiah Donovan House.



Central Office celebrations.



During National Volunteer Week, SCCWA proudly celebrated the volunteers whose generosity, compassion and commitment enhance the lives of older Western Australians every day.

Across services, volunteers play a vital role in creating connection and belonging. From social visits and group activities to pastoral and spiritual care, bus outings, respite centre programs, mental health support, pet visits and end of life companionship through the No One Dies Alone program, their presence has brought comfort, dignity and moments of joy to people and their families.

We celebrated our volunteers at an appreciation breakfast at Kings Park, where four long serving volunteers were presented with awards in recognition of their contribution.

The morning provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact of volunteering and thank those who give their time so generously.

Among those recognised was Peter Jack, whose connection with SCCWA spans more than five decades. What began with fundraising support as a teenager grew into a lifelong commitment.

Peter even served as the CEO of SCCWA and later returned to volunteering in pastoral care, supporting residents’ spiritual wellbeing and offering companionship.

“My first contact goes back more than 50 years. I’ve been involved in one form or another for all that time,” Peter said.

For Peter, volunteering is about responding where help was needed most.

“If the need is there and I’ve got the capacity to help out, then I’d like to help out where I can,” he said. “I still come because I think I provide a valuable service and the residents appreciate it.”

Every volunteer role, no matter how big or small, contributes to a stronger, more connected community.

If you’d like to learn more about volunteering opportunities, visit: scrosswa.org.au/about-us/careers/volunteering



Peter Jack with his Certificate of Recognition.



Betty Flynn with her Certificate of Recognition.



Ming Lai with his Certificate of Recognition.



Eric Dass with his Certificate of Recognition.

Finding support at home, one step at a time



Community Engagement Coordinator Michelle Slennett with Derek and Christine.

For many older people, asking for help can be one of the hardest things to do. After a lifetime of being independent, caring for others, raising families and managing everything yourself, it can feel uncomfortable to need support.

But there is absolutely nothing wrong with asking for help.

In fact, getting support early can help people stay independent for longer, remain safe at home and continue doing the things that matter most.

Community Engagement Coordinator Michelle supports older people and families through this

process every day. With a background in aged care assessments, she is skilled at translating the My Aged Care process into simple, practical steps.

“Many people aren’t sure where to start, or think support is only for when things have reached a crisis point,” Michelle says. “Often, a little bit of help early on can make a big difference.”

Recently, Michelle met Derek and Christine after they moved into an Independent Living Unit at Thomas Perrott Village. Derek had been managing his health on his own for a long time, with support from Christine, who also had her own health concerns.

Michelle explained that the first step was contacting My Aged Care and supported both Derek and Christine to understand what would happen next.

“The assessment isn’t a test,” Michelle says. “It’s really just a conversation to understand what’s happening in your day to day life and what might make things easier.”

With Michelle’s guidance, Christine was able to access Support at Home services. Organising support early meant Christine had practical help in place at home, rather than waiting until things became overwhelming. She also helped Derek register for an assessment.

Through SCCWA Support at Home services, Christine now receives regular domestic assistance to help her remain safe and independent at home. This includes help with vacuuming, mopping floors and keeping the home clean and comfortable.

For Christine, it is not just the tasks that matter, but how the support is delivered.

“We love the people who come in and make themselves at home straight away and talk to you,” she says. “They go off and do the cleaning, then come back and have a chat. It feels like they are checking on you, but not too much.”

That sense of connection has made a real difference.

“They feel like part of the family,” Christine says.

Christine says Michelle’s involvement helped her feel confident about accepting support and knowing who to turn to when things felt overwhelming.

“We would have been lost without Michelle,” she says. “If I’ve got any problems, I tell Michelle, and it feels like the problem’s cut in half.”

While Derek waits for his services to begin, the support Christine receives has eased pressure at home and helped them both continue living safely and independently together.

“We want to stay independent for as long as we can,” Christine says. “And this helps us do that.”

Having been married for more than 65 years, being able to stay at home together means a great deal to them.

At SCCWA, supporting people to access Support at Home services is a key part of how we help older Australians live with confidence and independence. Our team is here to guide people through the process, answer questions, and connect people to the right support at home, at the right time.

As Christine puts it, “It’s wonderful having someone who can just nip in once in a while and help you work things out.”

You can contact the Support at Home team to find out about the options available to you at SCCWA on 1300 669 189 or visit scrosswa.org.au/our-services/home-care to learn more.

Cultural celebrations from SCCWA



Harmony Day celebrations at Joseph Cooke House.



Residents and carers enjoying Harmony Day celebrations.



A Margaret Hubery House resident celebrating St Patrick's Day.

At SCCWA, we celebrate diversity and take pride in the cultures represented across our homes and services.

For many people, moving into aged care is a significant change in life. Leaving familiar surroundings, routines and family can make it harder to continue the traditions, customs and celebrations that bring comfort and connection.

At SCCWA, we believe that if something is important to our residents, it should remain part of everyday life.

With a wide mix of nationalities and cultural backgrounds across our residential services, our teams look for meaningful and practical ways to ensure everyone feels respected, heard and at home. Food is central to this approach. As SCCWA Head Chef John Rabone explains, "We have a number of themed events and cultural celebrations. With such a variety of cultures, it's vital that we not only celebrate key themes but include them with culturally appropriate foods."

Menus are designed with flexibility and choice in mind. A fortnightly 'resident choice day' runs across the four week cycle menu, allowing residents to

request meals that reflect their heritage or personal favourites. "We recently had haggis – a Scottish offal dish," John said.

In the Kimberley region, teams regularly cook with native Australian herbs such as wattleseed and frequently serve kangaroo, sourced through local suppliers and butchers.

"Providing these menus plays a big part in making our residents feel at home; food brings a feeling of warmth to the heart of everyone," John said.

"We are also adaptable to cultural requests for daily offerings and look to honour anyone's chosen meal where we can."

So far this year, residents and staff have celebrated Lunar New Year, St Patrick's Day and Harmony Day, with more cultural celebrations planned throughout the year.

Breakfast club brings connection

At Frank Prendergast House (FPH), residents living with dementia are enjoying a **Breakfast Club** that combines social connection, reminiscence and sensory engagement in a welcoming café-style setting.

Designed to recreate the experience of meeting friends for breakfast, the group provides a familiar and meaningful environment where residents can connect with one another outdoors while enjoying a relaxed start to the day. When the weather allows, sessions are held outdoors, with tables dressed in tablecloths and café-style crockery to enhance the atmosphere.

Residents are encouraged to participate in ways that feel comfortable to them, from helping to set tables and pour drinks to sharing memories and conversation. The familiar sights, sounds and routines of the breakfast setting can prompt reminiscence and support meaningful engagement.

"We noticed that it really sets residents up for the day," Senior Occupational Therapist Delbar Mehta said. "They appeared more settled and happier after the breakfast sessions."

Alongside the Breakfast Club, residents at FPH also have the opportunity to participate in a separate Hand Therapy Group. These structured sessions focus on maintaining and improving hand strength, coordination and fine motor skills through targeted exercises and activity-based tasks.

The Hand Therapy Group supports residents to maintain functional abilities that are important for everyday activities, while also providing a sense of purpose and achievement. Regular participation allows staff to monitor changes in upper limb function and introduce supportive strategies when needed.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the value of person-centred occupational therapy approaches that support both wellbeing and independence. Whether through meaningful social experiences or targeted therapeutic activities, residents are encouraged to remain engaged, connected and active in ways that matter to them.



FPH Residents enjoying creative activities.



Senior Occupational Therapist Delbar Mehta with residents at the breakfast club.

Inspiring careers with Shivani Lala



SCCWA takes pride in nurturing its people by offering opportunities for growth, mentorship and the confidence to try new things.

Shivani Lala's journey is an example of the diverse pathways possible at SCCWA and what can unfold when purpose meets opportunity.

Shivani's journey began in Kalgoorlie as a volunteer while still at school, spending time

with residents experiencing isolation. "My mum worked as a Nurse at the facility and she told me how a lot of our residents had no family and were very isolated. I just wanted to provide some companionship to people." That motivation became the foundation for a career dedicated to improving lives.

After joining as a Carer in 2012 while studying psychology, Shivani moved into mental health and quickly progressed into leadership. During this time, she played a key role in reshaping services to be more person-centred and recovery focused, supporting people to build independence and achieve meaningful outcomes. The shift created lasting impact. "It's just so phenomenal to see the impact that some of those decisions made years ago have had on our clients" Shivani said.

Her career expanded across aged care, operations and home care, where she helped lead teams through significant sector reform.

Shivani supported teams to adapt to new systems, legislation and ways of working, while continuing to deliver high quality care. She remains especially proud of how teams embraced this change and maintained a strong focus on the people they support.

Alongside this, Shivani completed a law degree, opening the door to a new chapter supporting SCCWA from a legal perspective.

For Shivani, growth comes from backing yourself and those around you; a mindset that continues to shape her journey and inspire others. "Just say yes, give it a go and trust your mentors!" she said.

Mission and Ethos: Why we care the way we do



**Rose Santoro -
Senior Manager
Mission and Ethos**

Mission and Ethos is the heart of why SCCWA exists and how we choose to care.

SCCWA was founded by the Knights of the Southern Cross, a Catholic organisation committed to service, dignity and the common good. We are not owned by the Church, and Mission is not about asking people to be religious.

For us, Mission shows up in everyday choices. It is how we treat residents, clients, families and colleagues.

It is what we prioritise when things are busy, complex or under pressure. It is what we refuse to compromise when dignity, safety or respect are at stake.

Ethos is the culture that grows from that purpose. It reminds us that care is more than a service. People trust us with their lives, stories and vulnerability, and that responsibility matters.

Mission and Ethos is not an extra task. It is the reason behind the way we work.

Our Dementia Retreats



Attendees of the Dementia Retreat in Joondalup, WA.

For those recently diagnosed with dementia, the journey ahead can feel overwhelming, both for them and for those who care for them. That's where SCCWA Dementia Retreats are making a difference.

Open to anyone diagnosed with dementia, beyond just SCCWA clients, the fully government-funded program supports people living with dementia and their chosen support person, whether that's a spouse, family member or close companion. The focus is simple but powerful: equipping people with the knowledge, tools and confidence to continue living at home for as long as possible.

Held at Joondalup Resort, each retreat brings together four pairs for an immersive three-day

experience. Through a mix of education and practical guidance, participants learn more about dementia, available supports and how to navigate helpful services. Just as important, they connect with others facing similar challenges.

"The retreat is about more than information. It's about empowering people," says Dementia Respite Project Officer Innocencia Brown. "We help them understand their options, build confidence and create space for meaningful conversations."

The impact of the retreats is already tangible, despite beginning only last year. One participant, initially unsure how to manage a new caregiving role, has since begun attending memory cafés and reconnecting with his community. Another Carer realised the importance of her own wellbeing and has taken up yoga as part of her self-care routine.

With retreats running regularly and plans to expand into regional areas, including Broome, the programme is growing. Expressions of interest remain open, helping to build a list of community members who could benefit from this unique experience.

By bringing people together, the Dementia Retreats are helping participants feel less alone and more prepared for the road ahead.

For more information, please contact dementiaretreat@scrosswa.org.au or call 1300 669 189.



Attendees of the Dementia Retreat enjoying a meal.

A place to regroup and rebuild

For people living with mental health challenges, taking the next step after a hospital stay can feel uncertain. Our Community Options program provides a supportive environment where people can regain confidence and rebuild their lives.

Community Options is a short-term residential program that offers 24/7 support in a safe, home-like setting. It supports people aged 18 to 65 who have experienced a long stay in hospital due to mental illness, helping them develop the skills and confidence to live independently in the community.

When Community Options client Maria first arrived, she was adjusting to life outside hospital and feeling unsure about what came next. Everyday tasks felt difficult, and reconnecting with others seemed overwhelming. What she needed most was time, support, and a steady path forward.

With the support of her Recovery Partner, Maria began rebuilding confidence through small, consistent steps. She established a daily routine, learned to prepare meals and gradually re-engaged with the community.

Over time, she also started reconnecting with her family, strengthening relationships that had been impacted.

SCCWA's approach is person-centred, working alongside each client to understand their goals and what matters most to them. Together, we develop a recovery plan that supports independence, wellbeing and connection to community.

Life within Community Options also plays an important role in recovery. Clients share meals and activities, creating a sense of belonging and helping to rebuild social confidence in a supportive and respectful environment.

Today, Maria is preparing for her next chapter. She is building the skills to live independently and exploring opportunities that reflect her interests and goals. Her journey reflects what is possible with the right support, environment and belief in each person's potential.

Discover more about how Community Options can support you: scrosswa.org.au/our-services/mental-health-support



When to consider respite

For many carers, the idea of respite is something that gets put off for longer than it should.

"Many carers don't reach out until they're already exhausted," says Steve Mitchell, Respite Coordinator at SCCWA. "There's a tendency to push through, but respite works best when it's introduced earlier."

Caring is deeply personal, but there are common signs it may be time to consider extra support.

1. When everyday life feels overwhelming

Caring roles often change, becoming more physically demanding, complex and less predictable. If daily care is taking more effort than it used to, respite can provide valuable breathing space.

2. When routines are disrupted

Poor sleep, increased supervision or difficulty leaving the house can place constant pressure on carers. Over time, these disruptions can affect wellbeing. Even small, planned breaks can help restore balance and reduce the risk of burnout.

3. When you are planning ahead

Respite is not only for times of crisis. Exploring options early allows time to build familiarity, ease transitions and find what works best before care needs change further.

Respite care is often more flexible than people expect. It does not have to mean leaving home or committing long term.

In-home respite allows a support worker to step in while the carer takes time away, whether for a few hours to run errands, attend appointments or rest, while the person receiving care remains in familiar surroundings.

Centre-based day respite offers a structured, social environment with activities, meals and companionship. It also gives carers time to work, manage family responsibilities, attend appointments, or take a break.

There are also options for overnight or short stay respite, either in a dedicated centre or at home.

SCCWA offers a range of respite options designed to feel welcoming and home like, with both day programs and overnight stays available. Access is available through several pathways. For those unsure where to begin, the first step is simply starting a conversation; to find out more, call 1300 669 189 or visit scrosswa.org.au/respite.

Take a break at one of our dedicated respite locations:

Hilton, WA: Tony Quinlan Respite Centre

Forrestfield, WA: Donovan House Respite Centre

Broome, WA: Bran Nu Dae*

**Daytime respite services only.*





Your extraordinary starts here.

T: 1300 669 189

W: scrosswa.org.au

