

CHAPTER

SUMMER 2021

MARIE BURLEY OAM

Aveo's very own
Florence Nightingale

A WEIGHT OFF

The advantages of
clutter-free living

TELEHEALTH

Why virtual medicine
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Welcome

to the Summer 2021 issue of *Chapter*, the magazine that celebrates you and the issues that concern you.

Of the opportunity to enter a New Year, someone very important once wrote *"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."*

While traditionally this is true, in 2020 few were given the chance to alter the way the year unfolded.

Fortunately, the calendar has again rolled over and 2021 affords us the opportunity to take back the controls. While the circumstances proved devastating for many, COVID-19 has taught us some invaluable life lessons.

So how will you apply these learnings to the year ahead?

Will you take the opportunity to touch base with long lost family members, will you head out on that road trip that you always talked about or will this be the year you finally learn that new language, skill or hobby that has been on your to-do list since you were a teenager?

This issue features an inspiring resident who has decided against having someone else pilot her journey. Marie Burley has made coming to the aid of others her life's purpose. This humble but charismatic Aveo Durack resident is a career nurse who was recently awarded an Order of Australia medal as thanks for her service to her community.

Rebecca Mezzino helps people too – the difference is those in need usually come to her. A professional organiser by trade, Rebecca finds herself playing a pivotal role in helping ease the anxiety of active seniors as they go about vacating their family home.

In this issue she shares her tips for helping older Australians minimise their psychological trauma when tackling the decluttering process.

We hope you enjoy the read.

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The compassionate carer

A distinguished life fellow, an award-winning nurse, a multi-linguist and a mean mah-jong player. From the moment this Aveo Durack resident entered the world she has proved an unstoppable force.

Marie Josephine Burley's mother was too busy to go to work. Her daughter, however, is too busy not to.

Nearing 90 but with the effervescence of someone a quarter of her age, Marie has dedicated her life to the service of others.

A frontline worker with a special interest in midwifery, Marie's career as a nurse took her on a journey from a local hospital in the Hunter region of New South Wales, to a posting with the World Health Organisation in Geneva, and a myriad of locations in between.

Her impeccable service record and extraordinary work ethic saw her receive the highest honour bestowed by the Australian College of Nursing when she was named a distinguished life fellow.

At the tender age of 88, the pragmatic grandmother of two was one of just a handful of healthcare staff to be named an Order of Australia medal (OAM) recipient in the 2019 Australian Day Honours List.

But it's not just those who have had an interaction with the health services who have benefited from her generosity.

A Justice of the Peace (JP) with 50 years' worth of

duties behind her, the Aveo Durack resident is a long-standing University of the Third Age (U3A) Gold Coast chapter tutor where, in addition to instructing on how to play the tile game mah-jong, she also teaches three languages.

At one time or another she has occupied almost all voluntary positions on U3A Broadbeach's executive committee.

A nurturer by nature

By virtue of birth, caring came second nature to Marie.

Raised in a small country town called Barellan, about 260km northwest of Canberra, she was born the eldest in a family of seven children and the only girl.

"My mother was a sweetheart, she helped everybody she could. She was constantly pregnant and as a result was a lady who never went to work – well, she didn't have time, did she? She had her last child when she was 46, so of course, at 12 years of age I already had a nurturing role."

While she proclaims she "bluffed her way" through intelligence tests, evidently Marie proved a smart and

willing student, winning a scholarship to study at a Catholic high School in Newcastle – a mere 670km from her childhood home.

Yet rather than send their only daughter to live miles away on her own, Marie's parents made the selfless decision to relocate the whole family to the state's second most populated city.

Out of her hands

With a midwife as her godmother and two aunties who were already in the profession, the die was cast early when it came to choosing her future career.

Marie says she briefly entertained becoming a doctor but the cost of studying medicine proved prohibitive for her large family who relied upon her father's single income – firstly as a bootmaker, then a caterer and latterly as a fitter and turner – on which to live.

Fate was to have other ideas, however.

"I'd always been told that I'd make a great nurse and when I mentioned that I'd like to be a doctor, the nurses took me aside and said to me 'look, the doctors are rarely in the hospital, they just do their rounds. We're the ones who do the work'. That was enough for me, I was hooked."

She took a job as a telephonist at the end of her schooling to bide her time until she was old enough to enter nursing college while her evenings were spent teaching ballroom dancing.

Her plan was to put enough money aside to purchase what she terms a "proper nurses watch".

"I'd always been told that I'd make a great nurse and when I mentioned that I'd like to be a doctor, the nurses took me aside and said to me 'look, the doctors are rarely in the hospital, they just do their rounds. We're the ones who do the work'. That was enough for me, I was hooked."

"I can't remember what I was paid, but I know it wasn't very much. I used to pay around £2 per week for the layby of my watch which was not much more than I earned at the time."

Marie completed her training in general nursing and midwifery at what was then known as the Newcastle Mater Misericordiae (now Calvary Mater Hospital).

She completed the five year course in 1954 and spent some time working in the maternity ward before making the brave decision to journey to South East England to study orthopaedic nursing at the famed Wingfield Morris Hospital in Oxfordshire.

In its early life, the hospital served as an auxiliary to the Third Southern General Hospital at the outbreak of the first world war, but by the mid-1950s Marie claims it was "the best orthopaedic hospital in the world".

"But that's only my opinion," she says.

Gifted with a spare 12-month period in which to await her passage home, rather than head off to see a bit of Europe, Marie again put others first taking on a role with the World Health Organisation in Switzerland, before her eventual return to Australia.

Giving life

While things were going well on the work front, things on the home front proved a mixed bag. Her first marriage ended prematurely but resulted in the birth of Ann-Maree, now 61 and following in her mother's footsteps working as a nursing unit manager.

Her second union also ended before its time but again it resulted in a much-adored child. And again it was of the female persuasion.

Melanie, now 49, decided against following the family career path and instead works as a chartered accountant because, Marie chuckles, she "cannot stand the sight of blood".

Lengthy contributions

There is a saying that goes 'if you want something done, ask a busy person' and so it proved true when it came to Marie's decades' long involvement with the Quota Club and unwavering commitment to her duties as a Justice of the Peace.

It was while she was attempting to juggle the hustle and bustle of family life with her role as a matron at a regional hospital that Marie was asked to join the Quota Club.





“I suppose I will retire at some stage, probably when I die. To me it’s quite simple... if there’s people willing to give there are always people in need.”

An American-based not for profit organisation that exists to help empower women and children and to assist people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech-impaired, the organisation’s mantra to “share and care through serving others” fitted in perfectly alongside Marie’s own desire to expand her contribution to the community around her.

It was around this time she was also approached to become a judicial officer.

“As far as patients were concerned, they often didn’t think they needed to see a JP until they were already in

hospital and thought their time had come. Noting how hard it was to find a JP in the middle of the night, a time when they were often required, the doctor said to me ‘you basically already live here, right, so why don’t you do it?’ I joined up soon after.”

Her next move

Armed with a quick wit, a great heart, a massive generosity of spirit and a pragmatic nature, typically Marie shies away from the spotlight.

While she admits receiving an OAM in recognition of her many years of service was a “great honour”, the site she has chosen to store her precious medal speaks volumes about both her humbleness and the way in which she lives her life.

While most recipients would choose to frame it or place it on display for all to see, Marie’s medal rests in its original box, in the middle of her wardrobe, gathering dust.

“It’s not in my nature to go spouting about what I have or haven’t done. I suppose I will retire at some stage, probably when I die. To me it’s quite simple... if there’s people willing to give there are always people in need.” ●



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aveo care at home

Online care

Before the impact of COVID-19, few of us had ever encountered telehealth. But just like many active seniors, could virtual medicine now be here for the long haul?

Lauded as much for its convenience as it is for its safety, virtual medicine is changing the way we ensure our healthcare needs are met.

To date, telephone, email and video have been the primary mediums used to deliver assessments, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and follow-up of patients remotely.

Designed to support face-to-face appointments, it rose to our collective consciousness after COVID-19 began challenging healthcare systems around the world.

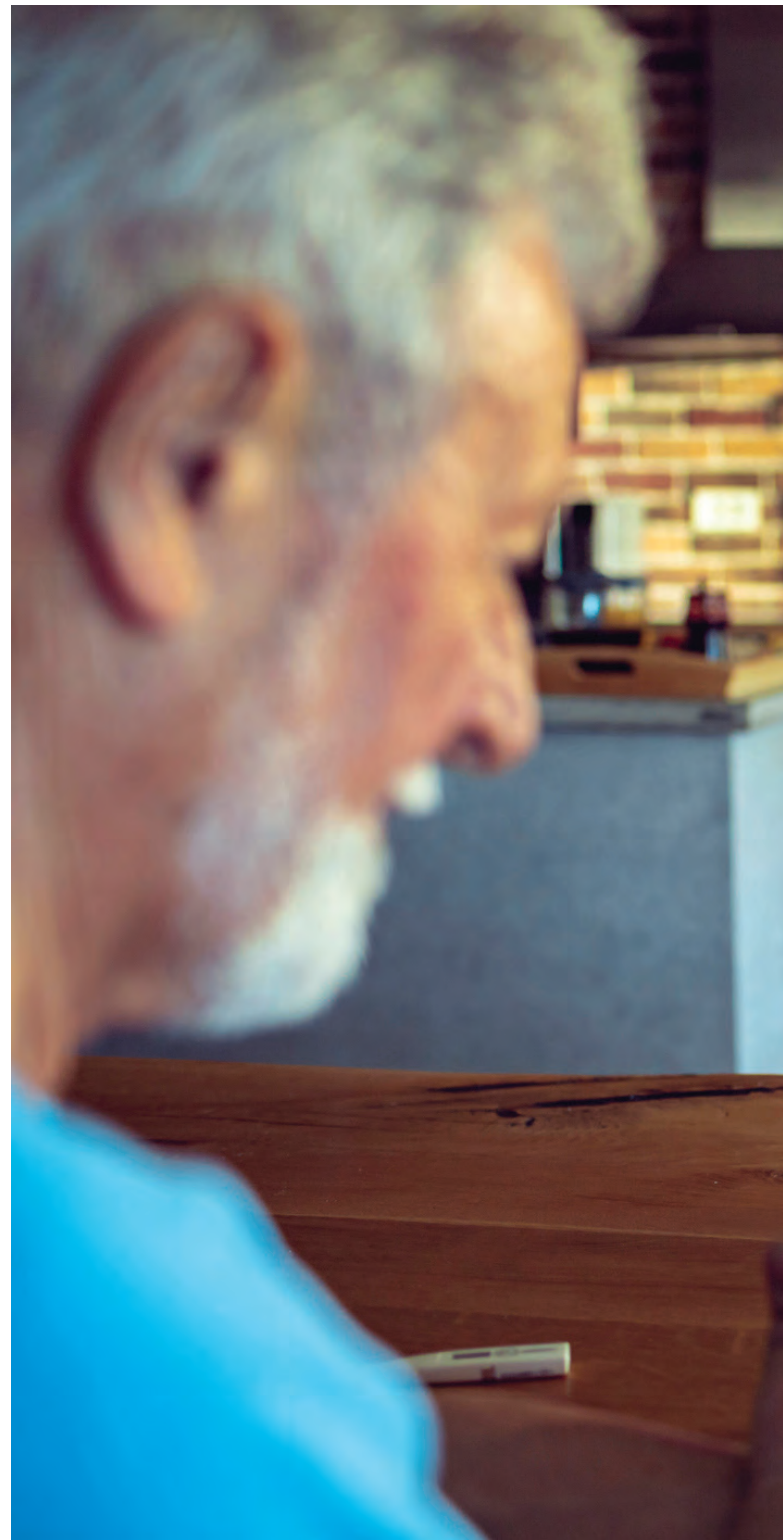
According to the Australian Medical Association, telehealth now accounts for 20% of all doctor consultations funded by the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Prior to March 2020, telehealth service offerings in Australia were generally limited to indigenous and aged care services where patients were more than 15km from their GP.

However all that changed with the arrival of COVID-19 where, as part of its pandemic response, the federal government temporarily increased access to more than 280 bulk billed telehealth and telephone services, and fast tracked electronic prescribing of medicine.

Services featured in the revised MBS schedule include general practitioners (GPs), specialists, allied health and nurse practitioner appointments and after-hours consultations, chronic disease management, pregnancy support counselling, services to patients in aged care facilities and mental health treatment.

Australians proved quick to embrace telehealth services,



and the use of telehealth soared. It was credited with helping to stop the spread of the virus, and in turn helping to save lives by protecting both patients and frontline health professionals.

It also helped spur innovation when, eager to find new ways of communicating, South Australia Health amped up its digital health offering by making available Microsoft Teams to 40,000 of its staff to build its remote working capabilities.



The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney took a different approach and instead capitalised on increased demand for telehealth services by opening the country's first virtual ward in a purpose-built space on the hospital campus.

How long has it been around?

Despite popular opinion, the delivery of health care from a distance is not a concept introduced solely to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Prior to COVID-19, GP telehealth services in Australia were underutilised and occurred in three main contexts: in accordance with existing MBS item numbers; through hospital outpatient departments; or as part of commercial services where patients paid the full cost for their consultations. The temporary MBS item numbers made it much more accessible.

Due in part to the fact its population is so dispersed, Queensland has been the country's leader in telehealth

implementation and research for many years.

For some time now, telehealth has been used as back up to the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service, while organisations such as BUSHkids have implemented telehealth to communicate with children and families living remotely who wouldn't otherwise have access to such services.

From 2003 to 2019, the state even had its own Centre of Research Excellence in Telehealth.

However as recently as 2018, many medical experts were lamenting Australian doctors' slow uptake of digital health technology and investigating new ways to bring specialists into the computer age.

Does it work?

CEDA, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, commissioned independent, not-for-profit organisation the Sax Institute to investigate 20 different reviews that had been done on telemedicine and virtual hospitals.

Its findings revealed the efficacy of virtual services was positive – unless you are a cancer patient or one who has respiratory disease.

"These studies largely found that the interventions were either as good as or better than usual care at reducing hospitalisations, re-admissions, emergency department visits and length of stay," CEDA found.

Clinically, studies again showed outcomes as good as usual care for heart-related or all-cause mortality, as well as for quality of life, hypo- and hyperglycaemia, BMI, cholesterol levels, blood pressure and mental health.

CEDA says the evidence also suggests that tele-monitoring, or the electronic transmission of health data, could have a significant impact on all-cause and heart failure related mortality.

"Overall, we found that the strongest clinical evidence for tele-healthcare and tele-monitoring was for patients with heart failure or coronary artery disease, for diabetes and for stroke rehabilitation. There is not so much evidence around its efficacy for cancer, and the

The Australian Medical Association has also thrown its weight behind the permanent adoption of telehealth arguing it will reduce costs across the health system while improving patient outcomes.

evidence for respiratory disease was not conclusive."

Will it stay?

October's federal budget confirmed a six-month extension of Medicare subsidies for telehealth consultations to March 2021, part of which included \$18.6 million for the preparation of permanent telehealth infrastructure beyond that period.

The Australian Medical Association has also thrown its weight behind the permanent adoption of telehealth arguing it will reduce costs across the health system while improving patient outcomes.

"Travel costs, including fuel, meals, and potentially accommodation increase with patient rurality, and can present a barrier to accessing care," AMA says.

"Telehealth can also reduce the cost of providing health care when considering the costs associated with health professionals needing to travel for home visits, and the cost to the government for rural aeromedical evacuation and health care in institutions like correctional facilities."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that older Australians are gunning for continued access to telehealth now and into the future.

A report released in September by the Global Centre for Modern Ageing (GCMA) found that Australia's active seniors had embraced the move to telehealth services and were happy to continue using the service post-coronavirus.

The report, *Telehealth – Here to stay*, found that one in five older Australians (20%) reported taking part in an online appointment or consultation with a health professional during COVID-19.

When it came to phone and online consultations, 85% of older Australians felt the quality of care/treatment provided during their telehealth experience was the same or better than a face-to-face consultation.

The report also showed 67% of Australians aged 60 or over who had used telehealth during the pandemic felt confident to use it in the future and nearly one in two of those surveyed say they are likely to use it after the pandemic.



However the news about telehealth wasn't all sweetness and light, with 38% of Australians aged over 60 noting they had experienced "some" concerns and difficulties using telehealth. These issues included:

- An inability to have a problem examined/receive usual treatment
- A less personal experience due to lack of body language and cues, less perceived warmth and less perceived care
- Challenges for people with hearing impairment
- Awkwardness, especially with a new clinician
- Tech glitches, lack of appropriate tech and lack of tech confidence.

In recognising some of the benefits of telehealth, the key representative body for Australian general practitioners The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) says providing on-demand telehealth services to patients may result in less time and fewer resources spent on routine care, including fewer routine home visits.

It also offers improved access to care for patients with mobility issues and reduced patient costs as a result of savings on transport.

However it argues that telehealth also presents a number of risks to both GPs and patients particularly when a patient is not known by the GP or practice offering the service.

This could result in fragmented or compromised quality of care as a result of an increased likelihood the service will focus solely on the issue presented by the patient and the opportunity to provide additional primary preventive care may be missed.

The industry group also says the provision of some advice or medicines without a physical examination or access to documented medical history can also potentially compromise continuity of care and best practice principles and says these situations may result in fragmented care and poor health outcomes.

When all is said and done the RACGP says maintaining continuity of care is essential, "irrespective of whether a service is provided face-to-face or by telehealth". ●

Change can be scary but with the right guidance, moving into a smaller space need not be the traumatic experience it's sometimes made out to be.

Having written extensively on the subject in her book, *Letting Go: How to choose freedom over clutter* – she says clutter is less about belongings and more about what's going on inside the mind.

The findings correlate with

“Downsizing is definitely a life changing event, as the home may have decades of memories so discarding some of the contents can be difficult.”



new home prior to making decisions about what furniture to take or to cull prior to making the move, Mezzino says.

"Take a tape measure and a list of what major furniture pieces you're thinking of taking and make a plan of what will go where. Measure up how much storage space you'll have in the new kitchen, line cupboards and especially, hanging space in the bedrooms."

Take the emotion out of it

Julia Zaetta, who spent 30 years as

editor-in-chief of *Better Homes and Gardens*, and who recently hosted a forum for active seniors on this very topic, recommends that when it comes to organising what items to keep and what to divest, a step-by-step approach typically works best.

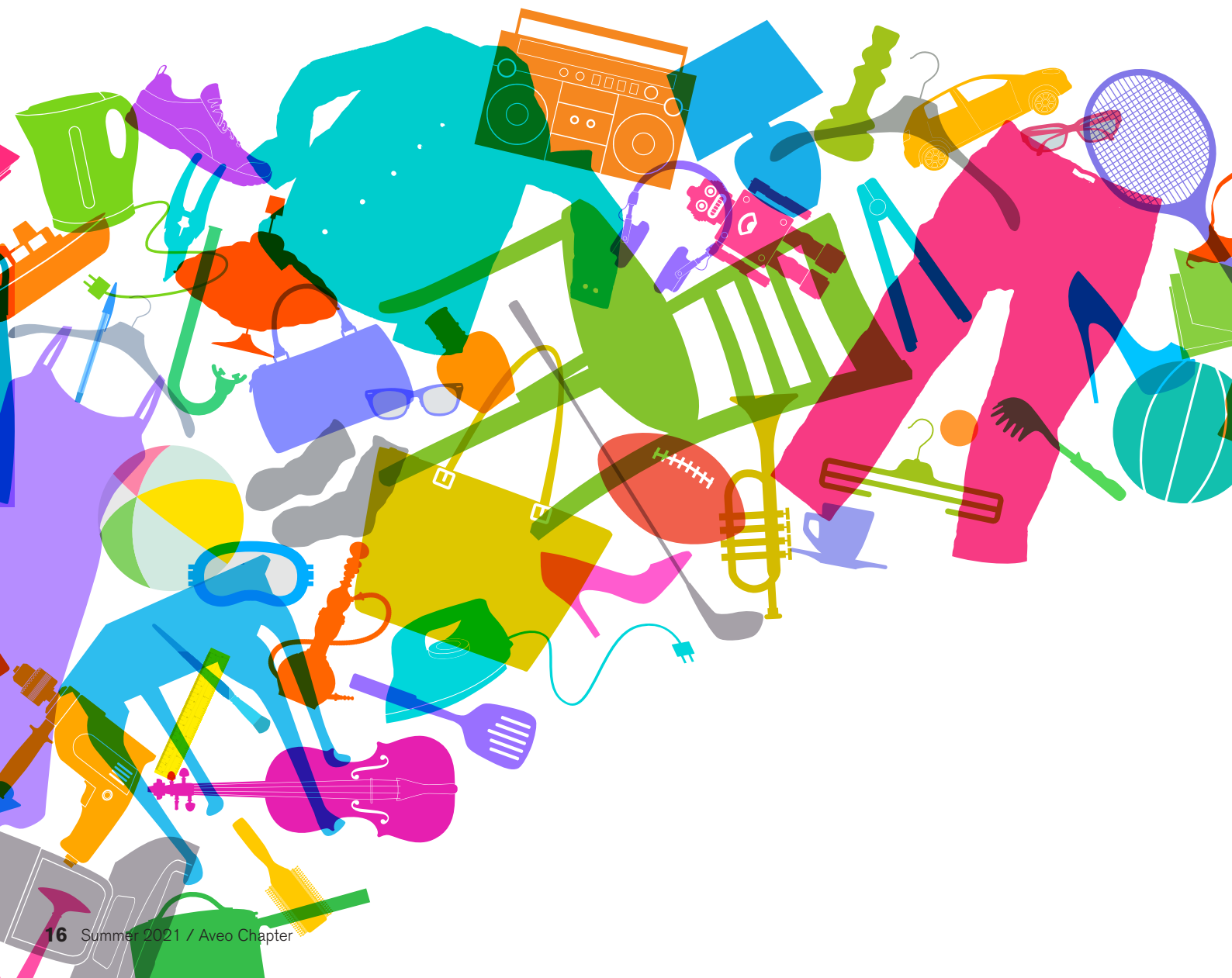
“Sit and look at your smaller items – remember why you have them, then ask yourself ‘is that story still valuable to me today’. If you’re not sure if their story still has value, put the item somewhere you won’t see it for a while. If you’re really torn on an item, put it away for even longer.

If you don't miss it, you can let it go. Appraise your larger items in the same way."

Be methodical

Mezzino, who helps her clients manage the move from start to finish, says that when it comes to the order in which you should undertake the decluttering process, it's always best to finish one area before starting the next.

Work first on a room that isn't used, so that it can become your staging area where you put



unwanted items until you can get them sold or donated.

"Then work on other rarely-used rooms and work your way up to the kitchen, the last one. Pack your wanted items as you go, packing unused items first such as decorative pieces, memorabilia, books and old paperwork."

By not moving onto the next room before you have made a decision on every item in the current room, you will not only save any confusion but more readily be able to keep track of your progress, she says. ●



Aveo has home clearing experts in each state able to work with you to declutter your home ahead of an anticipated move into one of our communities. For information on how to get in touch with them or to learn more expert tips about decluttering visit aveo.com.au and click on the blog and news tab.



Interior design firm **Valiant Interiors** specialise in helping active seniors envision how a space might function for both liveability and aesthetic appeal. Below, interiors account manager **Kristy-Lee Michael** offers her tips on how best to style small spaces.

- **Keep it light!** Using light, bright colours creates a sense of space and openness. You can do this by selecting light coloured fabrics for upholstered items and light timbers such as oak for larger furniture items.
- **Minimise sharp edges and corners.** Maintaining easy access is key to a comfortable living environment. Selecting round or oval shapes for coffee and dining tables ensures there's no risk of bumping into nasty corners. Curved shapes also create a greater sense of flow and movement throughout a space.
- **Utilise vertical space.** Tall display cabinets can be a great way to maximise your vertical storage space. Just remember to keep the finishes light and bright so your cabinets don't close the room in.
- **Keep it open under.** Select furniture with legs or open shelves, rather than pieces that run straight to the floor. Being able to see through or underneath an item helps to create a greater sense of space.
- **Walls are valuable visual real estate.** You can add personality to your home without adding too much clutter with a cleverly curated art collection.
- **Tuck it in!** Sourcing dining chairs that fit neatly under your dining table can provide much needed room for movement when the dining table isn't in use.

Source: valiant.com.au/interiors



A helping hand

Pain and stiffness in the fingers and wrists are commonly associated with arthritis, but there are steps you can take to lessen any impact.

Have you noticed your hands and wrists not working like they used to? Perhaps opening that new jar of jam has become impossible, turning the key in the door causes a twinge of pain or using a knife and fork have become more difficult.

Loss of grip strength in the hands, feeling stiff in the fingers, swelling or pain in any joints of the hands or wrist can all be a sign of arthritis.

Arthritis is a general term for conditions that affect the normal function of your joints, muscles, bones and

surrounding structures. Osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are common types of arthritis that can affect virtually any joint in the body.

It's important to know which type of arthritis you have, as treatment can be different for different types of arthritis. Seek the help of a medical professional if you have not had a proper diagnosis for your arthritis.

If you are finding day-to-day life more challenging due to arthritis, there are some self-management strategies you can try that can assist.

Take notice of the pain and change your activity accordingly

Don't ignore arthritic pain, as pain can be a signal that the joints, bones and muscles need to have a rest. It's important that you don't completely give up activity though, but you may be able to alter the way you do a task or take regular breaks in between.

Take knitting for example. If you are finding your hands are aching after a knitting session, instead of cutting out your hobby entirely, try to break up your knitting sessions into shorter intervals, giving your hands a rest and a chance to stretch into different positions.

Use larger joints when possible

Larger joints tend to be stronger, as there are more surrounding muscles and supportive structures. When carrying heavy items, such as groceries, try to carry bags on your shoulders if possible rather than in your hands. It will reduce the amount of strain on your painful joints.

When doing certain repetitive movement tasks, such as stirring ingredients in a bowl, try not to limit the movement to one particular joint. Share the movement across more joints or get some stronger muscles involved. Try to also spread the load out where possible, using two hands instead of one for instance.

Utilise helpful tools and equipment

There is an abundance of assistive devices out there to make your life easier. Things like special devices to help make opening jars easier or thicker handles for kitchen utensils to make gripping more comfortable. You'll be surprised how many helpful tools are available on the market.

Heat and ice packs

Do you wake up feeling very stiff and sore, but a warm shower gets the bones moving again? Heat packs or even

It's important to remember that movement and exercise does not mean you are damaging your joints further.

just running your hands under some warm water, can help to provide some temporary relief to stiffness, whereas cold or ice packs can help to provide some relief for swollen joints. If you're unsure whether heat or cold is the right one for you, a physiotherapist can help you out.

Keep active! Gentle stretches and regular movement

It's important to remember that movement and exercise does not mean you are damaging your joints further. Exercise, stretches and gentle movements are all recommended in managing your arthritis.

Some simple hand exercises to try:

1. Opening and closing your hand – stretch the fingers all the way out and then close your hand into a fist. Do this slowly and repeat eight times
2. Relax your fingers and gently roll your wrists in circles – complete five circles clockwise and five circles anti-clockwise
3. Stretch open all of your fingers with the palm facing upwards – starting with the thumb, gently bend each finger, one at a time, towards the centre of your palm. If you can't touch the palm with the bent finger, that is okay. Just bend as far as is comfortable for you and then straighten the finger back up.

One final word

Seek the help of a physiotherapist for a tailored exercise program that will help to manage your arthritis. Strengthening the muscles and supportive structures in your hands, wrists and arms can help to take the load off the sore bones and joints and keep you doing the things that you love to do. ●

The Physio Co helps improve the lives of active seniors. It services 11 areas across NSW, VIC, SA and TAS. Visit **www.thephysioco.com.au** or call on **1300 797 793** to find out more.



Aveo community spirit

With big smiles and generous hearts, Aveo communities have been doing what they can to come together while being apart. Here's a snapshot of what some of them have been up to.



Sweet music

Physically distanced musical performances during lockdown helped keep spirits high at Aveo Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, Victoria. Musician and singer Alan, who taught himself the autoharp eight years ago, entertains the masses from his lounge room. He also makes short music videos for his fellow residents four to five times a week which are then posted to the community's social media to be enjoyed by residents at their leisure.

The gift of giving

The spirit of giving is alive and well at Aveo Newcastle, with residents raising more than \$14,000 to gift to selected charities over the past 18 months. Breast cancer charity Project Pink was among the largest recipients, receiving a total of \$500 from the bar committee, together with a further \$7,220 from fundraising initiatives conducted across 2019 and 2020. The Leukemia Foundation's Shave for a Cure initiative was the next biggest winner, receiving \$3,400 of the funds raised by residents, who also donated a further \$3,000 to the Johnston family who were victims of the New Year bush fires. A cash donation of \$250 from the bar committee was presented to Nova Newcastle's 2019 Christmas appeal while residents generously donated 177 gifts which were placed under the radio station's giving tree.

A winter fair was also held (pictured right), the highlight of which featured residents manning stalls featuring their own craft, jewellery, art, photography, cakes and quilts. Proceeds from the day were given to charities including Ronald McDonald House and the Autoimmune Research and Resource Centre. Owing to the success of the event, there is now talk of making it a regular occurrence.





A star of our own

Aveo Veronica Gardens in Northcote can now claim to have one of the best village managers in the business. Kelvin Lloyd has been recognised by the Retirement Living Council as its 2020 Regional Village Manager of the Year for Victoria and Tasmania. The awards are based on the work nominees do within their village, and how they are making a positive contribution to ensure resident happiness, including providing a financially successful environment and going 'above and beyond'.

Taking to the street

It is often said that some good usually comes out of something bad. Pre-COVID-19 there was just one resident cyclist at Aveo The Parks in Cairns. However, since the pandemic and the restrictions on social gatherings, more residents have started to walk and cycle round the village with 15 or more now making it part of their daily routine. Walkers and cyclists are now finding the time to socially interact with other residents during their daily exercise, and what used to be a quick walk or cycle is now taking much longer with all the stops for chats with neighbours.



Community shopping

Fresh produce, baked goods and a home delivery service are among the new offerings being touted by Aveo Mountain View's revamped community shop in Murwillumbah. The shop, founded nearly 30 years ago, began life as an onsite craft shop with only a few sundry items for the convenience of residents. However in recent months the store – which also sells resident art and craft items on commission – has ramped up its offering, allowing it to give away thousands of dollars to charities such as Project Pink and the Bushfire Appeal.



Urban agricultural tribute

Residents at Aveo Durack recently gathered for an Ekka-inspired event, complete with delicious food, quirky costumes and a fantastic musical performance from Tim McCallum. Even the Ekka's iconic strawberry sundaes made an appearance, which could be purchased in support of The Common Good to raise vital funds for the Prince Charles Hospital. It was such a fantastic day, and it was great to see the residents getting involved!



Hippy Days

A trip down memory lane was the order of the day for Freedom Morayfield residents when they chose to commemorate Queensland Seniors Week with a specially-themed Hippy Day. Residents were encouraged to revisit their 60s wardrobes while sharing in a range of activities – including fortune telling and great musical hits – to mark the occasion.



The good life

From little things big things grow is clearly the mantra of Tasmania's Aveo Derwent Waters. In 2018 enterprising resident Pat Mavromatis began planting cuttings to sell at the community's annual Christmas market. Demonstrating their commitment to care for each other and the community in which they live, fellow enthusiasts soon lent a hand and the seed for a year-round plant stall was planted. However, the garden doesn't stop at plants with residents now reviving the village's communal vegetable garden, with all produce shared with the community kitchen and distributed among fellow residents.



We would love to hear from you!

For your chance to appear on these pages please send us details of fun events, fundraising initiatives, or just something interesting your community has been up to! Our top 10 submissions will receive a copy of *Live Life Cook*. Email us at: chapter@aveo.com.au





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Motoring around the country

COVID-19 has changed the way Australia's active seniors are planning to holiday now and in the future.



While Australia's COVID-19 response has been praised around the world, it seems we're not out of the woods yet.

With the World Travel Organisation predicting that international travel could be off the table until at least 2022 and many of us reluctant to fly domestic routes thanks to the global pandemic, a growing number of Australians are looking to motorised vehicles as their preferred travel option.

Suited to those looking for a more comfortable holiday, a motorhome – sometimes referred to as an RV (recreational vehicle) – is a motor vehicle built on a truck or bus chassis and designed to serve as self-contained living quarters.

One of the great things about exploring different parts of the country in a vehicle that has your transport and accommodation all contained within is that a regular car licence is all that is

needed to drive motorhomes weighing less than 3,500kg.

Now a \$155 million industry in Australia, there are around 620,000 motorhomes and other recreational vehicles registered here with an estimated 135,000 vehicles on the road at any time.

Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) marketing and communications officer Tess Bertoldi says RV drivers spend an average of \$770 per week however their value extends beyond economic capital to human capital with grey nomads often providing labour (such as gardening, house-sitting or their pre-retirement professional skills) in exchange for a place to park or for extra income.

She agrees this type of lifestyle is hugely popular among senior Australian holidaymakers, with around 80% of its membership base aged 65 or over.

Bertoldi says because the RV lifestyle is unlike any other forms of travel, it appeals more to those in this age bracket, as unlike traditional camping or commercial touring, it is both slow and relaxing.

"You are never tied down to a set itinerary unless you want to be and this suits Grey Nomads (those over 55s who travel in RVs for extended periods of time). You get to set your own pace; you do not need to rely on other people, and it is relaxing. There's minimal time setting up and packing up, and most of the time you have everything you need right with you.

"Setting your own schedule is more appealing than following someone else's schedule too."

One of the chief points expressed by the sector's is about the perceived costs of the lifestyle. However, this isn't always the case.

Bertoldi says those looking to purchase a motorhome can enter the RV lifestyle for an investment as little as \$20,000-\$30,000.

While purchasing a vehicle is more cost-effective long term, it is not your only option.

They can also be rented and here too the size of the vehicle you choose will have a big impact on how much you are likely to pay.

Available through commercial hire operators such as Apollo, Britz or Kea, or through private rental sites such as Camplify or CampToo, the average price of a two-seater motorhome sits at between \$50 and \$75 (excluding insurances and fuel) a day depending if it is low or high season.

For a four-seater prices range for between \$125 and \$145 while a six-berth motorhome will set you back between \$200 and \$400 in daily rental fees.

A two-seater motorhome only has a driver's seat and a passenger's seat leaving ample room for other features, including a shower cabin and toilet. The body of the motorhome typically contains a kitchenette, a workbench, and a table with benches that can be configured into either two single beds or one double/queen.

The two-seater style of the motorhome is ideal for those travelling alone or in a pair and because it is much smaller than four or six-seater ranges. It is also easier to park and drive and cheaper to fill.

Active seniors who prefer a little more space often opt for a four or six-seater vehicle which usually has additional entry places as well as extra seats in the dining area and a space above the driver's cab that converts into an extra bed.

"There are motorhomes and other

"The RV lifestyle can be addictive. Australia is a big place, with many stunning destinations to be explored."

RV types to suit every lifestyle, choice and budget," Bertoldi says.

"You can settle for the necessities or bring all your creature comforts along with you for the ride. Additionally, other costs to factor in include registration, insurance and roadside assistance."

Bertoldi suggests those considering trying motorhoming should first speak with experienced RVers to find out what they like and dislike about the lifestyle, as well as their vehicle preferences.

It is worthwhile gathering as much information as possible and using it to help in the decision-making process, she says.

"Do not be alarmed when you still find yourself learning new things well after your first trip. You will continue to find easier ways of doing things

or ways to modify and improve your vehicle, to make it your home away from home (or your permanent home).

"We do recommend trying before buying; not to get a taste of the lifestyle, there is no doubt you are going to love it, but to get a feel for the type of vehicle you may consider purchasing.

"The RV lifestyle can be addictive. Australia is a big place, with many stunning destinations to be explored. There truly is no better way to explore our own country." ●

Several Aveo communities already offer parking space for residents who own motorhomes or caravans to park them onsite. These include Aveo Amity Gardens on the Gold Coast, Victoria's Hunters Green and Aveo Island Point, in St George's Basin.



Tuna Bean Salad

Serves: **2-3** Prep time: **30 mins** Cooking time: **None**

Ingredients

1 x 400g can cannellini, drained and rinsed
½ red onion, finely chopped
1 tsp red wine vinegar, plus extra to taste
1 x 185g can tuna in oil
2 tbs fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 tbs capers, coarsely chopped
1 tbs extra virgin olive oil
Freshly cracked black pepper

Method

1. Put the beans into shallow bowl. Add the onion and sprinkle with wine vinegar. Stir gently and allow to stand for 5 minutes.
2. Add the tuna and parsley and mix gently to combine. Add the capers, olive oil and a little more vinegar to taste. Season generously with black pepper.

To serve

This is a versatile salad that can be served on its own, as part of an antipasto selection or on bruschetta.



Raspberry Queen of Puddings

Serves: **6-8** Prep time: **40 mins** Cooking time: **45 mins**

Ingredients

600ml milk
1 vanilla bean, split
125g fresh breadcrumbs
75g caster sugar
Zest of 1 orange
50g butter
3 large eggs, separated
1/3 cup raspberry jam
125g fresh raspberries
1/4 cup caster sugar
Cream, to serve

Method

1. Add milk and vanilla bean to a saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from heat and stir in breadcrumbs, sugar, orange zest and butter. Leave to sit for 20 minutes to allow the breadcrumbs to absorb the mixture.
2. Pre-heat oven to 180°C.
3. In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg yolks. Add yolks to the cooled breadcrumb mixture and stir to combine.

4. Pour mixture into a deep pie dish. Place in the oven for 30–35 minutes or until set.
5. While the pudding is cooking, heat raspberry jam in a small saucepan. Stir through raspberries.
6. Carefully pour the melted jam mixture over the top of the cooking pudding.
7. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Continue beating and gradually add sugar until glossy.
8. Spoon mixture on top of jam and return the pudding to the oven for a further 10–15 minutes.

To serve

Spoon pudding onto plates and serve with cream.



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video cooking classes, visit
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Mental ambition

Ensuring your brain remains engaged is important for cognitive function and may reduce your chances of developing dementia.

The brain is one of the most adaptive organs humans possess.

Yet while neuroscientists continue to argue over whether we have our full quota of brain cells by the time we approach adulthood or whether we can make fresh neurons well into old age, few deny the part that mentally stimulating activity plays in creating a healthy lifestyle.

It is also associated with better cognitive function and reduced cognitive decline.

Dementia Australia says keeping the brain active helps build reserves of healthy brain cells and connections between them.

It says that while more research is being done to better understand the mechanisms of the link with mental exercise and reduced dementia risk, participating in activities such as listening to the radio, visiting museums, playing musical instruments and doing crosswords or other puzzles may help delay the onset of dementia.

"Many of these activities involve social interaction and physical activity as well. Recent research suggests that combining mental, social and physical components in leisure activities offers the greatest benefit in terms of reducing dementia risk."

There is also evidence that cognitive and functional decline in people with dementia may be delayed by continued participation in mentally stimulating activities.

When it comes to those already living with dementia, Dementia Australia suggests they should be encouraged, "as far as possible" to maintain their usual hobbies and mental exercise activities.

"While adjustments may be needed as dementia progresses, keeping socially involved and mentally active may be important for the person's cognition, daily functioning and mental wellbeing," it says.

Keeping involved and active in the things they enjoy is extremely important for people living with dementia. Such exercises can include everything from reading a book aloud and dancing to imagery exercises – such as recalling a peaceful nature scene – designed to stimulate the senses.

Rather than giving up activities that are becoming difficult, it may be possible to modify the activity or break it down into manageable parts.

"Interaction with other people, social participation and communication may be as important for the person with dementia as any direct benefits from mental activity itself. Avoid choosing activities that are beyond the person's capabilities as this may result in frustration and a sense of failure," the organisation says.

Whether you're utilising mental exercises to improve your cognitive function or assisting someone already living with dementia to reduce their cognitive decline, it's vitally important



that any type of stress is kept at bay.

This is because excessive stress can result in reduced memory capacity, as well as adverse physical responses such as poor sleep.

Dementia Australia says that for people with dementia, avoiding doing more than they can cope with or more than one thing at a time can help prevent stress.

"Both physical and mental exercise are very good ways of dealing with stress and with its accompanying effects. Using the brain to undertake challenging tasks may remove attention from some of the causes of stress." ●

Many of our Freedom Care Communities offer diversional therapy programs to support residents living with dementia. To find out more, visit **freedomcarecommunities.com.au**



Rightsizing your life

Rightsizing is a process all active seniors will have to go through at one stage in their lives. But what is it and what impact can it have on how you live out your future?

Downsizing isn't about living in a tiny home – unless of course you want to. Instead, it's about rightsizing your home for the next chapter in life.

That's the opinion of personal finance expert Noel Whittaker who recently teamed up with aged care guru Rachel Lane to write a book, *Downsizing Made Simple*, which seeks to investigate the issue.

Aveo recently partnered with the pair in an online masterclass, *Everything you need to know about retirement community living*. Moderated by Starts at 60 CEO Rebecca Wilson, the panellists discuss how downsizing can impact your pension and finances, the costs involved in retirement living, understanding retirement village contracts and more.

The webinar invited viewers to submit questions of interest a selection of which are featured here.

What type of retirement living should I choose?

You have an amazing range of options available to you. You may want to buy a new freehold home; move into a strata-title apartment or townhouse; choose a retirement community; explore a mobile home; or establish a granny flat or other collaborative living arrangement.

Remember, there is no right or wrong or best when it comes to downsizing decisions. There is only the one that best suits you.

What if I'm not ready to take the plunge?

When did you last live with your children? If you're thinking of moving in with one of them – and their partner – perhaps you should give it a whirl before you commit.

Similarly, if your next move is to a new community, it



may be wise to rent for a period of time before you commit to buying.

If you're trying to find the right retirement community, the thing that will most influence your ability to enjoy the village is probably going to be something you can't see or touch – to quote that great Australian movie *The Castle*: "It's the vibe".

Many communities have open days and functions people considering moving to the village can attend. Do it. Some communities let people try before they buy. If this option is available, seriously consider moving in for a short stay.

This will be the best test for whether you will enjoy living in the village.

I think that I am ready to begin downsizing, but what should my first priorities be?

Where you live affects how you live, and it's one thing you can't change without moving again.

You might long for a sea change or a tree change. If you dream of spending hours walking along a beach or days in the mountains reading a book in front of an open fire, ask yourself if these things you will actually do? As you age, are your capabilities changing?

Do you want to be near friends and family? You may want to move closer – or further away from – certain people.

And what about proximity to care and medical services? You may be fit and active now, but if that changes you will want to stay at home, in the place you know and love.

Take time to think about what activities you enjoy doing, or hope to enjoy doing. Bear in mind the more facilities and activities the village provides, the higher the ongoing service charges are likely to be.

If I buy in a retirement village am I considered the homeowner for aged pension terms?

Whether or not you are a homeowner depends on how much you pay. If you move into a retirement village and you pay less than \$214,500 you are not considered a homeowner.

The amount you've paid for your home is included in your pension assets but as a non-homeowner you get an extra \$214,500 in the asset test threshold. The benefit of that is that you may then be eligible to receive rent assistance based on the ongoing amount that you're paying to live in the village.

In the event you pay more than \$214,501 you are

To watch the full version of *Everything you need to know about retirement community living* go to:
www.aveo.com.au/retirementwebinar

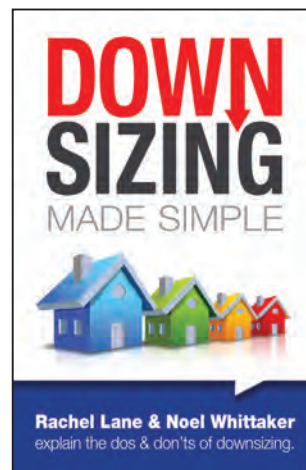


"Take time to think about what activities you enjoy doing, or hope to enjoy doing. Bear in mind the more facilities and activities the village provides."

considered a homeowner for pension purposes therefore the normal rules apply. Your home is an exempt asset and you will need to meet homeowner asset test threshold. You will not qualify for rent assistance.

Do retirement villages typically charge to pass the contract to you for sighting prior to you signing such a document?

No. When it comes to the ingoing bucket, sometimes there can be fees to have your contract prepared or have your leasehold registered on the operator's title. However, it is almost unheard of for the operator to charge you to look at the contract or to withhold that type of information. On that note, it is also worth noting that with most retirement village contracts there is a legal clause that means operators can't let you sign within a certain time frame of receipt of the contract. This is to protect against rash decision making. ●



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Aveo Hunters Green



Aveo Hunters Green is a social and vibrant community located within easy reach of some of Victoria's most picturesque locations.

Aveo Hunters Green is the very epitome of having your cake and eating it too.

Situated in Victoria's Cranbourne East, it is a community that quite literally boasts the perfect ingredients to make retirement living easy.

Community Manager Zelda Horner says the community's biggest drawcard is that the assortment of activities

available both within and nearby to Aveo Hunters Green means residents are spoilt for choice when it comes to how they spend their leisure time.

"You can make the community your home and have everything at your fingertips... or you can use the community as a home base and travel until you are ready to come home," Zelda says.

Located just 30 minutes from the Mornington Peninsula and less than an hour from downtown Melbourne, the village lies opposite a boutique shopping centre that contains a selection of supermarkets, chemists and other conveniences.

Aveo Hunters Green is an independent living community that was brought to life in 2006. It



welcomed its first resident in January 2007.

Since that date, the community has grown exponentially to the point where it can now accommodate 210 two-bedroom, two-bedroom plus study and three-bedroom units and villas. Each includes a modern kitchen with plentiful storage, a large open courtyard and internal access garaging.

Drawn by the community's proximity to the city and relaxed country charm, one of the reasons many residents claim it is one of the best offerings in the region is due to the

fact it contains a number of unique amenities, Zelda says.

One of only three community in Aveo's Victorian portfolio to contain an indoor heated swimming pool. Other onsite facilities include a resident-run bar, a library and computer room, a resident workshop and hair salon.

Determined to ensure the health and wellness of residents remains a top priority, there is also a fully equipped gymnasium, community vegetable garden and arts and crafts room.

Aveo Hunters Green is the very epitome of having your cake and eating it too.

Zelda says there are also a number of extra-curricular activities on offer to assist residents in their attempts to be more physically, psychologically and socially active.

These include Tai Chi, indoor and outdoor bowls, billiards, relaxation classes, social water exercise classes, line dancing, movie night, bingo and craft sessions as well as personal training and arthritis exercise classes.

Offsite options include bus trips to the movies or theatre and pop-up fashion parades.

For those who prefer to stay closer to home, Zelda says the community also has an active social calendar in terms of third party guests and onsite performances.

To this end, it has developed close relationships with many schools and volunteer groups in the area and regularly plays host to students from the Cranbourne East Secondary College, Cranbourne East Primary School Choir, Milestones Early Learning Kinder and charity organisation Back Pack 4 Vic Kids.

Prices at Aveo Hunters Green start from \$389,000 to \$425,000 for a two-bedroom villa depending on size and location. ●

For more information on Aveo Hunters Green visit aveo.com.au/hunters-green



Meet the Trimmells

Aveo communities are filled with residents with interesting stories. You may be surprised why this couple moved into Aveo Hunters Green during a state-wide lockdown.

Can you tell us a little about yourselves? My name is Jenny and my interests include vintage wares, gardening and my family. I am married to David, his interests revolve around car racing and family. We first met at school 43 years ago and we have now been married for 38 years. Together we have two sons, Ashleigh and Jarryd. We have one granddaughter, one grandson and another on the way.

What were your professions prior to your retirements?

I was at Woolworths for 30-plus years and David was in the caravan/RV industry for 14 years and previous to that worked in the white goods sector for 20 years. Currently we run a small vintage stall in Tyabb.

You moved into Aveo Hunters Green in the midst of a global pandemic. What factors convinced you the timing was right? We moved in during Victoria's COVID lockdown. In February we put our family home on the market but the impact of the pandemic meant house inspections were halted. Around the same time David was unexpectedly made redundant from his position, a job we had assumed would take him through to retirement. This pointed us in the direction of Aveo Hunters Green as we wanted to remain debt free and because it was positioned halfway between our two sons and 10 minutes' drive from our friends and family.

How did you know Aveo Hunters Green was the right place for you? Because we loved the location, the affordability, the fact it was a new unit and were impressed with the overall facilities. Physically we will be better off here in the long run with less garden and home maintenance and the ability to pack up and travel with ease knowing our home is cared for. After dealing with our elderly parents we feel we have been proactive in downsizing and moving forward in a positive manner without putting all the stress on our children in the future.



“We have future-proofed ourselves and now feel we have added years to our lives. Bring on the serenity.”

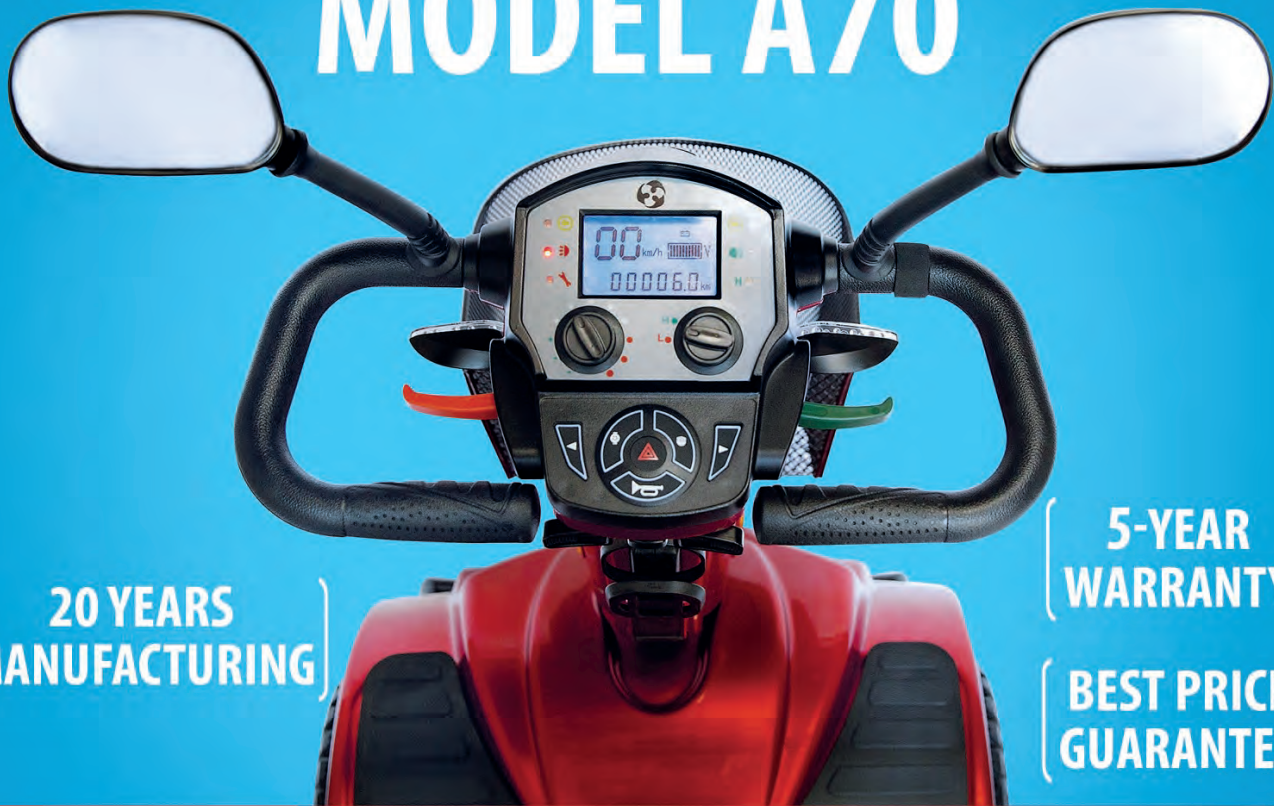
How are you settling in to village life and have you had much of a chance yet to involve yourself in village life? We feel now after six months that it feels to be the right decision for us. The total peace and quiet, combined with the safety of being in a gated community is just what we needed.

What is the one thing that has surprised you most about life in a retirement community? We feel we were well informed and had done our homework leading up to COVID. Therefore we came in with the right mindset. Now that restrictions have lifted we have met a few couples that we feel friendships will form.

What is the one piece of advice you would offer others thinking about entering a retirement community? Trust your gut instinct and gather all relevant information. Compare villages and all they offer as each is different in terms of their rules, fees and exit/entry fees. We feel we have entered at a good age to build friendships/neighbour relationships. We have future-proofed ourselves and now feel we have added years to our lives. Bring on the serenity. ●

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