



Spring 2025 Newsletter

Caring for physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs

We believe that caring for a person involves caring for their *whole* being, not simply meeting their physical needs. While we take great care in ensuring each person in our community is physically safe and has access to the practical care and support they require, our mission also calls us further. Through social connection in formal activities as well as informal gatherings, emotional and spiritual support through pastoral care and genuine Christian love for one another, we aim to ensure each person is valued as an individual and that our community is a place of welcome, care and belonging for all.

From our CEO

As spring arrives, bringing renewal and energy, I am reminded of the strength and warmth of our community here at Outlook Christian Living.

In our aged care home, we are proud to have consistently maintained our five-star provider rating, a testament to the outstanding care, dedication, and compassion demonstrated by our staff and volunteers every day. Our new senior leadership team has now settled in, and their contributions are being felt across our organisation, helping us to further strengthen the services and support we provide.

I am also pleased to share that our occupancy consistently remains well above the industry average. It is a testament to the trust that residents and families place in Outlook Gardens, the quality of care we deliver, and the welcoming, Christ-centred environment we nurture together. High occupancy allows us to remain strong and sustainable, ensuring we can continue to reinvest in our people, our facilities, and the future of our community.

We have also recently completed a full Wi-Fi upgrade across the Aged Care Home. This improvement not only supports our staff with faster and more reliable systems but also enhances the daily lives of residents. More and more residents are enjoying the benefits of digital technology – whether it's staying connected with loved ones through video calls, streaming favourite shows, or making use of smart TVs and other devices. With stronger connectivity throughout the home, residents can now enjoy these activities with ease and confidence. We see this as another step in ensuring Outlook Gardens remains a place where people feel at home, supported, and connected to the wider world.

Our retirement living communities also continue to flourish. Recently, we were delighted to welcome residents from Ebenezer to our Aged Care Home. They enjoyed seeing the refreshed look of the home, shared lunch with us, reconnected with friends, and joined our aged care residents for a Winter Wonderland-themed Happy Hour. I also had the opportunity to present a session on how aged care funding works, which sparked great conversation and interest. It was a wonderful day of learning, laughter, and community, and we look forward to more opportunities to share life together across our villages.

At Olive Gardens, the kitchen upgrade and verandah construction are now complete, just in time for the warmer days and lovely evenings ahead. We trust residents will make the most of these new amenities and enjoy the refreshed spaces together.

This spring we also extend a warm welcome to Lessenor Ackermann, who joins us as our new Home Care Case Manager. Lessenor will play a key role as we prepare to launch our Home Care Services in September, further extending the support we provide to residents in our retirement communities, so they can continue living well and independently in their own homes.

As we prepare for the new Aged Care Act to come into effect in November 2025, the organisation is well-positioned to embrace the changes and continue delivering care of the highest standard.

I thank each of you – our residents, families, staff, and volunteers – for being part of this journey. Together, we make Outlook Christian Living a place where people feel truly at home.

Jacques de la Porte



Around the villages...

Olive Gardens

There are always lots of opportunities to join in with community life at Olive Gardens. Our regular activities continued throughout winter, with morning teas, prayer meetings, Happy Hour and Keep Fit exercises. In addition, we also recently enjoyed a soup night as well as another special dinner—both of which were wonderful ways to keep warm in the chilly weather!

As the weather starts to warm up, we are looking forward to making good use of upgrades to our Community Hall, including updates to our kitchen, the installation of a servery window and a lovely new verandah/pergola outside. The new outdoor area provides plenty of space for shelter during BBQs and other group events, and will be very popular in the coming months!

Ebenezer

Since our last update, it's been a busy time at Ebenezer. Residents have enjoyed gathering for special events including our Winter Wonderland Dinner Dance and birthday celebrations. We also recently enjoyed a special visit from children at neighbouring St Judes Primary School—where year 2 students excitedly chatted with residents, asking a myriad of questions to learn more about what life was like in previous decades. Of course, we also continue our regular activities such as morning teas, carpet bowls, and exercise classes. These times together remind us of the joy of living in our wonderful community.

In July, a group of residents also enjoyed a day trip to Outlook Gardens Aged Care, where it was good to catch up with old friends, have a tour of the home, and join in the activities of the day.

Life continues to be full and rewarding in our Ebenezer community, where we are grateful for one another's friendship and support.

Outlook Gardens

Spring has arrived, and it is so good to walk in the gardens and enjoy the warm sun.

Over winter we had a soup night and had a lovely evening of fellowship. Another evening we enjoyed a film night, finishing with coffee and cakes. Although the weather was cold outside, the warm company, food and hot drinks kept us warm!

Our regular activities are in full swing with our exercise groups, Thursday morning coffee and Bible study groups.

Once a month is Happy Hour where we swap stories and have some fun time together.

We keep well informed of upcoming events and activities through the weekly announcements at Thursday morning coffee, as well as each household receiving a monthly update/flyer in the letterbox.

Encouragement from our Pastoral Care Coordinator

Isn't it true that you can only share about something if you have experienced it? Well, I can certainly share about Outlook Christian Living's care for the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of our residents and staff because I have experienced it firsthand!

I first experienced this care when my grandmother Hazel lived in our aged care home years ago. That same close and gentle care was extended to my mum Yvonne for the past four years. Suffering from back surgeries, cancer treatments, Parkinsons and being immobile, our staff lovingly **cared for mum physically** by lifting and washing her, changing and clothing her, washing her clothes and cleaning her room.

I cannot see myself doing this. It takes a special kind of person. It is a calling over a duty, and many of our staff have worked decades for our organisation and love caring for our residents.

Life for mum was difficult. She did not like being immobile and incontinent, or eating boiled vegetables. She missed living with dad and being able to do all the usual things. During her down and lonely days, and there were many, our staff **cared for mum emotionally** by sitting with her, listening, empathising and chatting to her.

Mum loved the social care of our lifestyle activities staff too, playing Bingo for her favourite lollies and chocolates, participating in Rummikub, Word and Trivia games.

Our aged care home also **cared for mum spiritually**. I had the privilege of having mum faithfully attend our "Sing praise, Study Word, Say Prayers", Hymn Singing and watch Sunday worship streamed to her TV from the church in which I minister. My colleague Belinda Waterhouse shares pastoral visits with me in our aged care home and faithful volunteers pastorally care for our retirement village residents.

This holistic care is not only our business, enshrined by our pioneers and Board of management since inception but most importantly, our care is given in gratitude to our heavenly Father's care, love and grace lavished on us!

God demonstrated His own love and care for us in this, that while we were still sinners, God's Son Jesus died for us. Because God first loved us in this sacrificial way, we love and care for one another. This is our motivation and delight!

We seek to practise this type of sacrificial love and care. Most of the time we get it right but at times we do not meet expectations. We are human, get frustrated at complaints, and at times we struggle with patience when dealing with difficult residents including my mum!

Finally, on behalf of my dad and family, THANK YOU to all our staff and residents for caring for mum. We are amazed at your care after mum's promotion to glory, tangibly shown in the humongous attendance at her thanksgiving service! May the Holy Spirit cultivate more of His fruit of love and care for one another!

Rev Michael de Kretser

Pastoral Carer, Outlook Christian Living

Pastor, Dandenong Christian Reformed Church, dcrc.org.au or search us on YouTube



An update from our Care Services Director

As the days grow warmer and brighter, it is a wonderful time to reflect on the season just gone, celebrate our achievements, and look forward to the exciting changes and opportunities ahead for our community.

Spring is approaching and with it comes a time of new beginnings at Outlook Christian Living. We are excited to share that Home Care is now part of our business stream, creating new opportunities for us to support people across our community.

Alongside this growth, we've made some important changes to our leadership team. Karen Edmonds has been appointed as Admissions Manager for both Residential Aged Care and Home Care, ensuring a smooth and supportive journey for residents and clients. Lili Bekachvili has stepped into the role of Clinical Care Manager across Home Care, bringing her knowledge and dedication to supporting clients in their homes. We also congratulate Jaskiran Kaur, who is now our Quality and Compliance Manager across both Residential Aged Care and Home Care. In addition, I have transitioned into the role of Care Services Director, overseeing operations across both areas and working closely with our dedicated team.

Earlier in winter, our aged care home endured a few weeks of a gastro outbreak in late June and July. We are very thankful that our residents who were impacted recovered well and have fully returned to their normal daily routines. A big thank-you to all our staff across every department for their commitment and teamwork during this time. In response, our team have also undergone refresher training in infection prevention and control to ensure we continue to be well-prepared for any future outbreaks.

There have also been many highlights. Our Winter Wonderland event brought great joy to residents and families, lifting spirits after a challenging time. We also celebrated Aged Care Employee Day with our staff awards, recognising the dedication and heart of our wonderful team. I am incredibly grateful for the caring and devoted people who work in our home, looking after residents as though they were their own family. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful individuals whose kindness and commitment make this community so special. Congratulations again to all nominees and winners, it was a privilege to celebrate with you.

As we look forward to the warmer weather and sunshine of spring after the cold winter months, I want to thank you for being part of our Outlook Christian Living family. Together, we continue to create a community built on care, connection, and hope.

"Where flowers bloom, so does hope." – Lady Bird Johnson

Liz Adepoju



Noticeboard

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance concerns/requests can be logged during business hours by calling Outlook Christian Living reception on 9795 7566. Urgent issues should be reported immediately on the same number.

Would you like to volunteer to spend some time with Aged Care residents?

Outlook Gardens Aged Care is always looking for volunteers! Our activities program has many opportunities for volunteers to be involved in activities, including: art/craft, special interests, bingo, gardening, music, facilitating boardgames, helping set up or pack up, or just joining a resident for a chat. We are especially looking for people who might be available on weekends when our regular programs are taking a break.

If you would like more information, contact Gabby on 9795 7566 or leisurelifestyle@outlookcl.com.au