

Neighbourhood news

Our latest news and favourite moments



Yackandandah Health
Aged Care

December 2025

From the Manager



Aatqa Ameer

Thank you for welcoming me as the new Manager. It's been wonderful meeting such a special group of residents, their families, and our dedicated team.

Our team loves helping residents feel at home and focus on building strong relationships, creating homely spaces and planning special activities that support them to continue doing the things they enjoy.

Our staff take the time to get to know each residents' preferences, routines and life story. The stories in this newsletter showcase how we do this.

On November 1, the Government's new Aged Care Act came into effect. We welcome these changes that are strengthening Australia's aged care system and ensuring that the rights of older people are at the centre of their care. We remain committed to delivering care that is respectful, safe and tailored to every resident's individual needs.



A garden journey that nurtures mind, body and soul

A meandering path through the gardens at Yackandandah Aged Care is providing a sensory adventure for residents.

The thoughtfully designed pathway leads residents past vibrant plants, beneath colourful pergolas and through pockets of shade, encouraging them to enjoy fresh air, movement or moments of reflection. The pathway's first destination is the sensory garden, a favourite for many residents. Here, bright flowers mingle with fragrant herbs and textural greenery – a carefully chosen selection of plants that evokes memories and sparks conversation.

A small bridge leads further, past a small waterfall with soft, bubbling sounds, before continuing to the remembrance garden where a poppy statue stands waiting to be appreciated. Elegant Japanese maples provide generous shade, allowing residents to linger longer throughout the day in their favourite corners.

Gardener Dave talks enthusiastically about the garden, the pathway and the potential. "There's a surprise around every corner," he smiles.

Resident, Flo, is in the garden every day, particularly in the cottage garden where she carefully selects flowers to arrange into colourful displays to brighten our shared spaces. Another resident, Eddie, loves spending time in the sensory garden. "It's very relaxing," he says.

For the residents, the outdoor spaces are more than just beautiful – they support health and wellbeing. Sincere thanks must go to our gardener, Dave, and the team who continue to transform the spaces to be even more beautiful.



A community bequest enhancing our Memory Support Household

Plans are progressing well for the uplift to Poppy Place's indoor and outdoor shared spaces, thanks to generous bequests from the estates of Maureen Cabrie and Beverley Skeen.

Apollo Care is working closely with our local team and the Yackandandah Health Board to develop a design that reflects contemporary best practice in dementia-support environments. The aim is to create warm, familiar and welcoming spaces that enable residents with significant cognitive impairment to move about safely and enjoy their surroundings with as much independence as possible. We are exploring ways to create a more traditional kitchen, dining and lounge experience, while also offering flexible activity areas and inviting new ways for residents to engage with the established gardens and courtyard.

Welcome to new Manager, Aatqa

Aatqa, who recently joined Yackandandah Health Aged Care, is deeply committed to making a positive difference for residents and their families.



A dedicated healthcare professional, with experience in clinical and operational management, Aatqa says building genuine relationships, listening with empathy and working together are at the heart of her leadership style.

"I'm excited to be here," she says. "It's truly a privilege to be part of such a dedicated team. At Yackandandah Health Aged Care, we strive to create a warm, safe and supportive environment where residents truly feel heard, respected and cared for. I'm always available for residents, families and team members."



Christmas on Facebook

At Yackandandah Aged Care, we're excited about all the festive activities, outings and celebrations planned for this time of year.

Make sure you keep up to date with all the fun things we'll be getting up to by following us on Facebook.

Feedback

Feedback from residents and families is important to us because it helps us improve and make positive changes.

We also love hearing when we are doing something well.

You can provide feedback in these 3 ways:

1. Tell us in person
2. Complete our feedback form and either place it into our feedback box or hand it to a staff member
3. Email Apollo Care's Chief Governance Officer at feedback@apollocare.com.au

"I am full of joy seeing such happy, smiling residents supported by delightful and caring staff."

Son of resident



Learning with the little folk

The benefits of having Little Yacks Learning Years co-located on our premises are wonderful.

The children from Little Yacks regularly visit residents, bringing their own special energy and enthusiasm. There is a buzz as the young children arrive and settle themselves amongst the residents, eager to get started on the day's planned activity. A firm favourite has been showing their elderly companions how to add jam toppings to jam drops. Of course, their hard work is rewarded when they get to share the delicious treats afterwards. There's always time for songs and stories, but nothing beats the raucous game of farmyard bingo!

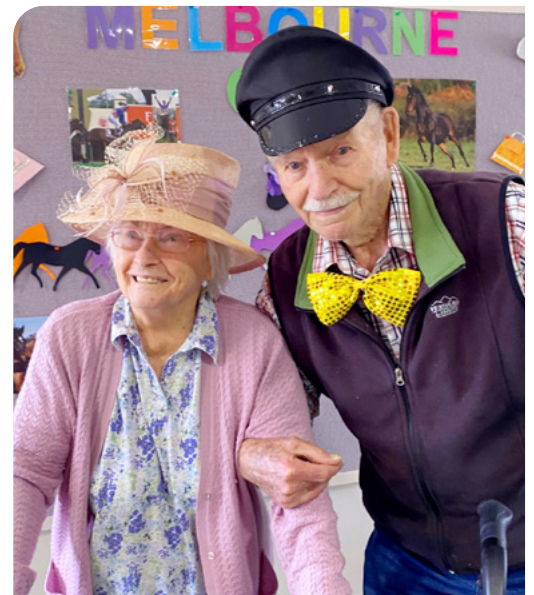
Manager, Aatqa, says intergenerational opportunities like these are invaluable. "They're a great way to share knowledge and an important way residents stay connected to their community."



An unforgettable performance brings hope and heart

A very talented group of children from Uganda filled Yackandandah Health Aged Care with vibrant song, energetic dancing and their infectious joy recently.

The Watoto Childrens' Choir stopped by on their Australian tour, arriving with big smiles, beautiful voices and warm hearts. The children spent time chatting with residents, sharing heartfelt stories of their upbringing in orphanages in Uganda as well as exciting tales about their travels around the world with their caregivers. This was truly a day to remember.



Flowers, feathers and a flair for fashion

The race that stops the nation brought plenty of colour and excitement to our community recently as residents gathered to celebrate the Melbourne Cup in true racing day style.

In the weeks leading up to the big event, crafting tables were busy with chatter and creativity as residents designed and perfected their own unique fascinators. Bright flowers, bold feathers, delicate lace and shining sequins were used to create our Cup-ready headpieces.

On the day, the green carpet was rolled out for a special fashion parade where residents modelled their handiwork to enthusiastic applause. With spirits high, everyone settled in for happy hour refreshments while enjoying the much-anticipated race.

Days like this bring our community together – joyful moments that stay with us long after the event.





Notice Board

A message from our Pastoral Care Officer



Although Christmas traditions vary around the world, there are common elements too, such as friends and family coming together to share a meal.

The humble birth of a Saviour to the world, for all people, unites us in a common cause for celebration right around the globe. Christmas is a day to remember the good news of Jesus Christ as we gather and share in great joy, around a meal.

Wishing you peace, joy and love this Christmas.

Jordan – Pastoral Care Officer



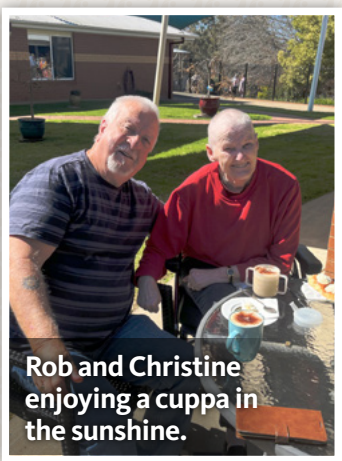
Special events

- Thurs 18 Dec** Christmas Mass
- Fri 19 Dec** Christmas party (family and friends welcome)
- Thurs 25 Dec** Christmas lunch (family welcome)
- Wed 31 Dec** New Year's Eve happy hour

Favourite moments



Betty at Melbourne Cup



Rob and Christine enjoying a cuppa in the sunshine.



Zina collecting colourful flowers

Quality & Safety Report: Quality Improvement Projects



The Aged Care Act 2024 and Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards came into effect on 1 November 2025. This was one of the most significant reforms the sector has seen, demanding stronger governance, transparency and consumer focus than ever before.

Apollo Care's specialist support ensured Yackandandah Health Aged Care was prepared to meet the 22 key provider responsibilities and Strengthened Standards.

Manager, Aatqa and her leadership team continue to work hard to align the quality of care with these standards.

Some of the key focus areas include:

- Enhancing engagement and communication between residents, their families and the community and the Yackandandah Health Board through our Consumer Advisory Committee and better connection with Wellbeing Advocacy Yackandandah (WAY)
- Introducing a trauma-aware lens in our care management process to ensure the impact of difficult life experiences is understood
- Elevating catering services and dining experience, including making lunch a feature meal that has a restaurant feel, greater flexibility around mealtimes, creating the capacity for 24/7 snacks and light meals, creating more opportunities for visitors to share a meal with residents
- Enhancing the living environment so that it has greater senses of home while supporting safety and wayfinding
- Supporting a greater alignment of leisure and lifestyle program to each resident's preferences and life stories



A very special milestone

Resident, Edith, recently celebrated a very special milestone – her 110th birthday!

Surrounded by loved ones, friends, fellow residents, staff and community leaders, Edith said it felt 'like a dream'.

Born in Gippsland, Edith moved to Yackandandah where she used to run the local bakery with her husband.

Now calling Yackandandah Health Aged Care home, the loving mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great-great grandmother, still relishes opportunities to stay connected with her family, something very important to her.

At 110, Edith is the oldest female in Victoria.

As we head towards the end of the year, we'd like to remind families and friends that you're welcome to visit your loved ones at any time. Whether it's connecting for a stroll through our gardens, a cup of tea, or joining in some of our activities, we'd be happy to see you!



Staff Profile



Meet Olivia, a dedicated and caring Nurse

Olivia loves caring for residents and goes out of her way to make sure they are comfortable, safe and happy in their home at Yackandandah Health Aged Care.

What inspired you to pursue a career in aged care?

I've always wanted to be a Nurse. I'm passionate about caring for people and supporting the elderly provides an opportunity to make a positive difference to their lives every day.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I really enjoy listening to residents' stories and finding out about their past. It helps me get to know them on a deeper level. They have all led such different and interesting lives, and it's fascinating to hear about their previous experiences and adventures.

As a Nurse at Yackandandah Health Aged Care, I'm so lucky that I'm able to have so much one-on-one time with residents. Stopping to share a cup of tea and a chat, playing a boardgame with a lively group, or accompanying them outside for a gentle walk and seeing them respond to the natural environment – these are precious moments of my job that I really treasure.

What do you think makes Yackandandah Health Aged Care so special

It's a very welcoming community, and our whole team works together to put residents first.

Favourite moments



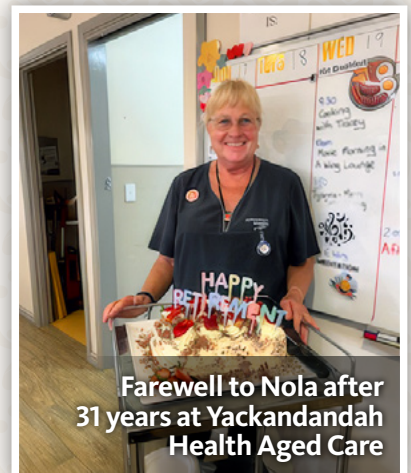
A high energy performance by Watoto Children's Choir



Betty G & Betty P enjoying their afternoon outdoors



Gardening in the sunshine



Farewell to Nola after 31 years at Yackandandah Health Aged Care