



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **mecwacare 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Opening of Jubilee House**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019**

**Mr John Hood**, Chair, *mecwacare* and Board Members

**Ms Michele Lewis**, CEO, *mecwacare*

**The Honourable Jeff Kennett AC**, former Premier of Victoria

**Mr David Southwick MP**, Shadow Minister for Police, Corrections and Community Safety and Member for Caulfield

**Mr Robyn Syme AM**, Life Governor, *mecwacare*

**Ladies and gentlemen**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this morning.

I am delighted to join you here today to open your beautiful new Jubilee House. And it is wonderful to be able to acknowledge this special 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year for *mecwacare*.

This visit today is made the sweeter for me, knowing that I am following closely in the footsteps of my predecessors: Victoria's 20<sup>th</sup> Governor, Major General Sir Rohan Delacombe KCMG, KCVO, KBE, CB, DSO KStJ who, in 1973 opened your residence in Malvern, MECWA House; Victoria's 21<sup>st</sup> Governor, Sir Henry Winneke AC, KCMG, KCVO, OBE who, in 1979 opened an extension of MECWA House; and Victoria's 23<sup>rd</sup> Governor, Dr Davis McCaughey AC, who opened the Olive Miller Nursing Home in Malvern in 1991.

I shall return to a few words about this new building shortly.

First, let me make just some brief observations about your 60 years.

Not everybody here can cast their memories back to the 1950's – or, at least, not as readily as some of us can!

It was an era when concerns for the welfare of the elderly loomed large in the eyes of the community – thus the original acronym MECWA for Malvern Elderly Citizens Welfare Association. And Malvern, of all the Melbourne Local Government Areas, had the highest percentage of people aged over 65.

Standing here today, knowing your successes and that thousands of people's lives have been enhanced by *mecwacare* across six decades now, it is hard to realise that your beginnings were in fact quite humble.

The local Malvern Councillors ran dances in the Town Hall to raise funds, and a volunteer run Op Shop contributed to early days' funding too. Even early care initiatives were managed by a voluntary committee.

The times have changed. Your governance and funding models have become more sophisticated. And your operations have considerably expanded.

It is extraordinary to think that you now house 780 residents in 11 aged care residences across Victoria, provide disability care and community housing, look after clients aged from 6 to 105 years old, and that you now provide services in all 31 local councils of metropolitan Melbourne as well as in regional Victoria.

Yes, the changes are immense. But, at the heart of everything that you do, in a fundamental sense, there is little change.

In 1959, MECWA's primary objective was to enhance the quality of life for people who needed care.

That remains your primary objective today.

Congratulations to everyone involved with *mecwacare*.

To John Hood, the Chair and past Chairs, past and present Board members, to Michele Lewis, the CEO and past CEOs, past and present staff and all the generous, caring and kind volunteers across the decades.

I note that just last year, your volunteers contributed almost 37,000 hours of their time. I have no doubt that, without them, *mecwacare* could simply not offer its range of services. Nor could it do so without the open-hearted philanthropists, donors and corporate sponsors.

And so, to this particular achievement in which we are standing today. This new building. A 40-bed modern and comfortable home for residential aged care.

Just a moment ago I was lucky enough to look around. The open design of the building, centred around the internal courtyard, ensures that each room is filled with light. With facilities more akin to a five-star hotel, including, a well-stocked library, cinema, hair and beauty salon and bar - with daily happy hour – residents are guaranteed to feel at home here.

I particularly like the café, complete with volunteer barista - a very Melbourne addition - and the private dining facilities, providing a more intimate setting for residents to celebrate a birthday or milestone with friends and family.

Of course, it is the care given here that will matter most.

We wish you great success in looking after some of our most vulnerable Victorians and we thank you for that important work on all our behalves. The dignified and kind care of our ageing population is something that enhances all our lives.

And so, I wish *mecwacare* a very happy 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

And in a few moments it will give me great pleasure to officially declare Jubilee House open.