

# Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH)



Residential Aged Care



**Victoria:**

Berwick, Berwick

Bundoora, Bundoora

Corpus Christi, Clayton

John R Hannah, Mulgrave

Providence, Bacchus Marsh

Shanagolden, Pakenham

Star of the Sea, Torquay

St Bernadette's, Sunshine North

St Catherine's, Balwyn

Wantirna, Wantirna South

Willowbrooke, Upper Ferntree Gully

Justin Villa, Balwyn

## Linkage Strategies Used:

Role Clarification



Written and Verbal Communication Pathways



Multidisciplinary Team Structures and Processes



Formalised Agreements and Plans



Knowledge Exchange and Upskilling



Continuous Quality Improvement



Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) has 12 residential aged care services across regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne. Of the 12, eight of these residences have a dedicated memory support wing, which is designed to provide specialist care for residents with dementia.

Each of VMCH's homes has residents from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, and with varying care needs.

Prior to the involvement of VMCH in the ELDAC Working Together program there were a number of key challenges for the organisation around advance care planning and the provision of palliative care.

While each residence had their own procedures and preferences, there was no organisation-wide policy and procedure on end-of-life care or advance care planning – nor did all staff have the knowledge and confidence in having conversations around planning and dying.

VMCH staff are very knowledgeable, committed and caring, however there was collectively a lack of knowledge on the specifics of providing quality palliative care. This may be due to the lack of linkages with specialist palliative care services in the community, or support from GPs in providing palliative care services on-site, or in completing advance care plan directives for residents.

The impact of these challenges meant that there were no streamlined processes or guidelines on delivering palliative care, and how to complete the appropriate documentation. For resident documentation that was completed, there were often gaps regarding resident wishes on palliative care and end-of-life.

This has then led to some miscommunication between the care staff, the resident and their family about what their wishes were in regards to transfer to hospital, palliative care and symptom management – as staff were also unaware of how to contact specialist palliative care services when required for advice and directions.

With the support of the ELDAC Working Together program, VMCH commenced and developed strong linkages with their local palliative care services and ensured staff had an awareness of the referral process for these services. VMCH have now embedded the

practice of having regular palliative care review meetings with key external palliative care service providers to discuss new referrals and / or complex cases and to share important information. VMCH has also developed stronger communication pathways with local GPs to assist them in planning for residents who enter the end-of-life phase.

*“Having ELDAC involvement has really brought end-of-life care into the open and I know we now all understand and manage it better.”*

Through the ELDAC facilitation process, VMCH established policies and procedures on palliative care and advance care planning, in line with recommended practices. VMCH were also able to embed the practice of completing post death audits for those who passed-away in the residence, in order to review staff practices and identify areas for improvement.

**“stronger**

**communication”**



VMCH believes that talking about palliative care has helped to ‘demystify’ it. VMCH has six residential aged care homes that fall under the Eastern Region. These include Corpus Christi, Clayton; John R Hannah, Mulgrave; St Catherine’s, Balwyn; Wantirna; and Willowbrooke, Upper Ferntree Gully, and Justin Villa, Balwyn.

Prior to the ELDAC Working Together program, these six individual residences were experiencing inconsistencies in the referral process and creating and maintaining linkages with the local specialist palliative care service – Eastern Palliative Care Association Incorporated (EPC).

Through ELDAC the residences had first-hand experience in how working together with EPC could provide real, tangible benefits to their services – as well as ensuring residents (and their families) were able to experience ‘a good death’.

VMCH’s Justin Villa Aged Care Residence, specifically designed for retired Catholic priests, is an example of how this new partnership has been strengthened. Prior to the project Justin Villa had not referred to EPC, or had any involvement from their service for residents who were palliative.

Michelle Narandan, Justin Villa Residential Services Manager, said that the introduction of the ELDAC project allowed the home to explore the possibility of staff being able to provide palliative care services to residents. This led the team to be able to fulfil the wishes of one of their residents, who became the first resident to pass away at Justin Villa.

*“It provided our team with confidence and skills to ensure that our resident was cared for in the most appropriate and peaceful way.”*



"We have been fortunate to be part of this network, with all very skilled and compassionate individuals. We have found even greater collaboration and teamwork amongst staff members around a resident's end-of-life trajectory since being involved in these ELDAC meetings."

*Star of the Sea Aged Care Residence*



"We have turned a sad time into a celebration of how we can preserve our residents' dignity and advocate for them right to the end. The staff have really lifted and are working with a real team attitude to get the best outcomes for the residents and their representatives."

*Willowbrooke Aged Care Residence*

"Being part of the ELDAC project has enabled me to start to focus more on the deterioration that indicates the palliative trajectory, and preparing the resident, their family and the staff, to assist them at their end-of-life in a way that provides choices and quality in care delivery."

*Berwick Aged Care Residence*



"Staff are much more aware when we commence the end-of-life pathway, and what this means."

*Shanagolden Aged Care Residence*

"The sharing of knowledge was given a high priority and the communication from ELDAC has been great."

*Wantirna Aged Care Residence*



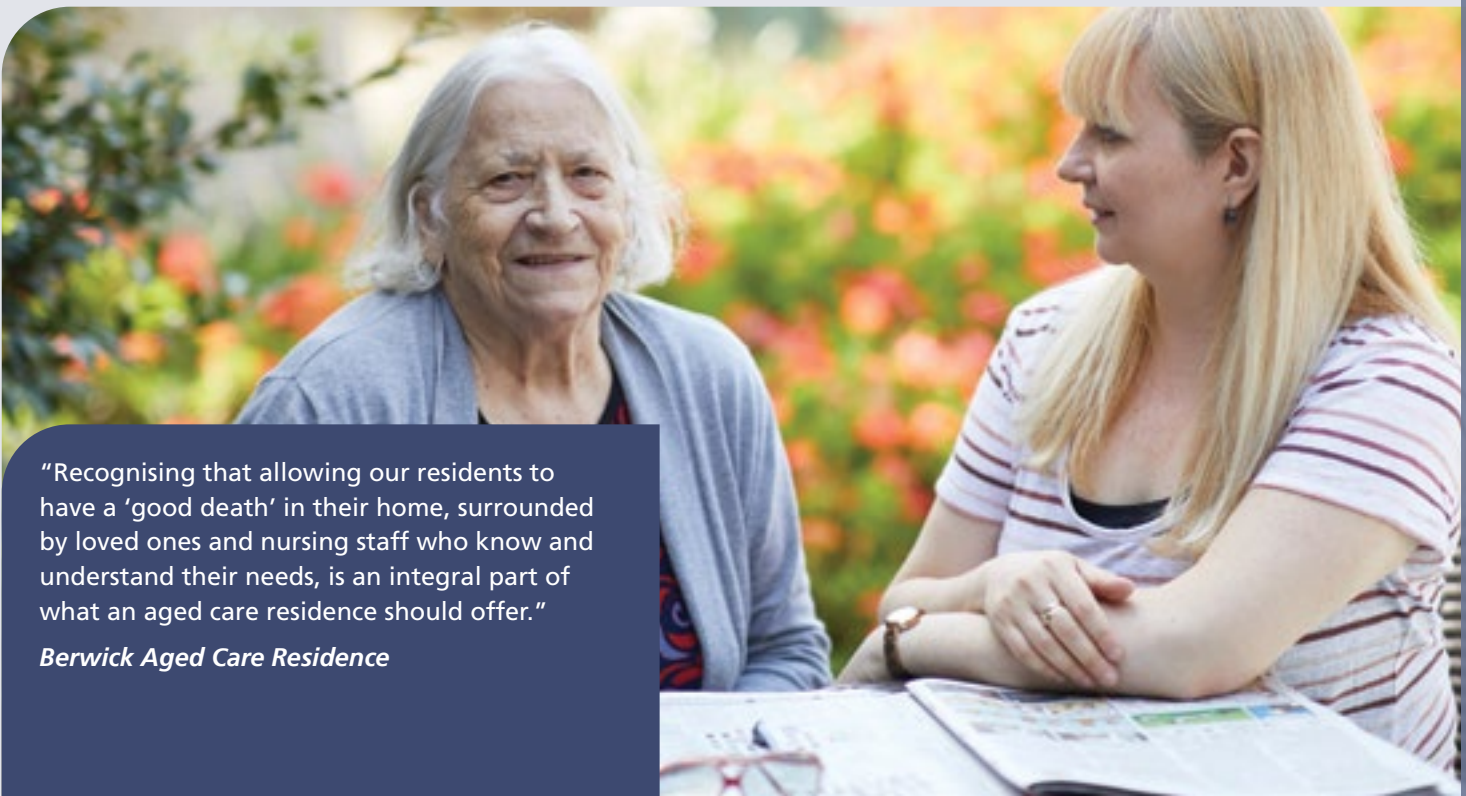
"ELDAC has supported the health care worker in aged care by providing information and toolkits for palliative care and advance care planning for the final stages of an illness which can be highly challenging."

*St Catherine's Aged Care Residence*



"This has resulted in early intervention and improved resident outcomes in the way palliative care and end-of-life care is delivered, especially by RNs. Staff now call the deceased resident's families a month post-death for feedback and this has been overwhelmingly positive."

*Providence Aged Care Residence*



"Recognising that allowing our residents to have a 'good death' in their home, surrounded by loved ones and nursing staff who know and understand their needs, is an integral part of what an aged care residence should offer."

*Berwick Aged Care Residence*