

the GoodLife

Issue 1 2024

Movement is medicine

Healthy ageing and
the joy of sport

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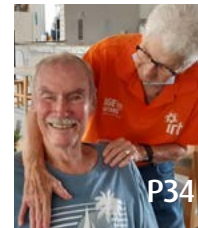
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Submitting a photo?

Just a reminder; when contributing photos for publication to ensure the people featured have signed IRT's Photo and Video Consent Form. Any questions, please email editor@irt.org.au.

IRT Customer Promise

We are committed to delivering consistently high quality experiences to help our customers achieve their optimum quality of life.



Easy
Our processes are simple and easy to understand.



Connected
We create a sense of belonging to help our customers feel connected.



Personal
We understand individual needs and embrace diversity.



Trusted
We are industry experts and can be relied upon.



Kind
We act with compassion and understanding.

Cover image: IRT Thomas Holt Kirrawee resident Helen Evans was a prolific ocean swimmer and swimming squad coach. Helen was one of the first women admitted into the Cronulla RSL Swimming Club in the 1980s, which until then had been exclusive to men. You can read more about Helen and her impressive sporting achievements on p.21.

Healthy ageing and the joy of sport



Welcome to the first edition of *The Good Life* magazine for 2024.

This year is sure to be an exciting one when the XXXIII Summer Olympic Games get underway in Paris in July later this year.

The Olympic Games, and sport more broadly, have the ability to inspire and unite us. Athletes captivate us with their dedication and achievements, and the joy of competition can bring people together as we support the various teams in solidarity or friendly rivalry.

To recognise this year's Olympic Games and celebrate the coming together of people through sport, this edition of *The Good Life* focuses on healthy ageing and the joy that sport can bring to people's lives. To understand more on this topic *The Good Life* spoke with occupational therapist Hilary O'Connell about how being active can help us age well. Hilary highlights that healthy ageing is about building healthy behaviours over a lifetime, but it's never too late or early to start. Every little bit we do helps, whether it's going for a bike ride or just taking the stairs. The feature also considers what it is about watching sports that gets our blood pumping and our emotions stirring as we get

behind and support our favourite athletes.

As part of the feature, we delve into the personal sporting journeys of some of our residents, sharing their inspiring tales and stand-out moments.

In the news section, we share the artistic talents of IRT Kangara Waters resident Brenda Madden (pages 4 and 5); we catch up with some residents of William Beach Gardens at IRT Kanahooka to find out about their experiences with the care centre's intergenerational program with pre-school children (page 9); and we learn more about the history of the IRT The Ridge Wine Appreciation Club (pages 12 and 13)! The out and about section shares some great yarns of what's been happening for many of our communities over the past few months.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of the magazine.

Patrick Reid

IRT CEO



Brenda's lifetime love of art



RT Kangara Waters resident Brenda Madden (pictured above) has had a love for art as long as she can remember.

"I became interested in art from the time I could hold a paintbrush at the age of five," says Brenda. "My aunty took

me every Sunday to the National Gallery in London from a young age right up to when I finished my schooling."

Born in 1938 in a town called Peckham in South London, England, Brenda was

surrounded by art from a very early age.

"My dad was a painter, grainer and marbler, and so I always watched my father paint," explains Brenda. "He painted all types of buildings in London, from the fronts of pubs to the

fronts of doors, to make them look attractive and welcoming. He won an award for best painter and grainer in London." (A marbler is someone who stains items in order to produce a marbled effect such as marbling stone to produce faux marble, while a grainer paints imitation wood grain patterns.)

In her 20s, Brenda got married and had two children – Steve in 1959, and Sue in 1962. They moved from London to Singapore for a short period where Brenda's husband worked on submarines for the Navy. Brenda stayed home and looked after the children in the day and at night attended TAFE, where she learnt shorthand and typing.

After returning to London, Brenda worked with the

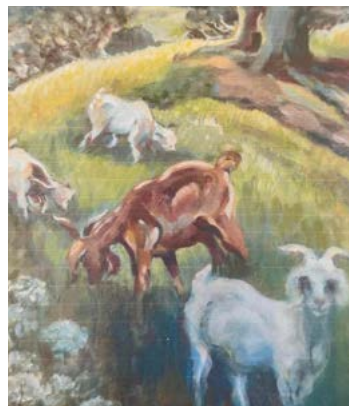


Amalgamated Engineering Union for five years, and in 1966 she and her husband divorced.

"I remarried a man named Martin in 1970 and we then moved to Australia in 1981 and lived in Balmain, Sydney,"

“**I became interested in art from the time I could hold a paintbrush at the age of five.**”

”



says Brenda. "I got a job in the High Court of Sydney in the Attorney General's office where I spent my working years until I retired."

When Brenda retired, she and Martin moved to Narooma where she got back in touch with her love of art.

"I became an artist and Martin became a furniture restorer," explains Brenda. "We went around to all the old farms and got people's old furniture. Martin would restore them and I made them masterpieces with my painting."

Brenda is completely self-taught, and enjoys painting in oils, acrylics and pastels.

"I've done a lot of oil and pastel paintings which I've sold," says Brenda. "My favourite subjects to paint are portraits and figures and the expressions on people's faces."

When asked what her favourite style of painting is, Brenda is very true to herself.

"My favourite style is my own personal style – I paint what I see."



Above and top: Brenda is a self-taught artist and enjoys painting with oils, acrylics and pastels and painting artworks on old furniture.



After reading *The Good Life's* feature on hobbies (Issue 2, 2023), IRT Home Care customer Ben Dannecker got in touch and shared his story and life-long hobby; collecting technical miniatures.

At 80 years of age Ben says he's as fit as a fiddle. "I have been told I am healthier than the average 50 year old!" he says.

To achieve this Ben certainly works at it. "I take regular exercise walks and limit my daily food intake to an eight-hour period, with nothing by mouth for the remaining 16 hours other than water," he says.

Although he's a former regular army officer, Ben spent most of his working life as a pilot.

Above: Ben Dannecker spent most of his working life as a pilot. Here he is pictured at Essendon Airport in 1975 when he was flying night freight operations across Bass Strait to Tasmania. Below: Ben pictured in 2024.





Ben enjoys collecting technical miniatures and has a display in his home.

"I lived in Cootamundra when I was younger and as a school boy I used to ride with the crop dusting companies on their missions, and that's how I got introduced to flying," he says.

"I worked as a commercial pilot for most of my career, but I also held aircraft engineering certificates. I also flew with the Royal Flying Doctor Service where I was based in Mt Isa, and flew seaplanes for the CSIRO."

As a qualified flying instructor, Ben has written aviation historical and technical

articles for museums, affinity groups, societies and flying organisations, which have been published both locally and abroad.

"I've flown in Papua New Guinea, Europe, the United States, and all over Australia," he says.

Ben has been a resident of Nowra, in the south coast region of NSW, since taking up a position with a defence contractor to the Navy in 1989. "During this time I flew a two tonne jet drone target tug aircraft from HMAS Creswell (Jervis Bay Range), the other

naval air station for the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet Air Arm, south-east of HMAS Albatross.

"I also used to fly Nomad N24A twin-engined propjets to drop parachutists from the Wilton airstrip."

In retirement, Ben is now focusing on a hobby he's been interested in since he was a child, which is a nod to his career in aviation and defence.

"I'm enjoying spending my time collecting technical miniatures, which are accurate models of vehicles, aircraft, ships, artillery, armoured fighting vehicles and railway locomotives," he explains. "I have a lovely display in my home, plus some more in storage.

"I started collecting model cars and planes as a kid.

"I'm very attached to my collection so I am not seeking to sell anything, but I would love to connect with other like-minded retirees in the Shoalhaven region and beyond who share my interest."

Thanks to Ben for his contribution to The Good Life magazine. He will receive a \$25 gift voucher.



Ben in a 1936 Avro Cadet VH-PRU at Cambewarra Airstrip about to take off to return to HMAS Albatross across the Shoalhaven River in 1995.

Ben is happy to get in touch with other retirees who also share an interest in technical miniatures. If you'd like to learn more, email editor@irt.org.au.

IRT Woodlands Bakery rises to the occasion

IRT Woodlands Aged Care Centre has been on a 'roll' lately with residents whipping up a range of tasty treats for all to enjoy.

Affectionately known as the Woodlands Bakery, residents have been relishing the chance to get their hands messy with regular baking sessions.

IRT Woodlands Lifestyle and Hospitality Manager Janelle Robinson says it has been a joy to watch the residents bake.

"It's great to see our residents enjoying conversations, using team work and helping one another, and licking a spoon or two when we're finished!" says Janelle.

"We've made cupcakes, lemonade scones with jam and cream, shortbread for Christmas, and coconut bread drizzled in butter," says Janelle.

"The coconut bread turned out so well we had residents lining up for it, and the lemonade scones were so good the goldfish nearby were trying to jump out of the tank to try some!"

And it appears our Woodlands bakers have some big plans for 2024.

"When *The Good Life* contacted me to ask



Above and below: IRT Woodlands residents making a range of tasty treats including cupcakes, scones and cornflake biscuits.

about the bakery, I took one of the previous editions to show the residents and discussed them having their own article in the magazine," explains Janelle. "The residents became so excited and even suggested they should have their own cookbook!

"We've been having discussions with other residents who may like to be involved with the cookbook idea, and we're looking to involve residents' families who could help in providing recipes of their loved ones' special treats and dishes. We're going to call it *Delicious Memories*.

"So, watch this space!"



Connection through the generations



Above and below right: William Beach Gardens at IRT Kanahooka residents have been building strong relationships with local pre-school children as part of the care centre's intergenerational program.

The intergenerational program at William Beach Gardens at IRT Kanahooka is in full swing, with residents spending time with children at the nearby Goodstart Early Learning Centre fortnightly to engage in a range of activities together (read more about the program in *The Good Life* Issue 2, 2023).

We caught up with some William Beach Gardens residents and IRT Lifestyle Team Leader Tegan Fletcher to hear their thoughts on the program:

Pat Mitchell:

"The program is great because the littles ones are interested in these new people that come in. I get along really well with all the littlies. I find that if I bend down to their height they're quite happy to chat to you. In the end I have three or four climbing all over me!

They're not shy because they're used to us coming into their area. The kids can't wait to show us around."

Ann-Marie Harding:

"I love going on the bus to the pre-school. It's just wonderful. You wish you were that age again. It reminds me of when I was a Brownies leader. I really enjoy when we get to do free play. The children are so creative. I love when the children find something funny and then you laugh at them laughing!"

Judy Bertinato:

"The program is really good. The children get to know us really well which I think is really important. They all know us by our first names! I'm an ex-teacher so I love kids. As soon as we get there they're waiting by the door and calling out to us. The ideas that they have are amazing."

Tegan Fletcher:

"Since we've started going to the pre-school, the children are so much more relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings. The residents walk in and get mobbed! We've been teaching them some of the songs we like to sing at the care centre like *Aeroplane Jelly*, *Happy Little Vegemites*, *You Are My Sunshine*, and *Show Me The Way To Go Home*.

"The children made us some beautiful Christmas gifts – each resident received a photo frame with a photo of them with some of the kids and a plant for their room.



"The grandchildren/grandparent relationship is a lot different now to what it used to be, as a lot of grandparents still have to work so they can't be as involved in the children's lives. With the program we're able to bridge that generational gap."



Snails may not be a mascot commonly associated with the armed forces, but for IRT Sarah Claydon resident Margaret Gwatkin-Williams and her family, the mighty snail is a symbol of strength, determination and courage.

“My father-in-law was a naval captain in World War I,” explains Margaret, who is better known as Peg to her family and friends. “Britain’s plans to support their armies during the war were based around railways – everything was transported to the fighting men via rail. The railways, however, needed to be built first and so it was that hundreds of railwaymen were transported on ships in order to create rail lines wherever they were needed.”

The HMS Tara, which was captained by Peg’s father-in-law was one of the British ships used for this purpose. However, the Tara was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine while patrolling the North Egyptian Coast in 1915. Twelve officers drowned and 92 survivors

were taken prisoner by the Senussi clan, who were connected with Ottoman Turkish forces.

“The men were taken deep into the Libyan Desert, imprisoned in a well, where they stayed for a number of months, and those at home presuming they had been lost,” says Peg.

“As prisoners in the desert, the men were starving and the well they were confined in was covered in white snails which they ate to stave off starvation.”

Many of the men from the Tara died from illness and malnutrition, and gravely concerned about the future of the imprisoned men, Captain Gwatkin-Williams made an escape in order to seek help and rescue.

“Using his excellent navigational skills and carrying a sack of cooked rice to keep him from starvation, he walked for many baking hot days and freezing cold nights through the desert, in order to get word out to friendly forces of the plight of the men of the Tara,” says Peg.



IRT Sarah Claydon resident Peg Gwatkin-Williams pictured with some of the ornamental snails in her collection and the book her father-in-law wrote about the crew of the Tara.

Although he was eventually captured and returned to the well, the men were rescued soon after when a message Captain Gwatkin-Williams had left in a burned out car was found by the Duke of Westminster, who was serving as a major in the Cheshire Yeomanry, a volunteer cavalry regiment.

“On St Patrick’s Day in 1916 – four months since they were captured – the Duke of Westminster arrived at the

camp at daybreak leading a fleet of cars and achieving the freedom of the men of the Tara,” says Peg.

Peg also has links to the armed forces, as a former member of the Auxillary Territorial Service (ATS) in the UK. The ATS was the women’s branch of the British Army during World War II and its members assisted in carrying out a range of jobs including serving as clerks, cooks, telephonists, storekeepers, drivers, postal workers and ammunition inspectors.

“When the war in Europe ended I volunteered for overseas service hoping to go to Paris or Berlin, but instead I was posted to Egypt!” says Peg. “While in Egypt I was sent to Jerusalem, when the area was still British Protectorate, where I worked in the King David Hotel – the army headquarters.”

Peg’s husband John also served in the British Army.

“Remarkably, when John was with the army in Egypt in World War II he met Basil, who had been his father’s interpreter during his time in the camp in the Libyan Desert!”

While Peg and John were both stationed overseas during World War II they did not meet until years later in Singapore.

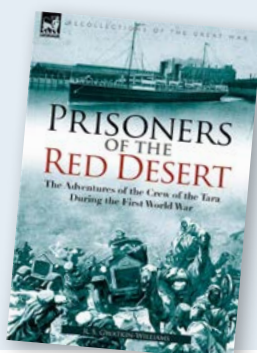
“When I left Jerusalem I returned to Egypt before returning home to be demobbed (discharged) when I was 21,” says Peg. “I lived in London but was very restless and was applying for work

overseas when my brother, who lived in Singapore, offered me a home with him and his wife and assured me I would find work there quite easily – so off I went!”

It was there that Peg met and married her husband and made it their home for nine years, before returning to England with two-year-old John Jnr. There they bought a pub in Ovington, near Winchester and their family grew with the birth of daughter, Joanne.

Peg’s connection with Australia started through John Snr who, while in Singapore, worked for a branch of an Australian company and the pair kept in touch with friends here after they returned to England.

To read more about the plight of the crew of the Tara, check out the book written by Captain R. S. Gwatkin-Williams; *Prisoners of the Red Desert: The Adventures of the Crew of the Tara During the First World War.*



When Joanne decided she would like to travel, she stayed with friends of Peg and John’s in NSW where she met her husband Ross.

“I joined Joanne on some of her travels around Australia and then we returned home to England together,” says Peg. “A year or two later Ross came over to England and they were married before moving back to Australia. I used to go out and visit them for a few weeks every year.

“When Joanne had children I came out here to live [following the death of John Snr] and to get to know my grandchildren. I came in 1998 and here I still am all these years later. I moved to Milton about six years ago to be closer to where she is living now.”

Back in her unit in Milton, you can’t help but notice the impressive collection of ornamental snails that adorn Peg’s home, paying homage to the snails that saved her father-in-law’s life.

“The collection started in England when my husband John was given a lead snail by his sister and it has simply grown from there,” says Peg. “Many are glass but some are also formed into ceramic teapots and papier-mache ornaments.”

“The snails represent strength and survival for my family, because without snails the men of the Tara would have starved to death.”

Cheers to ten years



IRT The Ridge's Wine Appreciation Club celebrated its tenth birthday in January and the celebrations included this amazing cake. Pictured opposite are the club's foundation members, including Chris Hanks (back row, third from right) who established the club.

In January a group of residents at IRT The Ridge celebrated a decade of developing their palates and expanding their appreciation of wines.

Known as the Wine Appreciation Club, the group has met once a fortnight since 2014 and during that time the members have grown to enjoy a wide selection of wines from across Australia and abroad.

IRT The Ridge resident Chris Hanks put up the idea of forming a wine appreciation club all those years ago, as he

thought he and other residents might enjoy branching out from their usual selection of wines for happy hour.

"I just thought it would be good to get people together to appreciate wines a bit better," explains Chris. "I put out an expression of interest in forming a wine appreciation club and we got 20 members. We had a little meeting to decide how the club would run."

Members pay \$5 a meeting, which goes to the purchase

of three different bottles of wine for them to sample. Chris explains they use traditional tasting methods when they try the wines, such as looking at the wine, smelling and tasting.

Members score the wines they taste and the wine with the most points becomes the wine of the week, which in turn becomes first prize in the next meeting's raffle. And whoever wins the raffle, selects the wines to taste at the following meeting.

"We've all grown together," says

Chris. "About 90 per cent of the club only drank white wine at the start. Nobody can believe how their tastes have changed. Reds have been really popular lately."

Chris writes a newsletter to accompany each meeting, which includes information on how to taste wine, the history of wine grapes, and details about winemakers and vineyards. He has researched and penned so many that the club members have suggested he starts reusing some of the older newsletters for upcoming meetings.

Club members enjoy a Christmas dinner together and trips to different wineries and wine regions.

"We are a very social club," says Chris. "We have also enjoyed many tastings on our weekend trips to some of the

“
The members all
have some special
memories of the
past ten years ...
”

best wineries in South East Queensland."

While Chris started the club, these days the members help with organising meetings and wines and setting up for the meetings. The club's wine selections change on a regular basis; sometimes there will be an international night where the wines come from different countries, and sometimes they'll all come from one winery or one particular wine region.

For Chris, it's the cool climate wines that appeal the most, such as Tasmanian wines, and if picking a white he'd choose a pinot gris, while his red selection would be a pinot noir. "Interesting they are both pinots," comments Chris.

And he would like to visit the King Valley Wine Region in Victoria. "I've never visited but would love to go," he says.

The club's membership of 20 residents includes eight foundation members. "The members all have some special memories of the past ten years, while looking forward to enjoying the wines and friendships the coming years will bring," says Chris.

Thanks to Chris for his contribution to The Good Life magazine. He will receive a \$25 gift voucher.



Volunteer spotlight



Finding inspiration

Jan Dawkins' (pictured above) volunteering journey with IRT started with her dad and a piano at IRT Peakhurst.

"My dad was in the village in 2002 and there used to be a piano in Scott Cottage, which I would play," explains Jan. "And some of the other residents joined us. After Dad died I used to go and visit some of those residents. I just kept that up."

From there Jan was approached to become a volunteer at IRT Peakhurst and went on to start The Village Writers group around 2007. "There was a resident who was a founding member of the NSW Writers' Centre and he was looking for an accessible writers group, so we decided to start one here."

The group meets every second

Tuesday of the month. "We have a chat first, I give them a new subject, and then we listen to the stories the members have written based on the subject I gave them last time. We then have a lesson, using their writing as an example, about cliffhangers and foreshadowing. Then we have a five-minute writing session, and then it's time to leave."

Jan says the diversity among the group's members is amazing and they are a good support for one another. "It's good they've got that connection," she says. "We laugh and have good conversations."

The group includes nine to ten members who are all very enthusiastic.

"A lot of members have come and gone but you never forget them," says Jan. "They're an inspiration."

Jan has done volunteer work for many years, and for many groups and organisations, and finds it very rewarding.

"You get back more than you give," she says. "So many people just want someone to listen to them and acknowledge them."

She's been a phone counsellor for the Calvary Hospital, volunteered for what was then known as Georges River Community Service and on community projects over the years.

"Volunteering has always been part of my life," she says. "It's life experience and the people you meet that teaches you."

Jan featured in the last edition of *The Good Life* magazine (Issue 3, 2023) – as she received an individual volunteer achievement award at the 13th annual St George Community Awards in November 2023.

Jan has a background in nursing - during her career she was a midwife, nurse educator, worked in social welfare, and as a bereavement counsellor, as well as in the family business. "It was bathroom renovations, and I was duped into being the business manager," she laughs.

For anyone thinking of volunteering Jan encourages them to do so. "The people you meet enrich your life," she says. "I think it's just wonderful. No one ever does anything alone. Even when I was the volunteer I couldn't have done it without support from others."



Interested in
volunteering?

If you'd like to know more about volunteering opportunities with IRT, please contact the Talent Acquisition team at recruitment@irt.org.au.

IRT partners with Greenacres

IRT enlisted the help of Greenacres Disability Services in late 2023 to provide end-of-year appreciation gifts for IRT staff.

The gifts, including scented soy candles, reed diffusers and wheat heat packs, were purchased through Greenacres' new social enterprise IMAGINE Homewares and Hampers, a brand of luxury products handcrafted by Greenacres' supported employees in Wollongong.

IRT Group CEO Patrick Reid said the partnership was a wonderful way to support the employment of local people with a disability while acknowledging IRT's hardworking staff.

"The gifts were a modest token of our appreciation for the incredible contribution made by our passionate staff who do their best for our residents and customers day in and day out," says Patrick.



IRT Group CEO Patrick Reid (left) and Greenacres CEO Chris Christodoulou helped Greenacres employees deliver appreciation gifts to IRT Tarrawanna staff in late 2023.



IRT Woodlands

Construction works are well underway for Stage 9 of the IRT Woodlands Retirement Village. When complete the villas will look similar to villas in Stages 7 and 8 (see above).

Elements at IRT Towradgi Beach

IRT has provided all requested information to Wollongong City Council regarding our development application for our Elements at IRT Towradgi Beach retirement living development. A decision by the Planning Panel regarding the application is anticipated by mid-2024.

IRT Woonona

IRT is continuing to progress its plans for the renewal of IRT Woonona. Our development application for the demolition of the buildings known as Ribbonwood and Blueberry Ash was submitted in October 2023 and remains under assessment by Wollongong City Council.

The team continues to refine design options for the site that focus on delivering more living space and wellbeing and lifestyle opportunities that will support older people through all stages of ageing.

IRT St Georges Basin

IRT has now selected our preferred contractor for the construction of an extra 13 units for IRT Georges Basin Retirement Village. The contract is currently being finalised, with works anticipated to occur over the next few months. We are also continuing to plan the construction of a new community recreation room to give all residents greater opportunity to enjoy activities, hobbies and social events together.

IRT Dalmeny

Construction of our 20 independent living units at IRT Dalmeny continues to take shape, with brickwork and roofs being established on some villas. Completion is expected in late 2024.

Age Matters team profile

Meet Gail!



Gail (pictured above) is the Assistance with Care and Housing Coordinator with Age Matters, and shares why she was drawn to wanting to work in the area of community services:

"From a young age I knew I wanted to work in community services. I vividly remember travelling on a bus with my mother when I was eight years old. During the trip I noticed a teenager with matted hair and dirty clothes. Curious, I pointed him out to my mum, and she explained that he was experiencing homelessness.

"The image of that teenager stuck with me, and I developed a strong desire to make a positive difference in the lives of those facing such challenges. I set my sights on becoming a social worker, however life took me in a different direction and I found myself working in administration in Sydney's CBD.

"One day while rushing to catch my train home, I noticed an older lady sitting on the steps with a large suitcase at Wynyard Station. She was well dressed, with long grey hair pulled back in a ponytail. She

stood out to me as she looked afraid and alone. Over the week, I saw her consistently, and I noticed a change in her demeanour and appearance. Her initial elegance seemed to fade, and it became apparent that she was either homeless or in a dire situation.

"Despite wanting to help, I struggled to overcome my own fear in doing so. One day she wasn't there and I never saw her again. Motivated by the impact of these experiences, I re-evaluated my path and enrolled in TAFE to study community services.

"My memories of the young boy and older lady continue to drive my commitment to my studies and my work in this field. I strive to offer the assistance and empathy that they might not have received.

"I'm currently reading *The Book on Ending Homelessness* by Iain De Jong and the following quote has stayed with me: 'People experience homelessness. It is a state of address, not an identity. It is not a character flaw.' This quote is a reminder that behind the term 'homelessness' are individuals with unique experiences, hardships and aspirations.

"As a team, Age Matters recognises our clients' humanity, and we work collaboratively towards not just housing, but pathways to stability, growth and a renewed sense of belonging within the community."

Finding forever homes



The Age Matters team has started 2024 with great success, with two clients moving into stable accommodation.

The team was able to secure a 'forever home' for one client, while another moved into a transitional rental property at a retirement village.

Manager – Age Matters Natasha Debsieh said both clients were vulnerable older people who were referred to Age Matters for assistance.

"Both clients are absolutely ecstatic to have a safe, secure and age-appropriate place to live," says Natasha.

Thanks to the generous support of the community, Age Matters provided donated whitegoods and other household items to help both clients set up their new homes.

Natasha explained that both clients found themselves facing homelessness as older persons.

"The moves are part of a long journey towards stability and the opportunity to feel safer and settled," says Natasha. "Age Matters has been part of that journey to provide the expertise and support them to navigate that path. What a great way to start the year!"

If you know anyone who is in need of housing assistance, please reach out to the Age Matters team at info@agematters.org.au.

Age Matters a finalist in Community Service Awards

The Age Matters team was thrilled to be nominated for the Community Industry Group Community Services Award in late 2023.

Age Matters was nominated with other members of the South Eastern NSW Care Finders Collective in the Above and Beyond Team category. Age Matters is part of the Collective with three other not-for-profit organisations in the Southern Eastern NSW region and supports the Australian Government's care finder program, designed to help support vulnerable older people to access aged care and other services in the community.

Although the team didn't win, Age Matters was honoured to be selected as a finalist amongst so many impressive organisations who offer critical support to vulnerable people.



Supporting Age Matters

Age Matters relies on grants, donations and fundraising to deliver on our vision for no older person to be homeless, isolated or without purpose. If you can spare a few dollars a week, please consider becoming a regular giver on our website agematters.org.au.

You can also follow us on our Facebook page (@AgeMattersAus) and help us spread the word.

Movement is medicine

The Olympic Games have the ability to inspire us – to feel excited about the competition and to admire the athletes for their strength, speed and performance. It can also help turn our minds to our own sporting pursuits, and subsequently our overall health and wellbeing. In this feature *The Good Life* explores healthy ageing, and the joy sport brings to people's lives, whether participating or watching.



Playing a sport and being active is often seen as the domain of young people, but as we get older being active is just as important for our overall physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

"I'm doing all I can to age well," says Hilary O'Connell, Principal Advisor Healthy Ageing and Reablement for

iLA (Independent Living Assessment). "I like to travel, I'm very active and play tennis and golf. I walk and go to the gym. I'm also a volunteer. My 95-year-old father is still independent, and I'm hoping I'm going to be like him."

When asked about the connection between healthy ageing and being active

Hilary quotes the World Health Organisation, which says that healthy ageing is about building healthy behaviours over a lifetime. "It's about putting the pillars in place so you can continually challenge your body and brain," explains Hilary. "It's like having savings in the bank – you've got something in reserve – so you can pull on that."

Hilary O'Connell is an occupational therapist with more than 40 years' experience. She began her career in the UK and today, in Australia, she offers best practice support to older Australians and people with disability. Hilary is the Principal Advisor Healthy Ageing and Reablement for iLA. The organisation supports the community to make informed decisions about living independently and its services support people with disability, older people, carers, health professionals and the aged care sector.



When it comes to living a long life, Hilary says that only 25 per cent of how we age is down to genetics – the other 75 per cent is lifestyle.

“We are all going to get older and being active for longer plays a pivotal role,” she says. “When it comes to an activity it’s about doing something you enjoy and within your capacity, like walking, bowls and sports. It’s the physical, mental and social benefits of being active which contribute to overall longevity.”

But it isn’t always about going for a jog or hitting the gym, a way to increase your activity is through incidental activity. “Find the furthest car space and walk just that little bit further to the shops, take the stairs or get off the bus a stop early,” says Hilary. “It does help.”

Hilary explains that for older Australians, one of their biggest concerns is losing their independence. “People want to be able to stay at home and do the things they want to do,” she says. “Inactivity can mean losing the ability to do things on your own.”

Hilary describes movement “as medicine” and that we all need to keep moving and try to do a little bit more than yesterday. “Some estimates suggest that about half of the physical decline associated with old age may be due to lack of activity.”

As we go through life we tend to become inactive in mid-life. “When you are older you do

get aches and pains and can become more risk adverse,” explains Hilary. “People can lose strength, confidence and balance. However, the more you do the better it will be for you.”

Hilary says for every condition a person develops they should do more activity, not less.

“We are brainwashed to think this decline is going to take place [as we age].”



“
Being active, doing sports, gives us the opportunity to come together.”

One of the initiatives of iLA is the website LiveUp (liveup.org.au), which focuses on helping older people maintain their independence. Hilary says the website strives to

change the discussion around ageing and how we age. “It’s a healthy ageing website for older Australians, funded by the Australian Government. We offer impartial advice and information to help people stay independent and connected.”

Hilary says that being active also has additional benefits, such as helping us to control stress and sleep better. “Being active, doing sports, gives us the opportunity to come together,” she says. “Loneliness can have a detrimental impact, so people need to get out there and try new things. Being active has huge benefits – it brings with it quality of life. And it also brings economic benefits – it reduces health care costs.”

Hilary acknowledges that the ageing experience is different for everyone. “Some people are really struggling,” she says. “But it’s never too late or too early to start. Do not be limited by your age. Having a positive attitude can add seven years to your life. So get rid of those negative thoughts about ageing. Keep having a go at things.”

While the pursuits of Olympic athletes can inspire us and enthral us, we can’t all be Olympians. We can keep moving though, setting daily achievable goals and where possible doing so with others; just like our Olympic heroes. After all, the Olympic motto is something we can all aspire to: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together.



Do you remember where you were when Cathy Freeman claimed gold in the 400m final at the Sydney Olympics in 2000? Or does Emma McKeon's incredible performance in the pool at the Tokyo Games make you feel a sense of pride? Watching our Australian athletes compete at an elite level can stir up lots of emotions and create memories to last a lifetime.

So what is it about sport, and in particular the Olympic Games, that can do this?

Feel-good factor

There's often a feel-good factor when watching the Olympic Games – we feel proud of our country and the athletes who are representing us. According to Sport Australia's Community Perceptions Monitor Survey, over half of Australians who watched the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (55%) and Paralympic Games (58%) said they saw something that made them feel proud to be Australian.

Common sentiments reported included athletes showing determination, working hard, and good sportsmanship¹. Seven in ten Australian adults say they can be inspired by our Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games athletes and teams².

The ability to reminisce

Watching the Games can bring people together. It's a time when people reflect on their own sporting achievements and celebrate the achievements of others.

The Olympics has the ability to engage the community beyond the playing field, and take people on a journey.

Were you one of the estimated 8.8 million people who watched Cathy Freeman's iconic gold medal run at the Sydney Olympics in 2000? Perhaps you were lucky enough to be in the stadium with more than 110,000 others to experience the roar of that crowd as she crossed the

finish line? Perhaps you were one of 82% of Australians who watched at least some of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games or 68% who watched at least some of the Paralympic Games?¹

In our aged care centres our Lifestyle teams often have activities during the games, from torch relays to Olympic-inspired games, activities, and the sharing of Olympic memories.

IRT Lifestyle Team Leader Tegan Fletcher says that as the Paris 2024 Olympics approaches, the two care centres she works across will be conducting themed activities with games, and of course they'll be watching the action on television. "Hopefully we'll even have a medal ceremony," says Tegan. "The Olympic Games are an international delight that have the ability to bring everyone together to share in the success of our nation and athletes. We are all looking forward to a healthy competition through various games and challenges while we get to enjoy the action from Paris."

So the countdown to Paris 2024 is on. We look forward to celebrating the highs and commiserating the lows that are all part of the Olympic Games.

1. Sport Australia's Community Perceptions Monitor (CPM) Summary Report: Impact of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games on the Australian community, Australian Sports Commission, (October 2021).

2. AusPlay focus: Australians' participation in Olympic and Paralympic sports, Australian Sports Commission, (May 2021).

Champion swimmer and cherished mum



Helen Evans (right) with her daughter Lee.

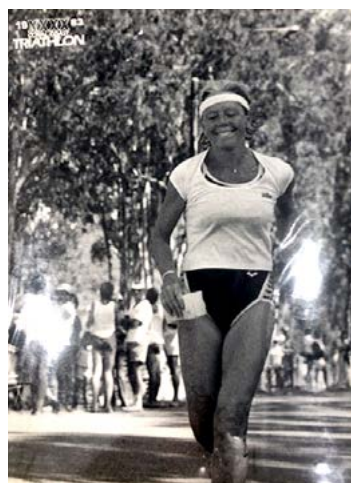
RT Thomas Holt Kirrawee resident Helen Evans is one gutsy woman, according to her daughter Lee.

“Mum used to snow ski, surf, swim, run and bike ride,” says Lee. “She would compete in ocean swims, triathlons and marathons. She was so gutsy, Mum. She really was.”

“She was incredibly fit. She used to run sand hills at 6am every morning before going swimming,” says Lee.

Helen was born in 1931 at a time when women were excluded from large parts of public and political life in Australia. Women were not allowed to stand for the Federal election, drink in public bars or work in the public service once married. But this didn't stop her from leading a life of achievement.

By the 1980s Helen was among the first number of women admitted into the Cronulla RSL Swimming Club, which up until that time had been exclusive to men. She was quickly recognised as a valuable member of the Club



Helen loved to compete in a range of sports including ocean swims, marathons and triathlons.

by winning her 50 – 59 age event in record time in her first attempt at the AIF Swimming Championship. (AIF stands for Australian Imperial Force and the swimming championships are held by the AIF Swimming Association which was formed in the years following World War I).

Lee says Helen was also a prolific ocean swimmer and swimming squad coach.

“Mum joined the nationals swim team and went on to enter ocean swims all over Australia, winning her age group every time. I did all the swims with her,” says Lee.

“Mum and I have done the Cronulla Shark Island swim multiple times. I would come first in my age group and Mum would come first in hers. We did the Byron Bay swim a couple of times, we did the Bondi, the harbour swim and the Wedding Cake Island swim. We've swum all over the place.”

Helen and Lee still hold a world record with ten other team mates for completing a 24-hour swim at the Cronulla Swim Complex in 1992.

Not restricted to water-based activity, Helen also became a well-known artist; painting many murals in homes on the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs of Sydney.

“It was an unusual upbringing for me, I used to go into all of the art galleries with Mum and go to all the (art) jobs with her when I was younger. She was a fabulous artist, so creative,” says Lee.



Marco Polo Woonona resident Reg Matthews with his beloved South Sydney Rabbitohs shirts.

Reg's enduring sporting spirit

For Marco Polo Woonona resident Reginald Matthews, sport has been a way of life for as long as he can remember.

From being on the footy field to cheering on family in their sporting pursuits, to watching his beloved South

Sydney Rabbitohs, 101-year-old Reg's passion for sport comes not just from his personal achievements but from the joy, camaraderie, and lifelong memories created alongside his teammates, rivals and loved ones.

As a young boy growing up in

Far North Queensland, Reg says he encountered obstacles that would have discouraged most from getting involved with sports.

"I was born with a bad right leg, it was two sizes smaller than my left," explains Reg. "I had to wear specially made shoes and metal braces."

After losing his mother when he was six years old, Reg lived with his aunt and uncle and found solace in sports.

“I was never picked for sporting teams because of my leg. But that just made me more determined,” says Reg.

The year 1941 was a big sporting year for Reg. Not only did he win his first rugby league premiership playing for the Juniors in Cairns, he was also named Vice Captain of the Cairns Junior Representative hockey team, who went on to win the Roxy Cup that same year.

Reg’s first sporting passion was, and still is, rugby league and his love of the sport coincided with him meeting the love of his life, wife Maisie. After moving to Gunnedah in NSW, Reg started dating Maisie whose father happened to be the coach of the local football team.

In 1944 Reg was part of the undefeated premiership-winning Gunnedah Rockets rugby league team who took home the coveted Spicer Cup, a moment which he describes as his “favourite sporting memory.” (The Spicer Cup was a rugby league challenge trophy contested by teams in northern NSW that enjoyed significant popularity in the 1920s and 1930s).

Reg was known for his speed and at one stage was even the third fastest in the north-west NSW region, where he was living at the time.

“ I took my daughter to her first game at that oval when she was just two weeks old! ”



Reg played a range of sports including hockey.

“One day there was a race to see who was the fastest in the area,” says Reg. “I shouted my rival the largest beer the local pub offered before the race in an effort to beat him!” Unfortunately, Reg’s plan did not work and he was beaten by his beer-drinking rival!

Reg’s competitive spirit is not limited to rugby league, and says throughout his life he has tried many a sport with mixed success including: tennis (“my wife would beat me in tennis”); bowls (“never won a thing!”); hockey (“we were a multi-premiership winning team”); cricket; and sailing.

Being involved in sport was a family affair for the Matthews. Reg’s younger brother was also a keen rugby league player; his nephew Mitch Brennan played for Queensland in the State of Origin in the early 1980s; and his cousin’s daughter Michelle Mason Brown represented Australia in high jump at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

Reg also enjoys watching sport, and as a lifelong fan of the South Sydney Rabbitohs rugby league team, his family’s love affair with the team runs deep.

Reg recalled that the only outing he and Maisie could afford in their early years together was the entry fee to the local football ground, adding that fortunately that local ground was Redfern Oval; home of the Rabbitohs at the time, and just a few blocks walk away.

“I took my daughter to her first game at that oval when she was just two weeks old! My grandchildren are also fans and attend as many games as they can,” says Reg.

Although he hung up his playing boots a while ago, Reg has found plenty of ways to stay connected to the world of sports including through his community at Marco Polo Woonona.

“I go in the annual footy tipping comp every year,” says Reg. “I’m looking forward to watching some of the events at the Olympics this year, and I never miss the Melbourne Cup!”



IRT Seaview residents participate in fortnightly exercise and wellbeing sessions in the village.

Focusing on wellbeing at IRT Seaview

When IRT Seaview resident Kerry Wilson decided to investigate holding exercise and wellbeing sessions at the retirement village, she was motivated not by the latest online fitness crazes but rather by the history of the village itself.

“I was inspired to start the program after looking through old albums in Thelma Lodge, which is a 120-year-old heritage-listed community centre within the grounds of Seaview,” explains Kerry. “The albums showed pictures from 10 to 15 years ago of a vibrant community participating in activities such as dance evenings and exercise groups.”

Upon seeing these photos, Kerry approached IRT about reinvigorating Thelma Lodge to host exercise and wellbeing sessions for village residents.

Before she retired, Kerry had spent over 20 years working in aged care in roles including personal care, diversional therapy, and management and understands the importance of social connection and physical activity in overall wellbeing.

“On average, residents are now older when moving into a retirement village and often experience loneliness as they tend to isolate themselves,” says Kerry. “COVID lockdowns also had a big impact on isolation for residents too.”

“The motivation for the program was to get residents ‘back on the horse’ and give them the confidence to socialise and engage with others, to meet their emotional needs, and to improve the wellness of the body and the mind.”

The wellbeing program

kicked off in October 2023 and sessions are run every two weeks at the retirement village. Activities being held can include anything from manicures to yoga and stretching to chair walking. Exercise classes are mostly seated, although some residents prefer to stand, and the sessions often incorporate light weights.

What IRT Seaview residents have to say:

“I never thought I could do this.”

“You have brought life back to Seaview.”

“Seaview is back! You have brought us back together!”

“We make sure the activities are appropriate to the demographic and can be modified for the level of mobility and cardiac health of the participants,” explains Kerry. “The focus is on overall wellbeing to get the community together in a social way, to exercise, to make it fun and enjoy movement.”

Chair walking, a seated exercise, has proven very popular.

“We currently walk one kilometre in 10 minutes and are hoping to eventually walk three kilometres in 30 minutes, but that’s a little way off yet!” says Kerry.

Vox pop

We asked retirement village residents at IRT The Ridge and IRT Parklands about memorable Olympic and sporting moments from their lives. Here's what they said.



Margie Woodhead,
IRT The Ridge

"I enjoy watching the Olympics, especially the swimming. My most memorable moment is probably when Thorpey [Ian Thorpe] won his three gold medals at the 2000 Olympics. I don't think there's anything else that comes up against it. I'm really happy downhill mountain biking is back in the Olympics, with a bit of luck my grandson will be competing for Australia in the sport at the Brisbane Olympics. He's 14 now and would love to compete in 2032."



Reg Baxter, IRT Parklands

"I definitely feel a sense of pride watching our athletes. They put in so much time and effort and to see them succeed is great. I think some of the excitement of watching sport comes from how the commentators bring it across. You can't help but get excited when the commentators are screaming at you through the TV!

"I love to play tennis, I've been playing since I was ten. There's a whole seniors tennis movement across Australia, and I also volunteer my time as secretary for Tennis Seniors Queensland. Every year there's an Australian teams carnival where over 100 teams compete and we play against other states. Tennis is a great way to keep fit and mentally switch off – you have to be totally focused on the game. It's also the social aspect that keeps me interested. There's a good network of people playing competitively in seniors tournaments. You get out there and play hard and then sit down afterwards and have a beer with them."



Wendy Hallam, IRT Parklands

"I don't like watching sport, I prefer to play it! I did stay up to watch the America's Cup when Bob Hawke was Prime Minister though. Everyone was saying Australia had a good chance of winning, so I watched it. I think everybody watched it!

"My own sporting moment was when I lived in Penang in the 1970s. I took up badminton and was chosen to go to Singapore for the Penang team. We played against a number of Asian teams including Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. I didn't win but it was certainly an experience!"



Liz Allen, IRT The Ridge

"My first, most memorable impression of the Olympics was in 1956 when my mother dressed myself and my sister in our Sunday best clothes and we went off to see the Olympics at the MCG in Melbourne. I was only six and I remember it being such a massive occasion, with all the people around me cheering.

"I like bike riding, and I rode across the Nullarbor in 2021. It was pretty memorable when we finally reached Adelaide, after 2800km and three weeks of riding. One thing I do get out of being active is the feeling of being fit, being strong and meeting up with other people. It just makes me happy. I'll just keep doing it for as long as I can!"



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Personal care



Cleaning and household tasks



Getting out and about

Down in the garden

Getting out in the garden is a great way to stay active. Gardening activities such as digging, weeding, trimming and raking use a range of muscles while encouraging us to be outside, which is great for our physical and mental wellbeing. For this edition of *The Good Life*, IRT Team Leader Gardening Brad Oliver provides us with some helpful tips to prepare our gardens for the cooler months ahead.

As the long sunny days of summer give way to cooler evenings, autumn brings a unique set of challenges and opportunities for the avid gardener. It's time to transition our gardens with care and consideration for the months that lie ahead, and with the right approach you can ensure your garden thrives as the temperatures begin to drop.

Embrace the seasonal change

Autumn is a time of transition, so it's time to take stock of your garden as summer blooms fade and foliage changes. As the months begin to cool conditions are perfect to prune summer flowering plants and hedges, remove deadwood, and check your plants for pests and diseases.

This is also the perfect time of year for planting; with the soil still warm, even though the heat of summer is slowly passing. These conditions can allow many plants to establish and grow before winter.

Whether you're planting cool season vegetables such as beetroot, broccoli or leeks or annual flowers like pansies or violas, don't forget to

fertilise. Fertilising will promote a good start for plants' roots to establish before the onset of the colder winter months.

Tend to your soil

Autumn is the ideal time to nourish your soil in preparation for the colder months ahead. To ensure your plants remain healthy throughout the season you can improve your soil and conserve moisture by mulching it well with a good organic compost.

Plan for spring

Take a moment to assess your garden, and start planning for spring. Consider what worked well and any changes and improvements you'd like to make for next year. Perhaps you'd like to include a veggie patch, or create some new flower beds, or find a spot for a compost bin. Now is the perfect time to lay the groundwork for your ideal garden going forward.

Take the time to enjoy your garden in autumn. By making the most of the autumn months you can set your garden up for success through winter and into spring.



Apricot chicken



In this edition, the IRT Catering team serves up a recipe that has been a dinner-time favourite for generations, and ideal for the cooler autumn and winter evenings ahead.

Serves
4

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tsp oil
- 600g skinless chicken thigh fillets
- 1 packet French onion soup mix
- 405ml tin apricot nectar
- 410g apricot halves in juice, drained
- Steamed rice to serve

METHOD:

1. Heat oil in a large frypan over a medium heat. Cook chicken for 5 minutes, turning occasionally, until golden brown.
2. Combine soup mix and apricot nectar. Pour over chicken. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in apricot halves and cook until heated through.
4. Serve with steamed rice.

Cover pan, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir occasionally until chicken is cooked.

3. Stir in apricot halves and cook until heated through.
4. Serve with steamed rice.

Out and about

A woolly affair

IRT Seaview's Knitters and Natters Group – whose members knit items for charities at home and abroad – is on the hunt for more good-quality yarn.



Group member Helen Martin says that they are very grateful to all the people who have donated yarn in recent times but still need more.

"In particular good-quality wool, like 8-ply, is ideal," she explains.

The groups' members knit items such as baby blankets, large blankets, jumpers, scarves and beanies for various charities.

If you'd like to donate yarn to the Knitters and Natters Group please email editor@irt.org.au or call Helen Martin on 4284 6487.



Taking in the view

Residents of IRT St Georges Basin enjoyed a lovely morning out in December (see photos below and left). The group had morning tea by the water, saw pelicans and enjoyed the smell of saltwater coming off St Georges Basin.





Magical mystery tour

It was a hauling good day on IRT The Palms' men's mystery tour in November (see photos above). Residents boarded a bus which took them to Brown and Hurley, a big truck dealership and

service agent in Burpengary, Queensland. The company has been operating for over 77 years and residents were given a tour and were presented with show bags, which included a trucker cap.



Residents, accompanied by family members and staff, enjoyed a ride on a trishaw at IRT Woodlands in January (see photos above and right). The experience, which happens monthly at the community, was offered by Cycling Without Age – a not-for-profit charity which gives those who are no longer able to ride a bike themselves free rides on a trishaw e-bike. The bikes are piloted by volunteer cyclists. Lifestyle and Hospitality Manager Janelle Robinson said that the rain held out for just enough time for the rides to go ahead. "It was so great to be able to have some family members along to share the experience too."

Happy 100th Tom

Family and friends helped IRT Five Islands Aged Care Centre resident Tom Fenton (pictured below) celebrate his 100th birthday on 24 February.



Tom celebrated the occasion with a morning tea at the care centre the day before his birthday, and at a party at Illawarra Yacht Club on the day.

Born in Helensburgh, NSW, Tom's family (including his parents) had moved there when his grandfather, an engineer from Scotland, took a job at the nearby Metropolitan Mine in 1912.

As a young man Tom completed his apprenticeship as a toolmaker and worked at BHP (Port Kembla Steelworks).

Tom married the love of his life Elsie Chant in 1950 in Wollongong and they had two children, Janine and Bruce.

After honeymooning in Orange, NSW, Elsie and Tom moved there in the early 1950s when a job opportunity came up.

Tom was a member of the Orange Male Voice Choir which performed regularly, including at Parliament House, National Library of Australia in Canberra, Sydney Town Hall and the Sydney Opera House.

During his life Tom has had a long association with the Freemasons and in 2022 was recognised for more than 70 years' service.

Today Tom has six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Happy birthday Tom!

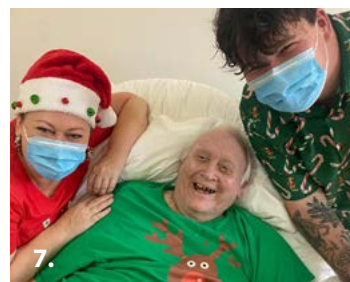
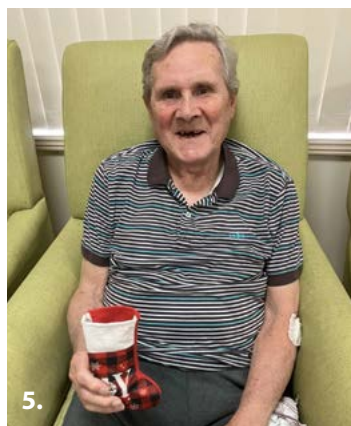
Hitting the dance floor

From seated dancing, to up and dancing and singing along to the songs, a fabulous time was had at IRT Kangara Waters Aged Care Centre during the Dance Health Alliance's DanceWise class in late January (see photos right). Lifestyle Manager Claudine Corbett-Clay said the residents were enjoying themselves so much they didn't want to break for lunch. Dance Health Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation which offers dance classes (like DanceWise) for those who have limited movement; IRT lifestyle staff have received training to facilitate the dance classes. A groovy time was had by all.



Christmas all wrapped up

Being the first edition of *The Good Life* magazine since Christmas, we thought we'd take the time to share photos of the festivities and celebrations across our communities. Here are some photos from IRT Kangara Waters (1-4), William Beach Gardens at IRT Kanahooka (5-7), IRT Thomas Holt Sans Souci Gardens (8-9) and IRT Sarah Claydon (10) care centres.



Plenty to celebrate at Seaview

To celebrate Christmas together and enjoy a communal singalong, the Seaview Residents' Social Committee organised their inaugural Carols in the Lodge in late December 2023. It was planned to be Carols by Torchlight but the rainy weather sent residents into the community centre, Thelma Lodge.

The Social Committee gathered a group of residents together to form the Seaview Christmas Choir who practised hard to lead the singing.

Resident Vic Chapman gave a mindful Welcome to Country and started the carol singing with a verse of Silent Night in Gamilaraay language.

Forty-five residents and their family members enjoyed



IRT Seaview resident Vic Chapman starting the singing off with Silent Night in Gamilaraay language.

the singalong, which ended with a visit from Santa Claus. Santa Claus was very well represented on the night by IRT Driver Ralph Stevenson who volunteered to help out. Christmas cake and fruit punch were provided to refresh



Santa (IRT Driver Ralph Stevenson) and his helpers, IRT Seaview Social Committee members (left to right) Helen Cameron, Kerry Wilson, Cath Dimond and Dianne McKellar.

everyone after their energetic singing.

The feedback from residents was very positive and they hope to be able to repeat the event in the twilight outdoors next Christmas season.

Thanks to Glynis Szafranec, Secretary Sea View Residents' Association, for her contribution to The Good Life magazine. She will receive a \$25 gift voucher.

Feeling bubbly

IRT Culburra Beach residents had a very enjoyable day in February which began indoors with milkshakes and reminiscing in the morning. Being such a beautiful day, residents then moved outside to enjoy the sunshine, fresh air, and a surprise bubble machine (see photos right).





Year of the Dragon

In February residents and staff at IRT Kangara Waters celebrated Lunar New Year, also known as Chinese New Year, with food, music,

costumes, decorations and fortune cookies (see photos above). In the Chinese zodiac calendar, 2024 is the Year of the Dragon.

In the mood for love

Cupid spread the love across our communities on Valentine's Day. At IRT Woodlands, residents enjoyed a concert with guitarist and singer John the Hatman and a special high tea in the afternoon (see right). While at IRT Culburra Beach residents enjoyed each other's company as they decorated cakes and then ate them for morning tea (see below).



Crossword Answers

Across: 1 Endure, 4 As it is, 9 Ablest, 10 Cod, 11 Near, 12 Net, 13 Presto, 15 One, 16 Agog, 17 Host, 19 Type, 20 Ties, 21 Avid, 22 Pick, 24 Euro, 27 Lift, 28 Nth, 29 Tee off, 31 Hat, 32 Will, 33 Ran, 34 Powers, 35 Yanked, 36 Bronze.

Down: 1 Embargo, 2 Duels, 3 Rut, 5 Sydney, 6 Tentative, 7 Seasons, 8 Accomplishing, 14 Out, 18 Triathlon, 21 Ability, 23 Kit, 25 Referee, 26 Untrue, 30 Edwin, 34 Par.

IRT locations

1 SUNSHINE COAST

- IRT The Palms, Buderim
- IRT Parklands, Currimundi
- IRT Woodlands, Meridan Plains

2 BRISBANE

- IRT The Ridge, Bracken Ridge

3 SYDNEY

- IRT Peakhurst, Peakhurst
- IRT Berala on the Park, Auburn
- IRT Macarthur, Campbelltown

4 SOUTH SYDNEY

- IRT Thomas Holt Kirrawee, Kirrawee
- IRT Thomas Holt Stafford Court, Jannali
- IRT Thomas Holt Kilpatrick Court, Sutherland
- IRT Thomas Holt Sans Souci Gardens, Sans Souci

5 NORTHERN ILLAWARRA

- IRT Seaview, Woonona
- IRT Birch Villa, Corrimal
- IRT Tarrawanna Gardens, Tarrawanna
- IRT Edwina, Corrimal
- IRT Woonona, Woonona
- IRT Tarrawanna, Tarrawanna
- Marco Polo Woonona

6 CENTRAL ILLAWARRA

- IRT Towradgi Park Lodge, Towradgi
- IRT Towradgi Park, Towradgi
- IRT Braeside, Keiraville
- Howard Court at IRT Pioneer Place, Wollongong
- Parkside at IRT Pioneer Place, Wollongong
- IRT Diment Towers, Wollongong

7 SOUTHERN ILLAWARRA

- William Beach Gardens at IRT Kanahooka, Kanahooka
- Henry Brooks Estate at IRT Kanahooka, Kanahooka
- Kemira at IRT Kanahooka, Kanahooka
- Jasmine Grove at IRT Kanahooka, Kanahooka
- IRT Harbourside, Kiama
- IRT Five Islands, Port Kembla
- Marco Polo Unanderra

8 SHOALHAVEN NORTH

- IRT Greenwell Gardens, Nowra
- IRT Culburra Beach, Culburra Beach

9 SHOALHAVEN SOUTH

- IRT St Georges Basin, St Georges Basin
- IRT Sarah Claydon, Milton

10 EUROBODALLA

- IRT The Clyde, Batemans Bay
- IRT Crown Gardens, Batemans Bay
- IRT Moruya, Moruya
- IRT Dalmeny, Dalmeny

11 ACT

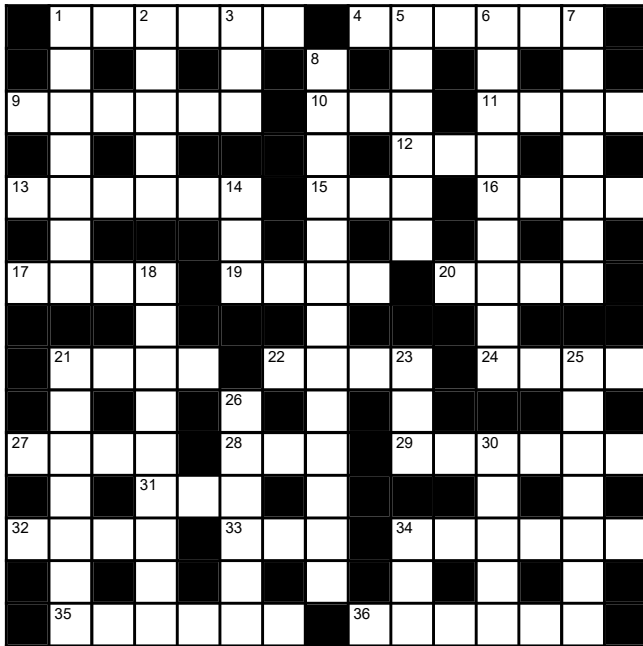
- IRT Kangara Waters, Belconnen

IRT HOME CARE

- We offer IRT home care services in South-East Queensland, South-East Sydney, South-West Sydney, Illawarra, South Coast, Far South Coast and ACT.



Crossword: Sports



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Across

- 6 Withstand (6)
- 4 In the existing circumstances (2,2,2)
- 9 Most capable (6)
- 10 Fish species, *Gadus morhua*, Atlantic ___ (3)
- 11 Close by (4)
- 12 Sporting apparatus made of mesh (3)
- 13 Voila, hey _____ (6)
- 15 Bryce Courtenay novel, *The Power of ___* (1989) (3)
- 16 Enthralled (4)
- 17 Paris, Olympic ___ city 2024 (4)
- 19 Category (4)
- 20 Draws (4)
- 21 Enthusiastic (4)
- 22 Select (4)
- 24 European currency (4)
- 27 Elevate (4)
- 28 North (abbrev.) (3)
- 29 Start a round of golf (3,3)
- 31 Admire, take one's ___ off to (3)

- 32 Self-discipline (4)
- 33 Participated in a marathon (3)
- 34 Command (6)
- 35 Pulled (6)
- 36 Medal metal (6)

Down

- 1 Restriction (7)
- 2 Fencing matches (5)
- 3 Groove (3)
- 5 2000 Olympic city (6)
- 6 Yet to be confirmed (9)
- 7 Summer and winter (7)
- 8 Achieving (13)
- 14 Over the line (in a tennis match) (3)
- 18 Multisport race (9)
- 21 Prowess (7)
- 23 Equipment (3)
- 25 Umpire (7)
- 26 False (6)
- 30 Australia's first Olympic gold medallist, _____ Flack (5)
- 34 Good enough, up to ___ (3)

Answers can be found on page 34.

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IRT acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.