

Volunteer Update

This month, I had the privilege of visiting Warrigal Multicultural Village (WMV) in the Illawarra and spending time with the volunteer team, who have a longstanding connection with the home and its residents.

The Multicultural Village has a diverse range of residents from CALD backgrounds, and while chatting with the volunteers, we discussed the challenges of communicating with residents who have memory loss or dementia and may revert to their first language. In this edition, I have included some tips for communicating with dementia residents to assist with these interactions.

I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the many stories of the work our volunteers at WMV are doing, as well as having a great laugh.

This month, we also celebrated a volunteer's 94th birthday and said farewell to a volunteer who has retired after 19 years of volunteering at Warrigal!

Thank you to everyone who completed the 2024 Volunteer Feedback Survey; your valuable feedback helps us celebrate what we are doing well and identifies areas for improvement.

We always love hearing the stories, experiences, and connections of our volunteers, so if you'd like to share yours, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Michelle Chate, Volunteer Coordinator

Margaret retires after 19 years of volunteering!

After an incredible 19 years of volunteering, we say farewell to Margaret King from APR. Retiring at the age of 91 was a difficult decision for Margaret, whose commitment and boundless energy has left a lasting legacy.

Reminiscing about the early days at APR, Margaret shared memories of how volunteers rallied together to support the relocation of residents during renovations.



Margaret King
Retired Volunteer

"We'd pack up all their things, settle them into their new rooms, and once the renovations were complete, we'd move them back again".

Margaret volunteered three days a week over many years. Whether it was organising seasonal fashion parades, facilitating group games, or working in the APR café, Margaret embraced every opportunity to spread joy and laughter. Margaret's versatility has always shone through, from giving gentle massages and doing clothing alterations to bringing holiday cheer by Christmas shopping for residents.

Margaret's warmth, positive attitude and infectious smile have always been a shining light at APR. "I've enjoyed every minute of volunteering" Margaret said.

As Margaret retires to dedicate more time to her growing family, we know she won't be a stranger. Margaret will continue to make crocheted tea towels for the café to sell and plans on delivering chocolate goodies for Easter.

Margaret, your remarkable contributions to Warrigal APR will always be cherished and fondly remembered. From everyone at APR and the wider Warrigal community, we give our heartfelt thanks for your 19 years of volunteer service.

Tips for Communicating with Dementia Residents from CALD Backgrounds

Communicating with someone with dementia from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background, especially when they revert back to their first language, can be challenging. Here are some tips to help facilitate communication and connection:

1. **Use simple language and gestures** - speak slowly and clearly using simple words and gestures to convey your message. Keep sentences short and to the point.
2. **Familiarity** - if you know which language the individual reverts back to, try to learn some basic phrases or words in that language to facilitate communication.
3. **Non-verbal communication** - use facial expressions, body language, and gestures to convey your message. Non-verbal cues can often be more easily understood and interpreted than words.
4. **Visual aids** - utilise visual aids such as pictures, photographs, or drawings to support communication. These can help trigger memories and facilitate understanding.
5. **Be patient and attentive** - give the resident time to process information and respond. Be patient and avoid interrupting or rushing the conversation.
6. **Engage in activities** - engaging in activities together, such as listening to music, looking at old photographs, or participating in simple tasks, can provide opportunities for connection and communication.
7. **Use technology** - technology can also be a helpful tool for communication. Consider using translation apps or devices that can translate your words into the individual's first language.
8. **Seek assistance from family or staff** - if possible, involve family members or staff who are fluent in the resident's first language. They can help facilitate communication and provide insights into the resident's preferences and needs.
9. **Create a supportive environment** - ensure the environment is free from distractions and conducive to communication. Minimise background noise and other distractions that could hinder communication.
10. **Show empathy and understanding** - approach the resident with empathy, understanding, and respect. Show that you value and respect their cultural background and language.

Remember, every individual with dementia is unique, and what works for one resident may now work for another. It's essential to adapt your communication approach based on the resident's preferences, needs, and abilities.

Meet the team at Warrigal Multicultural Village



Francis Tan
Residential Services
Manager

Rebecca Marshall
Acting Lifestyle Team
Leader



Deborah, Rebecca, Gluby
Lifestyle Team



Annie, Karen, Roula, Julie, Stephen
Volunteers



Peter and Marita
Volunteers

Volunteer Freda Celebrates Turning 94!



Freda from Warrigal Goulburn recently celebrated her 94th birthday with the Goulburn Auxiliary volunteers, family and friends.

Freda has been a dedicated volunteer at Warrigal for many years, and it's truly extraordinary to have such an active volunteer at the age of 94.

Throughout her years of volunteering, Freda has been incredibly active and involved. When her husband fell ill in 2004 and moved into Mirambeena Nursing Home, Freda would be found at the home six days a week, not only caring for her husband, but also providing companionship and conversation for other residents.

After the opening of Warrigal Goulburn, Freda continued her volunteering efforts as Treasurer of the Warrigal Goulburn Auxiliary. Alongside our current members, Freda assists with fundraising and leads our knitting group. Many beautiful hand-knitted blankets, made by Freda and others, have been donated to our residents.

During COVID lockdown, Freda hand wrote letters to the residents, ensuring they remained connected during a challenging period.

Freda's works tirelessly to raise funds to purchase gifts for Christmas, Easter, Mother's and Father's Day. As part of the Auxiliary they also contribute to essential purchases such as air chairs, air mattresses and setup for the palliative care room.

Despite her immense contributions, Freda doesn't seek recognition. In her own words, "I just do it because things need doing. I enjoy helping others". *Sue McDonald, Auxiliary Volunteer*



Freda Bush
**Treasurer, Warrigal
Goulburn Auxiliary**



Spreading Joy and Laughter at Warrigal Multicultural Village



Annie Gretch
Volunteer WMV

Meet Annie, a cherished and vibrant volunteer at Warrigal Multicultural Village (WMV). When you chat with Annie you are immediately drawn in by her enthusiasm for life, sense of humour and dedication to volunteering.

Annie began working as at WMV as a cleaner and cook many years ago, when there were only five residents. As the home grew and more residents came, she was asked to cook for 70 residents. Not a problem for Annie, "I just needed a bigger pot"!

After Annie retired, she was quick to become a volunteer, as she knew she would miss all the residents and staff. "I have a heart for the elderly; they have so much to give".

When asked about how volunteering makes her feel Annie said "If I stay at home, I feel 100. The more I'm involved and volunteering, the happier I am".

Annie runs Bingo and proudly declares "my numbers are so clear". Annie also volunteers with Church services and provides companionship to residents during visits and chats.

With Annie around, there's no shortage of laughter, joy and heart-warming moments. Thank you Annie, for your volunteer work. You are a shining example of the difference one person can make.

Dementia Care Training for Volunteers

Are you interested in learning more about dementia and supporting people living with dementia or experiencing memory and thinking problems?

Dementia Training Australia is offering a **FREE** online course for volunteers. The completion time is approximately 4 hours over one week, and upon completion, you will receive a Certificate of Completion.

Click on the following link to access the course:

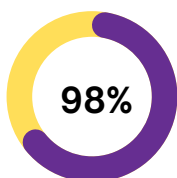
<https://dta.com.au/online-courses/dementia-care-training-for-volunteers/>

Volunteer Feedback Survey 2024

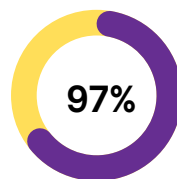


We received **150** responses from volunteers, with 95% of respondents intending to continue volunteering at Warrigal in the future.

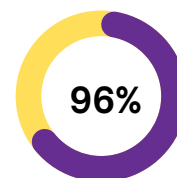
These responses and feedback has provided us with valuable insights to help optimise the Warrigal volunteer experience. Below is an initial brief overview.



Are satisfied with their volunteer experience.



Would recommend Warrigal's volunteer program to a friend.



Feel like valued members of the Warrigal team.

Warrigal Volunteers make a significant impact through various activities, engaging with residents and providing extra assistance to our staff.

Volunteers bring joy through music, gardening, Church services, cafes, Op Shop, auxiliaries, activities, bus outings, just to name a few, making residents smile and fostering connections.

Thank you for all that you do.

Wollongong

Michael Patterson will be the Acting Lifestyle Team Leader until August while Wendy McKnight is on leave. For Wollongong volunteers, Michael's contact details are listed below.



Queanbeyan

Welcome back Maddie Memmolo, Lifestyle Team Leader at Queanbeyan! A big thank you to Rikma and Belinda for their support and guidance to our volunteers during your absence.



Community Facilitators

Shell Cove - Scott Rayner 0476 858 872
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Queanbeyan - Kathleen Thompson 0408 486 016
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Lifestyle Team Leaders

APR - Natasha McAlister 0476 858 870
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Multicultural Village - Rebecca Marshall 4276 3212
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Queanbeyan - Maddie Memmolo (02) 5110 3500
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Stirling - Sushila Subedi (02) 6287 0200
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Wollongong - Michael Patterson 0458 068 486
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For all volunteer enquiries please contact Warrigal's Volunteer Coordinator

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