

# My life, my way



News from our community

SUMMER 2023/24

## welcome

What a year this has been for all of us! Here at AccessCare, we've been hard at work growing our services, upskilling our staff and improving care for you, our valued clients.



In the past 12 months, our teams have completed important training in dementia care and mental health. We also added a new route to our community bus service, allowing clients to access the wonderful Danny Frawley Centre in Moorabbin, and we launched a brand-new service called Social Links, which is designed to help our clients and community members build stronger social connections.

We have also been busy preparing for the upcoming aged care reforms, with the government announcing earlier this year that they have moved the start date of their improved in-home care program to 1 July, 2025.

You will likely read a lot of stories in the news about what this program will look like and how it will affect existing home care providers, but I want to assure you these reforms will not impact the service you receive from us. We at AccessCare remain as committed as ever to supporting our clients through home care services and ensuring that our community is a place where all people can age well, now and in the future.

We will continue to keep you updated on the upcoming aged care reforms, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please call 1300 819 200 to speak to a member of our team.

Finally, as the year draws to a close, I'd like to take this moment to extend a huge thank you to everyone in our community. At AccessCare, we are so appreciative for the dedication, compassion and kindness shown by our staff and our volunteers every single day. We are also so grateful to our clients and their carers, and I'd like to thank you all for your continued trust and unwavering support over the past 12 months.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter, and I look forward to speaking with you again in the new year.



**Margie Hanrahan**  
Manager – AccessCare

**READ OUR  
INSPIRING  
STORIES**  
*inside*

How Lorraine sought closure by putting pen to paper

Page 02

Home care helps Margaret and her mum to live their best lives

Page 06

How to get started with advance care planning

Page 07

# How Lorraine sought closure by putting *pen to paper*

On the back cover of her debut novel, *Broken Head*, AccessCare client Lorraine asks the question that's at the very heart of the book: "Whatever happened to Bob Patterson?"

One morning in 1958, when Lorraine was only 25 years old, her father got into his car, drove to Port Campbell on Victoria's southwest coast, and was never seen or heard from again.

It wasn't until years later, after Lorraine had retired, that the trauma of not knowing what had happened all those years ago became too much to bear, and she realised she needed answers.

"When something like this happens, and there's no body, then there's no resolution," says Lorraine.

In the pursuit of this longed-for resolution, she decided it was finally time to visit the place where her father had disappeared.

Theories of course abounded over the years regarding what might have happened to her father. Some people thought he could have hitched a ride from Port Campbell to the airport and flown to Canada to start a new life.

Another even darker theory suggested that her father's life may have come to an end in that coastal town, with the cliffs of the nearby Broken Head headland a notorious place for people take their own lives.

"My father was a brilliant man, and had a top job at the Ford Motor company. For some reason though, things weren't going well for him. He'd had an awful accident, and he'd also told me he had a mistress," says Lorraine. "Then on one particular morning, he said to my mother, 'You'll never see me again', and drove off."

The one thing Lorraine knows for sure about what happened next was that her father arrived in Port Campbell that same day.

"There's evidence he had breakfast at the Karoa café," says Lorraine. "He was seen by two people: the waitress and the policeman's wife, who'd gone down there to buy milk.

*"He'd ordered eggs and bacon for breakfast, which was his favourite thing. The waitress said he was sitting in the corner of the café and was looking out the window as if he was expecting someone. One could think he was picked up by someone and driven to the airport. In those days there wasn't the technology we have today, so you couldn't have traced him. He could have been picked up by someone and disappeared."*

Finding no answers in Port Campbell, Lorraine returned to Melbourne. However, within her disappointment, Lorraine found fresh inspiration. She decided to enrol in a creative writing course, and turn her pain into her very first novel, *Broken Head*.



## On the cover:

AccessCare community bus driver Leanne with some happy clients at the Fitzroy Gardens.



Above: Lorraine at home with copies of her debut novel, *Broken Head*. Inset: *Broken Head*'s cover art was designed by Lorraine's grandson and granddaughter.

"[My father's] body was never found, so either he went over that cliff, or he didn't," says Lorraine, who even hired a private investigator to help with her search for the truth, but to no avail. "My job with the book was to try to work out which alternative was true."


The process of completing the book took years, and sadly no resolution was ever found. However, Lorraine, who is now in her 90s, did find something else she'd longed for: closure.

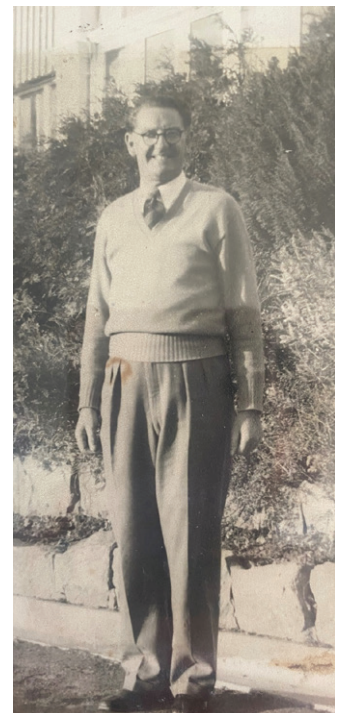
"For years I didn't think he went over [the cliff]. I guess after all this time, I'm inclined to think he went to Canada.

***"It was cathartic," Lorraine admits of writing the book, then after a pause adds, "The whole thing takes you over."***

Lorraine, who has been an AccessCare client since early 2023, is now a member of a community writer's group, which she credits for helping her to finally finish *Broken Head*. Now, from her sunlit home office, Lorraine is busy on her second book, *Isabelle*, which is also inspired by Lorraine's own life experiences.

"The main character is a clergyman's wife, and I was a clergyman's wife, so it's a bit of a send up," says Lorraine with a laugh.

With Lorraine's first short story also recently completed, her pen is showing no signs of slowing down. AccessCare is proud to be able to support Lorraine to remain living in her own home, where she has a lifetime of story inspiration all around her. 



Lorraine's father.



For more inspiring stories about AccessCare's incredible clients, please visit our website by scanning this QR code:





# keeping cool in the summer heat

Extremely hot weather can have serious impacts on your body, with many people aged 65 years and over at increased risk of heat-related illnesses. These illnesses – including heat rashes and cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke – happen when the body cannot cool itself down properly and maintain a healthy temperature.

The below guide is designed to help you stay healthy and safe during the coming summer months, and is based on information presented in the Department of Health's 'Survive the heat' brochure.

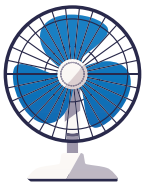
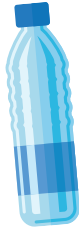
## What are the signs of a heat-related illness?

The table below should help you to recognise the symptoms of some heat-related illnesses, and explain what to do if you experience any of these.

Heat-related illness	Symptoms	What to do
<b>Heat cramps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Muscle pains</li> <li>» Spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place</li> <li>» Drink cool water</li> <li>» Rest a few hours before returning to activity</li> <li>» See a doctor if cramps persist</li> </ul>
<b>Heat exhaustion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pale complexion and sweating</li> <li>» Rapid heart rate</li> <li>» Muscle cramps, weakness</li> <li>» Dizziness, headache</li> <li>» Nausea, vomiting</li> <li>» Fainting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Go to a cool area and lie down</li> <li>» Drink cool water if not vomiting</li> <li>» Remove outer clothing</li> <li>» Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths</li> <li>» See a doctor</li> </ul>
<b>Heatstroke (a life-threatening emergency)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Same symptoms as heat exhaustion except sweating stops</li> <li>» Mental condition worsens, confusion</li> <li>» Seizure</li> <li>» Stroke-like symptoms or collapsing</li> <li>» Unconsciousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Call an ambulance – phone 000</li> <li>» Get the person to a cool area and lay them down</li> <li>» Remove clothing</li> <li>» Wet skin with water, fanning continuously</li> <li>» Position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway</li> </ul>

## How can I prepare for extreme heat?

- ✓ Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty (if your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather)
- ✓ Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers



- ✓ Spend as much time as possible in cool or air conditioned buildings (such as shopping centres, libraries, cinemas or community centres)

- ✓ Block out the sun at home during the day by closing curtains and blinds
- ✓ Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day
- ✓ Wear a hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made from natural fibres like cotton and linen



- ✓ Stock up on food, water and medicines so you don't have to go out in the heat. Visit your doctor to check if changes are needed to your medicines during extreme heat


- ✓ Store medicines safely at the recommended temperature.



## What should I do if I start to feel sick?

If you start to feel unwell during the heat of the summer, visit your doctor or call NURSE-ON-CALL on **1300 60 60 24** for support and advice.

In an emergency, call triple zero (**000**), or go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.


As always, the team at AccessCare is here to support you, and we will be conducting welfare calls and welfare checks on vulnerable clients throughout the summer. If you require any advice or wish to speak to anyone about how best to prepare for extreme heat, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team on **1300 819 200**. 



## Need a new book?

Let the library come to you

Did you know that the City of Kingston has a home library service?

Available to eligible Kingston residents who are unable to visit their local library in person, this free service allows you have library books – as well as DVDs, CDs, magazines and more – delivered straight to your door, ensuring you always have something new to read. 



To find out more or to register your interest, head to the City of Kingston's website by scanning this QR code:



# Home care helps Margaret and to live their *best lives*

It's not hard to understand why 93-year-old Eunice is so determined to continue living at home. After all, she has lived in the same house for some 70 years, experiencing all the highs and lows of her long life from within the same set of walls. Even after her husband passed away nine years ago, she knew there was nowhere she would rather live.

However, earlier this year, Eunice's health began to decline.

"After mum had several falls, I was a bit concerned, as her cognitive state isn't as good as it could be," says Margaret, Eunice's daughter and primary carer.

*"But we felt that she would be happier staying in her own home with support rather than going into residential care."*

Conveniently, Eunice was already a client of AccessCare and therefore was used to support workers visiting throughout the week to assist her with certain tasks.



Three generations in one photo: Margaret with her mother and her daughter.

"We made the decision that as she now has a level four [home care] package, that we will just continue to get more support to ensure that she can stay at home."

Now, Eunice has a support worker coming to her home every Monday and Thursday to take her shopping and to help her with other jobs around the house and in the community. Additionally, she has a cleaner who comes every Friday.

This extra support has proved to be a huge help not only to Eunice, but to Margaret as well.

"I don't actually live in Melbourne; I live in country Victoria," says Margaret. Previously, Margaret would have to travel two and half hours each way, nearly every day, to care for her mother. But now, she has peace of mind knowing she is a part of community dedicated to providing her mother with the very best care.

"I've got the support workers' days worked out around the times that it's most convenient for me to be down in Melbourne," says Margaret. "I'll come down at least three days a week now, making sure that I'm there to support mum through whatever she needs, like medical appointments or getting her hair cut. All those extra things."

Margaret says knowing that her mother has people coming to support her on the days when she's not there is incredibly calming.

"It's respite for me that I don't actually have to be down in Melbourne with her at all times," says Margaret.

# her mum

*“It just takes the weight and the pressure off me, having other people you know you can rely on to do certain things, and to be there for mum.”*

“It allows me to have some time in my own home, and means I am still able to have a slight life in my own town.”

Many carers struggle to find the time to care for themselves, but by knowing that her mother is supported by familiar and friendly support workers, Margaret can once again run her own errands, including taking herself to the doctor.

“AccessCare has enough different support services that they’re able to meet all mum’s needs. And the communication [with our aged care advisor] is brilliant.

*“It’s reassuring to know that the support is there to ensure mum’s life at home stays the best it can possibly be.”* ○

## How to get started with advance care planning



Back in October, we held a special free information session on advance care planning as a part of the City of Kingston’s seniors festival. It was a very interesting and informative session, so we thought we would share some of the key takeaways with you, in case you were unable to join us on the day.

Advance care planning involves making decisions now about the healthcare you would like – or would not like – to receive in the future if you become so seriously ill or injured that you are unable to communicate your treatment preferences.

For example, it can include your preferences on palliative or end-of-life care, and what treatments you do and do not consent to receive.

“We recommend to a lot of our clients that they consider advance care planning, and consider it while they are relatively well,” says AccessCare nurse Kate.

*“It can provide valuable guidance to your family and medical team regarding your wishes and values in relation in your life and your healthcare. Additionally, it can reduce stress and anxiety for family members if they ever need to make decisions for you.”*

Regardless of your age or health, it’s never too early to consider advance care planning. Much like making a Will, advance care planning is available to everyone, and can be updated over time if your choices change.

Getting started with advance care planning is easy; it requires you to first take some time to really think about what’s important to you, and taking stock of your values and preferences.

The next step is to start talking with your family, friends, doctors and aged care workers about your choices. These conversations should be ongoing; naturally, your preferences may change over time, so it’s important that you keep your loved ones and healthcare team up to date on what you want and don’t want in terms of your future health.

To make sure your wishes are respected, it’s important to formalise these discussions. Ideally, this will include recording your preferences in an advance care directive, which is legally binding.

If you would like to find out more about advance care planning, please reach out to the AccessCare team, who will happily discuss your options and share further resources with you. ○

# Kitchen counter

This issue's healthy and delicious recipe comes from our aged care advisor Emily, and is approved by our nursing team.

## Halloumi with corn, cherry tomatoes and basil

Makes 2-3 servings

### Ingredients:

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
350g halloumi cheese, diced into 1-inch cubes  
2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen and thawed (if fresh, this is about 2 or 3 ears of corn)  
2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved  
1 jalapeño, thinly sliced (if you don't like too much spice, remove the seeds)  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
1 teaspoon salt  
¾ cup red onion, thinly sliced  
½ cup fresh basil, chopped (extra for the garnish)  
1 lime, cut into wedges  
Black pepper

### Method:

#### Step 1

In a large, preferably non-stick frying pan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over a medium-high heat for about 20 seconds. Working in batches, add cheese in one layer, and cook until golden on one side, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip cheese and cook until golden on the other side, about 1 minute longer. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and repeat with remaining cheese.

#### Step 2

Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil to the pan and heat it over medium-high. Add corn, tomatoes, jalapeño (leave this out if you don't like spicy foods), cumin seeds and salt, and cook until corn and tomatoes have softened, about 5 to 10 minutes.

#### Step 3

Remove pan from the heat and stir in the browned halloumi, sliced onion and basil. Squeeze a lime wedge or two over everything and season with more salt and lots of black pepper. Garnish with more basil and serve immediately.

Enjoy! 🍷



 AccessCare

1300 819 200

[accesscare.org.au](https://www.accesscare.org.au)

If you have a story you'd like to share in our next newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at [info@accesscare.org.au](mailto:info@accesscare.org.au).

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email in the future, please let us know via [info@accesscare.org.au](mailto:info@accesscare.org.au).

If you have a spare moment, we would love it if you could leave us a review on Google by scanning this QR code:



AccessCare proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.