

## New website: your easy navigation is our focus

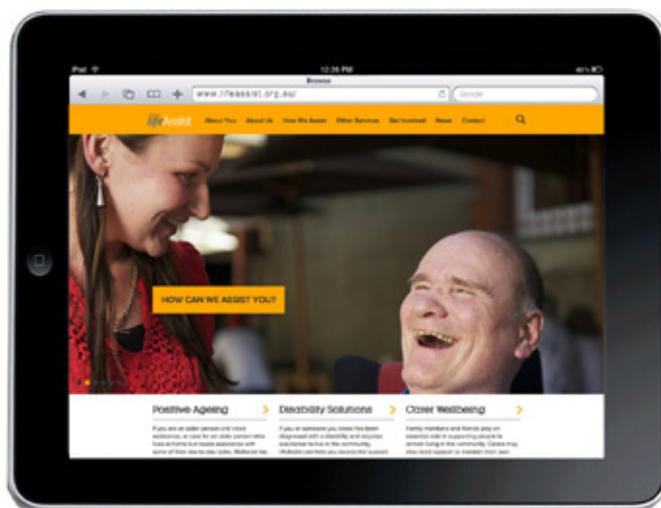
**By the click of no more than four option buttons, anyone looking for help will find specific options which suit their personal needs...**

UnitingCare lifeAssist has launched its new website which is believed to be ground-breaking within the community services sector.

As anyone who has ever tried to access community services will agree, trying to navigate your way through the various organisations and available options can be overwhelming. This is particularly so for anyone seeking assistance within the aged care or disability support sectors, whether for themselves or for a friend or family member.

As one client recently commented to lifeAssist: "I was with the RAAF for five years and flew commercial planes for 38 years, but I'm damned if I can navigate the aged care system."

Until now, the common approach by most organisations has been to provide page after page of information about the services they provide. People looking for help have been expected to wade through all of this information trying to find possible solutions to their particular need.



"The frustrating thing is that almost nobody plans to need outside assistance. For most people the need arises from a trigger event such as an unexpected change in circumstances, or has been delayed until the need for assistance becomes critical" said UnitingCare lifeAssist Chief Executive, Gerry Mak. (Continued on page 3)

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**Young carers' fun escape to Portsea Camp**

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# Adapting to changing times

from the  
**Chief Executive's desk**

Organisations like UnitingCare lifeAssist have traditionally received most of their income in the form of federal and state government grants, allocating them on a needs basis to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. In our case that focus has been on disability solutions, positive ageing and carer wellbeing for over 26 years. However, this is about to change dramatically for aged care and disability care.

Grant beneficiaries, variously referred to as participants, clients or consumers, will soon be empowered to exercise much more choice and control in how their funding is managed. This will come with both the announced aged care reforms, effective from 1 July 2015, and the NDIS rollout beyond the trial sites likely to commence within a year or so thereafter. In effect, instead of being tied to a particular grant administrator, people will be free to decide which services they will purchase and from which agencies those services are provided. This is known as 'Consumer Directed Care' (CDC).

Thus, not for profit agencies like lifeAssist will have to compete on price and quality to attract clientele. We understand this and, indeed, welcome it, because we have been thought leaders through our research and advocacy in the societal and public policy shift to CDC. In fact we are applying CDC principles to all our activities, not just the ones mandated by law.

Like any successful business operating in a competitive market, we understand the crucial importance of listening to our participants to be sure we properly understand their needs. That is why we have a Participant Committee and why we have developed explicit service standards for every participant touchpoint with lifeAssist. This has led to drafting a Participant Charter of Rights which we will formally announce in the next edition of *The Bugle*.



Our new website, launched in July, is another example of how we place participant needs at the centre of our universe. Visit our website and see how easy it is to find the specific answers to unique circumstances at [www.lifeassist.org.au](http://www.lifeassist.org.au)

The provision of quality services is not by itself a guarantee of a sustainable organisation. People must see sufficient value to pay the asking price, noting that comparisons between alternative offerings will inevitably be made. We are ensuring that our cost structure will enable us to be price competitive. The fact that our new self-funded services offering, mylifeAssist, is steadily growing, is testament to our focus on cost effectiveness and consumer value. Indeed, we are finding there are cases where we can actually save people money through the application of our service navigation and care coordination expertise.

We are therefore committed to working closely with participants to ensure continuity of care in the lead up to and during these coming years of transition to CDC, and to continue as a standard bearer for the important human rights enshrined in CDC.

Finally, we are also vitally involved in the Victoria/ Tasmania Synod review of all UnitingCare agencies to ensure we all adapt to best serve the interests of clients and communities in the new social sector and business environment.

**Gerry Mak** Chief Executive

# New website: assistance within 30 seconds

(...from page 1)

“When they do decide they need help, they need it urgently. For many, this is also a highly emotional and stressful time. The last thing they want to do is spend hours reading websites trying to find something that sounds like a possible solution to their situation.”

The launch of lifeassist.org.au has changed this forever.

For anyone looking for assistance, the new website can provide all options which are relevant to the individual and their personal circumstances in less than 30 seconds.

By the click of no more than four option buttons, anyone looking for help will find specific options which suit their personal needs from all the programs which lifeAssist can source, including

government-funded, self-funded and free access or referral services.

The new website simply takes a common-sense approach, replicating the typical first contact conversation that would take place if anyone makes an enquiry by phone.

“The first thing we would do is ask someone about themselves and their needs if they rang looking for help,” said Mr Mak.

“We wouldn’t rattle off all of the things we do and wait for the person on the other end of the phone to say ‘that sounds like me’. We have applied exactly the same principle in designing our new website.”

The website has been in development since early 2014, going live in mid-July.

Just choose ‘About You’ then easily click through scenarios which define who you are and your situation; your lifeAssist help options are immediately presented to you, with no need to go hunting for them.

## LATE NEWS!

Our new website has been nominated in the not-for-profit category of the 2014 Australian Web Industry Awards, which recognise outstanding website design and acknowledge excellence in websites at the highest level.

The screenshot shows the lifeAssist website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with the lifeAssist logo and links for 'About You', 'About Us', 'How We Assist', 'Other Services', 'Get Involved', 'News', and 'Contact'. Below the navigation bar is the heading 'I Need Assistance Now'. Underneath are six icons representing different user scenarios: 'Myself', 'Disability', 'Future Planning', a heart with a cross, '5. Your options', and a speech bubble. Below these icons are six service cards. The first card is 'Short Term or Emergency Respite' with a 'SELECT' button. The second is 'Services and Referrals for Carers' with a 'SELECT' button. The third is 'One-on-one Carer Support' with a 'SELECT' button. The fourth is 'myLifeAssist' with a 'Read more' link. The fifth is 'Other/Custom' with a 'Read more' link. The sixth card is a dark grey box with the text 'Select 1 or more packages and PROCEED TO NEXT STEP' and a right-pointing arrow. A red arrow points from the 'About You' link in the navigation bar to the 'I Need Assistance Now' heading. Another red arrow points from the 'Myself' icon to the 'Short Term or Emergency Respite' card. A third red arrow points from the 'SELECT' button on the 'One-on-one Carer Support' card to the 'PROCEED TO NEXT STEP' button.

## Coming events

lifeAssist will have information stands at the following expo events. For an up-to-date list visit our website [lifeassist.org.au](http://lifeassist.org.au) and see the 'Events' page under 'News'.



### **RIDE Disability Expo**

Wednesday September 3, 10am-2pm  
Hungarian Community Centre,  
760 Boronia Road, Wantirna.

### **Melbourne Retirement, Lifestyle and Travel Expo**

Friday September 12 to Sunday  
September 14, 10am-4pm daily  
Caulfield Racecourse.

### **City of Whitehorse Positive Ageing Expo**

Thursday October 2: The Whitehorse  
Centre, 397 Whitehorse Rd Nunawading.

### **Maroondah Seniors Wellbeing Expo**

Thursday October 23: Eastland Shopping  
Centre, 171-175 Maroondah Highway,  
Ringwood.

## **Staff 'amazing, kind, compassionate and caring' – thank-you**

**Every now and then we receive little reminders of the impact our services can have. The following is the text from a thank-you card received:**

A short note to thank UnitingCare lifeAssist for their help with my father over the past month.

Your caring, helpful attention, even though at very short notice, was very much appreciated.

Every staff member and carer have been amazing, kind, compassionate and caring.

This journey I am having with my beloved father has been helped by the wonderful attitude of lifeAssist.

Whilst the care for Dad is the most important part, I certainly appreciate the attention and help given to me as his primary carer.

Thank-you all. *(Name and date with for privacy)*

# Portsea Camp getaway for young carers



Young carers escaped to the Mornington Peninsula recently for fun at the Portsea Camp.

The time away included meeting new people, relaxation with lots of chill out time and a day visit to Peninsula Hot Springs.

The camp also involved fun and adventure with horse riding on the beach, abseiling and many other experiences to remember!



Contact the Young Carers team to find out what other activities we have planned.

**Call 1800 052 222 or email  
[youngcarers@lifeassist.org.au](mailto:youngcarers@lifeassist.org.au)**

## New carers community garden group

The Carers Community Garden is a new group for people who care for individuals who are living with Mental Illness and reside in the southern region - Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong.

Carers can enjoy meeting with other people in a similar situation, learning new gardening skills and wellbeing ideas, enjoying free lunch and participating in other carer support activities.

The Carers Community Garden is a partnership between Mental Health Respite Carer Support Options UnitingCare lifeAssist and Hampton Park Uniting Place.

For more information please contact Mental Health Respite Carer Support Options on 9239 3932, email: [Rose.Coulter@lifeassist.org.au](mailto:Rose.Coulter@lifeassist.org.au) or visit our website [www.lifeassist.org.au](http://www.lifeassist.org.au)

We hope to see you there!

# Living the truth of who I am = peace

**Anne Hyde, part of the lifeAssist team looking at how we can become more inclusive of people who are sexually and gender diverse, met recently with one of our participants who identifies as a transgender woman. Shivanee (68) shared with Anne the story of her journey to realising the truth of who she is.**

I was born the eldest of eleven children and lived as a male for most of my life. I grew up in a family where there was very little affection shown and my father was a strict disciplinarian. Memories of my childhood include being “wacked” and doing chores, especially looking after my younger brothers and sisters. My parents divorced due to my father’s unfaithfulness. My brother died of leukaemia while I was in my mid-20s (on my birthday), my mother died when I was in my mid/ late-30s. My father then deserted the family after her death. These days I hear very little from my siblings unless I initiate the contact.

I also experienced a lot of bullying at school and called a “sissy” because I didn’t like football and cricket. I was sexually assaulted by my peers in my early teenage years, which was very traumatic. I knew as an 11 year-old that I was different, but not how to describe it. Sexuality was a taboo subject in my home.

I started work at 16 years old in two large soft furnishing retail stores and, at one point, supervised 60 people. At home, however, I was always treated as a child. At the table we were allowed to be seen, but not heard. If someone spoke, then we were rapped on the knuckles. At one point in my 30s everything got on top of me and I had a nervous breakdown.

I never had a partner. Prior to coming out I was a recluse. I wouldn’t open the door to people. I used to hide away. I had thoughts and ideas which I felt were sinful and dirty. Over the years my health deteriorated and I got sicker and sicker. At one point, about eight years ago, I was admitted to Southern Health’s Care in Context program to help identify ways to prevent my frequent admissions to hospital.

The situation was brought to a head when the psychiatrist I was seeing at Care in Context pointed out that the lie I was living was making me sick. In her opinion, I had two choices: to continue to hide from who I was (and get sicker and sicker – possibly ending in suicide); or to come out and accept who I am. I chose honesty and I think it is the best thing I ever did for myself. I finally had a name for who and what I was.

I have come a long way since those days, but there are still challenges. I am no longer concerned about how I am



perceived and no longer hate crowded shopping centres and busy waiting rooms. I used to find that I tended to assume the worst of people and think is quite common in people like me. These days I am completely at peace with myself.

For some people it is all about learning who they are sexually attracted to. For others, it is all about identity and being true to oneself. For most it is a combination of both.

I am still learning about how to be the real me. I want to learn how to apply make-up and dress well. I also want to help others who are coming out too. There aren’t any support groups around at the moment except on-line. I get a lot of comfort from my beautiful cat, Mr Bruthen.

What I think *Bugle* readers can learn from my story is:

- Trans-gender people can be very sensitive about discussing these issues and how they are perceived.
- It is important to be very clear when, where and with whom my information is shared and stored.
- Discussing issues of sexual identity needs to be initiated by the participant.
- Trans-people generally don’t like crowds and hide behind the phone and internet. If they can they will do as much as they can by phone or internet, get things delivered or take the last appointment of the day so there aren’t too many people around.
- Everyone has a different journey and it is important to recognise that.
- Trans-people often have a history of split lives, ie. working as a male, but living privately as a female.

**If anyone else would like to share their story about identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, please call Anne Hyde or Michelle Veale on 9239 2500**

It takes some effort to  
change “I can’t” to  
“I will” or “I can”.  
It’s a good habit  
that will shift  
you forward.



## Time to spring clean your mind

### A Pastoral Reflection by Siew-Kim Lim

Spring is here. There’s a bounce and a buzz in everyone’s step and some cheeriness in attitude and tone. Perhaps it’s the longer blue skies and shorter nights. For me, it’s noticing my first few jonquils in my garden patch that has lifted my spirit this morning. It never ceases to amaze me how these forgotten bulbs remind you of their presence with their display of beauty and fragrance year after year! It’s also noteworthy how something so insignificant (dried up and dead looking in the soil), so simple, so humble could provide such inspiration.

This is so similar to how we should tender to our lives so each season brings with it – great anticipation.

So with Spring here, it is time to prune, cut back or chop up some negative habits and thoughts and replace it with good attitudes and beliefs that will help enhance your life and well-being. Here are some suggestions to help you SPRING into A-C-T-I-O-N:

Clean out **NEGATIVE THOUGHTS** and replace it with **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**. It takes some effort to change “I can’t” to “I will” or “I can”. It’s a good habit that will shift you forward.

1. Clean out **PRIDE** (your ego) and replace it with **HUMILITY**. It’s lonely to only work with “I” and we all need another point of reference. You are never

alone in your experience so be open to share – start with just one or two?

2. Clean out **FEAR** and replace it with **COURAGE**. Be bold and take courage. I learnt from a wise mentor never to be afraid to ask for help because he/she can always say, ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ and that’s Okay as I have not lost one thing in asking but gained much by doing so!
3. Clean out **ANGER** and replace it with **SELF-CONTROL**. Anger eats you and when unmanaged, will take its toll on you and those you love. Know your triggers, find strategies that help or join an anger management workshop.
4. Clean out **BITTERNESS** and replace it with **FORGIVENESS**. Bitterness hardens your heart and only forgiveness will soften it. You do it so you are no longer imprisoned by the past.
5. Clean out **COMPLAINING** and replace it with **PRAISE/ENCOURAGEMENT**. “Every problem has a gift for you in its hands” (Richard Bach). If there’s a problem, contribute a solution – they may love you for it!

Enjoy Spring and here’s wishing you renewal of your mind.

(Note: If you need further support, please speak to your doctor, counsellor or a grief & loss counsellor)

## DONATIONS

### How you can make a difference

UnitingCare lifeAssist is a not-for-profit organisation working to achieve 'a good life for all'.

Your tax deductible financial contribution can help support our most innovative programs and make a lasting difference in someone's life.

In particular, we invite donations to our Realising Dreams Fund. Established in 2008, the Fund provides our participants with access to one-off grants to help them purchase a range of services or pieces of equipment which will contribute to their ability to realise a particular dream or goal.

#### I would like to make a donation to the lifeAssist Realising a Dream Fund

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(all donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

#### Payment method

**Cheque** (payable to lifeAssist)

**Electronic Funds Transfer.**

Account Name:

lifeAssist

BSB: 083-214 Account Number: 035597732

**Credit Card.** Please contact Helen Finn on 9239 2500 with your credit card details and payment can be processed over the telephone.

Please return this completed form to:

**lifeAssist**

**PO BOX 5267, BRANDON PARK VIC 3150**



## ABOUT US

UnitingCare lifeAssist is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities.

We have been supporting older people, people with disabilities and the unpaid carers who support them since 1987. Each year, we support around 4000 people throughout Melbourne's east and south.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of their circumstances. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for.

## CONTACTS

#### lifeAssist Head Office

Ground Floor,  
Building 5

Brandon Office Park  
530-540 Springvale Rd  
Glen Waverley 3150

**1300 ASSIST** (1300 277 478)

#### Direct2Care

Freecall: 1300 121 121

#### Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Disability: 1800 052 222

Ageing: 1800 059 059

(03) 9239 2500

TTY: 133 677

Fax: (03) 9239 2522

[www.lifeassist.org.au](http://www.lifeassist.org.au)

**Interpreters available on request: 131 450**

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