

MEDIA RELEASE

Celebrating Community Wisdom, is a heartfelt project designed to honour the invaluable contributions of older residents who have shaped our community through years of dedication, volunteer work, and leadership.

DATE

Wednesday 25 September 2024

Celebrating the wisdom and contributions of older residents during Seniors Week

United Way Glenelg (UWG) will launch "Celebrating Community Wisdom," a shire-wide initiative, at a special red-carpet event in Casterton marking the start of Seniors Month, a time to honour the invaluable contributions of older Australians.

This heartfelt project celebrates the dedication, volunteerism, and leadership of older residents who have shaped our region, while also commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Lewis Court Fund.

Through professionally produced short films, each up to 3 minutes in length, this initiative spotlights five inspiring older residents of Glenelg Shire, each recognised for their lifetime of service and involvement in the community.

Nicole Carr, Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg, emphasized the significance of this project, stating, "These films will honour and recognise the invaluable contributions that older people have made through lifelong volunteering and community service."

"By highlighting their stories, we not only celebrate their past contributions but also inspire future generations to continue these worthy traditions," stated Ms Carr.

"This project will serve as a living library, preserving these oral histories in digital form, which is accessible and engaging to everyone."

Celebrating Community Wisdom proudly honours the following individuals:

Jan and Ron Colliver – Portland: Recognised for their long association with the arts, particularly through CEMA, bringing the joy of music to older people at Harbourside Lodge and Jan's strong mentorship of students in the local community.

Stan Aitken – Portland: A dedicated presence at Portland Neighbourhood House, Stan has raised over \$400,000 for the community through BINGO, and continues to support local elderly and cancer patients. He coordinates the local diabetes group despite not having diabetes.

Andrew Legg – Heywood: A dairy farmer and pillar of the community, Andrew is known for his mentorship of young students, kindness, and resilience, continuing to support others despite personal challenges.

Wendy Dowling – Dartmoor: With over 60 years of community service, Wendy has contributed to numerous local projects, including the Tidy Town program, Neighbourhood Watch, and the development of the Memorial Tree streetscape.

Geoff Mitchell – Casterton: A fourth-generation farmer and dedicated community member, life member of the Casterton Football Club and has been actively involved in the Sandford Fire Brigade, Apex Club, Young Farmers, and the Kelpie Festival.

“Ten years ago, the Board of UWG was entrusted with the proceeds from the sale of Lewis Court Home for the Aged,” said Marg Wagner, United Way Glenelg President and former Lewis Court Home for the Aged Board Member.

“The funds have been invested and managed according to the wishes of the former Lewis Court Board to benefit our elderly community friends,” stated Ms Wagner.

“This project recognises the significant contributions by a number of Glenelg Shire stalwarts to the betterment of our community. I am thrilled to see the support and recognition for the aged sector continue with such impact.”

Since its inception, over \$300,000 has been reinvested back into community projects, supporting older people, with the original investment of \$1 million now sitting at \$1.8 million.

To watch these films, cafes across Glenelg Shire will feature QR codes on takeaway coffee cups, allowing patrons to scan and watch the films on YouTube, bringing the stories of these community heroes to everyday life, during the first week of October.

United Way Glenelg is committed to ensuring that these stories inspire the younger generation and improve access for people of all abilities by making the films widely available through social media channels and local senior events.

You can find the Celebrating Community Wisdom YouTube playlist here:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5MbCosuA5lmvJyH3Qv7ZKQlpormM9p_i

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