

# GOOD NEWS STORIES PART II: (MORE) CELEBRATION, INNOVATION, CONNECTION & KINDNESS

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Back in April, after stumbling across a number of uplifting and positive stories from our remarkable industry in the face of a global pandemic (on the back of a horror bushfire season for Australia), we published our first collection of Good News Stories. We felt that with the difficulties that our industry faces even without such disasters, it was important to highlight the amazing moments that we get to see, be it in Australia or across the world. A few months on, and our industry has continued to face increasingly challenging times – never-ending hard work with little to no respite for dedicated workers, funding fears increasing, fear and worry for the safety of our Residents and continuing to deal with media representations.

Yet still – in the face of everything our Industry has been through, on the back of not only the fires but the enormous amount of continuous change in the past several years – incredible stories of love, sacrifice, innovation, kindness and humanity are being shared.

We know that the hard work and challenges have not ended, and that we continue to face a horrific pandemic and that our industry is one of the hardest hit of all. But, we do want to share those moments of light, the amazing examples of humanity across the world, the exceptional people working or living in Aged Care, or older people accomplishing amazing things in the face of adversity. We are determined that the heart of why we work in this field is not left in the dark. We know the road ahead is not going to be easy, and hope that these amazing stories, from the most remarkable people, in the most wonderful field of work are small beacons of light to help guide us down the path to the other side.

For resources available for throughout this period, you can refer to our collection listed in our [most recent industry update here](#), the Department of Health's [COVID-19 resources for Aged Care available here](#), and peak body Aged and Community Services Australia's [collection of resources and links here](#).

## CELEBRATION

An extremely important celebration and very timely – our first good news story is the celebration of Aged Care Employee day, held on the 7th August. Originally [created by Aged Care Provider Whiddon in 2018](#) to celebrate all workers in the Aged Care field, the day has expanded into a national day of awareness and honouring the work they do. Naturally, this means that this month we have been blessed with beautiful stories of the people who have dedicated their careers to Aged Care, such as [a chef working at a](#)

[Facility](#) in Sydney, a [Resident and family liaison](#); and [employees of the Whiddon Group](#). You can find more information, resources and messages on the [official website here](#), or follow the hashtag **#ThanksFor Caring** on social media, to view all the messages of appreciation sent to those working in Aged Care.

One of the most shared stories around the world throughout the pandemic was the goal of 99 year old WWII veteran Captain Tom Moore [who pledged to walk 100 laps of his backyard](#) prior to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 30 April 2020. Initially hoping to raise £1,000 for the UK's National Health Service (NHS), the cause took off, raising £32,796,357 (\$59,762,861 AUD) with over 1.5 million supporters. But the story does not end there. Captain Tom had his [100<sup>th</sup> birthday](#), completed his laps 2 weeks early; [featured on a single that rose to #1](#) in the UK, making him a Guinness World Record holder for the oldest artist to have a #1 single; he and his family started [a new foundation in his name](#), raising money for charities that help with combating loneliness, supporting hospices and helping those facing bereavement; and ultimately, was [knighted by the Queen of England](#) for his fundraising efforts. To add a highlight to the story, a 5 year old boy with prosthetic legs begun his own fundraiser, walking 6 miles on his new limbs for the NHS, [inspired by Captain Tom's own walk](#). Tony Hudgell wished to raise money for the NHS to thank them for saving his life when he was a baby and was even sent a message of praise from Captain Tom.

Australia's oldest living Olympian, Frank Prihoda, has had a Thredbo ski run named after him in honour of his 99th birthday. Having once owned a shop in Thredbo – Frank's Place – 'The Tors' run has been renamed 'Frank's Face'. You can view an interview with Frank and a map of Thredbo with Frank's Face run [here](#).

An Aged Care home in France, wanting to keep their Residents safe from COVID-19, but without neglecting mental health, made the decision in March to [collectively quarantine](#). The facility locked down for what was thought to be a three-week period, but turned into 47 days and nights, with 29 of the 50 team members quarantining in the facility, 12 for the full duration. The Manager, Valerie Martin, referred to the quarantine as a '[holiday camp](#)', with the team bringing sleeping bags and pillows to sleep on the floor. No contact with the outside world meant that there were no distancing restrictions within the home, and the 130 people sharing the lockdown together could maintain all communal activities. The lockdown ended on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, with all Residents and team members testing negative to the virus.

## CONNECTION

Connection is one of the most challenging aspects of the current pandemic, with most people cut off from their loved ones in one way or another. With human connection so crucial to our wellbeing, we loved these stories of people connecting in some form.

An Argentinian man stuck in Portugal amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, but determined to be reunited with his almost 90-year old father, decided to [make his way home over 85 days in his 29 ft sailboat](#). With flights into Argentina cancelled, and the possibility that we would not be allowed to return to Portugal if anything went wrong on the journey, Juan Manuel Ballestero decided it would be worth setting sail for nearly 3 months across the Atlantic. Despite missing his father's 90th birthday, they reunited just in time for Father's day.

An Australian company is working to not only capture meaningful moments from the lives of older family members but also create connections between loved ones. [My Life Capsule](#) is a platform designed to store, share and celebrate moments, records and highlights of personal lives, connecting families across generations. From recipes to photos, to family history and information to critical documents like wills and insurances, My Life Capsule is focused on connection through stories across generations. You can find out more about My Life Capsule via their social pages on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and view videos on how the platform is helping families during the [current pandemic here](#).

A pirate radio station hosted by DJs living in assisted living communities that aimed to keep older people entertained, positive and to help combat loneliness, [has taken off in the US](#). Originally a project launched by a marketing company, [Luckie](#), who planned to air 60 minute shows every day for a month has turned into over 30 DJs streaming consistent content. Radio Recliner airs a new show every day, takes song requests and broadcasts shoutouts and messages of love to friends and family. You can listen and support the Radio Recliner station [here](#) and view their growing list of Resident DJs.

Australia also has a radio service designed to assist with social isolation. [Silver Memories](#) is a 24/7 radio service, that has [recently launched an app](#), providing the radio service available on Apple iPad and Android tablets. Silver Memories has been running for 10 years, and has been clinically proven to improve quality of life.

An exceptional story of connection from Victoria: When Yarra Plenty regional libraries were shut down, and the community hub no longer able to open for staff or community visitors, the Librarians focused their attention on the phone. Pulling the phone numbers of every library member over 70 years old, the Librarians set to calling every member on that list to say hi and see how they were going – a list that was 8,000 people long. This is not the only way libraries in Victoria have pivoted to continue helping the community, with reading material being supplied with Meals on Wheels and transitioning to online services. Read more about how libraries have changed to continue [community connection during lockdown here](#).

One of the most wonderful things happening in our Industry is the intergenerational social experiment that was the subject of the extremely popular [Old people's Home for 4 Year Olds](#) on ABC TV, run by [Ageless Play](#) and [Playgroup Australia](#). Although the current

pandemic has [forced a halt](#) on the physical intergenerational playgroups, the organisations are ensuring connections are continued, especially at a time when connection is most needed. Watch this wonderful follow up video [showing how groups are staying connected](#) during this time. Although it is heartbreaking to see the challenges faced by the restrictions the pandemic has imposed, it is an example of how organisations are continuing to stay connected and of course, is full of love.

This video was made by the ABC as part of a series of follow up stories about ageless friendships. You can view the series and find out more about getting involved [via their website here](#).

## INNOVATION

A survey conducted as a part of the [Global Centre for Modern Ageing's \(GCMA\)](#) research into how older Australians are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, has found that [telehealth services are being well received](#) by older Australians. With telehealth services being a crucial aspect to helping reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19, a positive uptake in the services is very promising for the future of such services. The GCMA has also [released results](#) as part of their research to demonstrate increased uptake and confidence gained in overall technology use by Australians over 60 years of age. The research highlights the importance of challenging stereotypes and is a positive opportunity for digital platforms to increase their reach during this time.

A fantastic project that provides support and resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) older Australians and their families to help plan their ageing has [released an app](#). A joint project between Aged care Provider Uniting and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), the app, Mosaic – LGBTI, is a part of *The Rainbow of Difference Project* in collaboration with the LGBTI community. The app also has resources and tools for Aged Care Providers to support LGBTI individuals receiving care and create culturally safe and inclusive services, including for people living with dementia or palliative care. Mosaic is an award-winning app that is free to download; and Aged Care Providers can [sign up as a Provider here](#). A wonderful project.

An extremely exciting event for Australian Aged Care with the Tasmanian dementia village that first hit the news in 2017 [opening for the first time in July](#). The Korongee dementia village is specifically designed to enable Residents with dementia to live as independently as possible – with aspects such as memory boxes with familiar items in then on bedroom doors, separately coloured houses, spaces with easy orientation, light and sound sensory experiences. The village [is specifically designed with dementia-inclusive principles](#) and will have its first 6 Residents (the village has capacity for 96 Residents) move in over the next few months. Residents will live in houses of eight, and an [evidence-based tool](#) used to place those with similar interests together. It is an

exciting step for dementia care in Australia and a welcome instance of great news. You can view the [Korongee Village page here](#).

For research, there have been two recent developments in both the Alzheimer's and Parkinson's spaces. A single treatment has been able to replace neurons lost by Parkinson's disease, with new neurons, [eliminating the symptoms of the disease in mice](#); and scientists have found that oxytocin – known as the 'love hormone' – has appeared to [reverse the effect of a toxic protein associated with Alzheimer's disease](#) in studies also completed on mice.

## KINDNESS

We've seen acts of kindness and love everywhere throughout this difficult period, and these are some of our favourites:

- Truly beautiful: a Brazilian Aged Care home has created a ['hug tunnel'](#), so that families and friends can still share cuddles without coming into direct contact, keeping each other safe during COVID-19.
- A man delivering newspapers became concerned that some of his older customers may find it difficult to leave their homes to get to the supermarket, especially during COVID-19. After offering to collect groceries in March for a customer in need, Greg Dailey's kindness ballooned to [helping 120 people](#) – he had made over 500 trips to the supermarket to collect groceries for elderly people by June. The demand was so large that his family have joined in to help with the deliveries, and he has joined forces with the Love-A-Senior organisation to help continue support older people in his community.
- A Californian woman who stopped to purchase food from a 94 year old street vendor, discovered he was struggling financially and unable to get work due to his age. This resulted in the woman [raising \\$84,000 in donations](#) that she gave to the man, from not only her friends, but also strangers.
- A New York based University student, quarantining alone in her apartment, has made friends with an elderly couple living across the street – by [using post-it notes](#). Constructing the message 'Hi!' out of the sticky notes in her window, she received a response from a window across the street, starting a series of short messages back and forth.
- An elderly couple living in Queensland have decided to [sell their penthouse home and donate the proceeds](#) to research for the treatment of COVID-19. Having donated \$100,000 to research earlier in the pandemic, they decided that the money would not go far enough, and thought it would be worth adding their penthouse to the donation. An ,incredible act of kindness.

For a final look at some of the lovely happenings in our world, check out these Aged Care Residents who [recreated famous album covers](#); this lovely grandpa who raised his (and

other's) spirits [by filming himself dancing with a broom](#); and the husband and wife duo from Taiwan, who have been '[remixing' clothes left behind at their laundry shop](#), with exceptional results.

We hope you are all safe and well in this challenging time. We are all in this together – please do not hesitate to reach out for anything if you need.

*There are many excellent resources out there, and we highly recommend keeping up to date with all the Aged Care peak bodies, who continue to provide a great deal of support and information in this time; the Ageing Agenda, Talking Aged Care, the Weekly Source & the Donaldson Sisters for timely Aged Care news; and the Department of Health updates.*

See more at: <https://providerassist.com.au/news-resources/>



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