

## Older People Speak Out



Empowering Seniors Since 1993

www.opso.com.au

PROMOTING THE VALUE OF OLDER PEOPLE

## From Val

*By Val French*

As president of OPSO I wish you a wonderful Christmas and all the happiness possible.

But wait a minute... there is something I would like you to think about... Perhaps you can even help us care for our older people.

One of the most important issues today is the growing abuse of older people. While many tend to think of the older generation as a burden, this is certainly not the case. Older people contribute in many ways: - They look after the grandchildren so that the parents can work and enjoy their social life.

Statistics show that many help the family financially – this is an important issue with the increased costs of homes, and general living today.

Older people unfortunately are often increasingly becoming the victims of elder abuse. Over recent years the government has introduced an Elder Abuse Unit. The issue becomes serious indeed when physical abuse of older people becomes a major issue.

Older People Speak Out during the coming year will live up to its name and work in every way to help and protect our older people.

WE TRUST YOU TO HELP US

Val French AM  
President of OPSO

## Lifetimes

Promoting Positive Ageing

December 2015



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## Media Awards Night in Review

The entries are in, the judges have done their work and the 2014-15 Media Awards were put to bed in a glittering Awards Ceremony on 16 November in Brisbane, The Hon Coralee O'Rourke MP, Qld Minister for Seniors, the Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO and Tim Moseley, Director, QLD Aged Care Complaints QLD State Office representing [Hon Susan Ley MP](#), Minister for Health shared their observations on the importance of positive ageing and the work of OPSO before presenting the Awards. Winners' names, the special Newsletter for the evening and photographs of the event are posted on our website [www.opso.com.au](http://www.opso.com.au).

OPSO would like to thank the many entrants this year for both the numbers and the quality of your entries – you all did a great job and made the selection of winners no easy task. For those who did come out on top, congratulations, for other entrants, congratulations also for taking the time to support older people in so many different ways. We are constantly amazed by your efforts in all branches of the media to publicise our contribution in daily life to our communities and the challenges we face, whether you entered our Awards or not. To all of you, the 2015-16 Awards are open for entries published after 3rd October 2015 with further details to be posted on the website. Good Luck!

**Val French and the OPSO Management Committee.**



*OPSO Media Awards Winner 2015 - Leanne Edmiston & Dame Quentin Bryce*

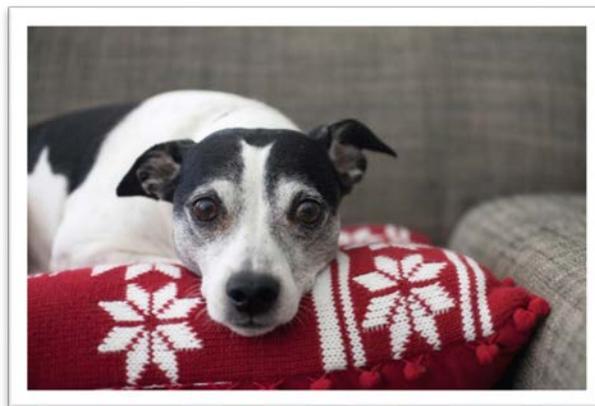


*OPSO Media Awards Winner 2015-Vivienne Cole & photographer Jack Tran, Chiou See Anderson, Elements & Tim Moseley, Director Dept. Health*



*OPSO Media Awards Winner 2015-Bruce Hunt, Coralee O'Rourke MP, Qld Minister for Seniors & Ross Wiseman Volunteering Qld*

# Overcoming Loneliness this Christmas Season



Christmas is usually seen as a time to celebrate with our loved ones, but for others the season seems to bring up feelings of grief, loss and loneliness.

Levels of loneliness are on the rise in our society, with nearly a third of Australians professing to be lonely at any one time. The hardest-hit group tends to be the elderly, with symptoms of loneliness often most extreme at Christmas time.

This can be due to a range of reasons. A number of bereavements in an older person's life, ill health, immobility or isolation from family are all contributing factors. It has been shown that loneliness in the elderly is known to have a negative impact on health and overall well-being.

So how can we address this issue?

## Reaching Out to Others

Helping others with loneliness, especially at Christmas, needs to become a community issue. We all need to be more conscious of connecting with our more elderly citizens who are alone or experiencing loneliness. After all, when we are lonely, the last person we want to spend time with is ourselves. Helping others overcome their loneliness is a perfect way of relieving loneliness in our own lives as well.

One way to alleviate loneliness is taking the step in reaching out to others. A simple way of connecting is to check in and say hello to isolated neighbours, particularly if they are elderly. Offer to do some shopping for them while you're out. Organise a group of friends to visit the local aged-care centre and sing a few carols, help decorate for the festive season, or leave some small care parcels for each resident.

Be aware however that, for some people who feel isolated, joining into someone else's Christmas festivities can often highlight what they don't have. Being alone doesn't have to equate with being lonely, as being alone some of the time is essential for our mental well-being. So don't be offended if they decline an offer to join your Christmas Day lunch.

If you are feeling lonely this Christmas or need help, don't be afraid to reach out to those around you and let them know how you feel. Don't hide from the world but move outwards towards connecting with others and participate in the Christmas season.

### Help is available...

- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Elder Abuse Prevention Unit ( QLD ) 1300 651 192 - for help in other States visit [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

# Gardens providing the ‘home’ for increasingly acute aged care facilities

By Darragh O’Keefe and Jackie Keast in *Australian Ageing Agenda*.

It’s no secret that residential aged care is becoming increasingly high care. The expansion of community aged care signals the end of what were low care facilities, while dementia and palliative care is increasingly becoming the core business of residential care.

But despite the shift to high care, a growing movement of providers is cautioning against facilities mimicking hospital models at the expense of homelike features. Specifically, they are restating the importance of gardens and outdoor spaces as effective tools in “memory care” and promoting psychological and physical wellbeing of both residents and staff.

Greg Price, residential manager at Baptist Care Maranoa Centre, said a decision to be more than a “sterile, clinical environment” led to his facility developing both an elaborate sensory garden and a rejuvenated tropical rainforest.

“Our mistake in aged care is that we tend to copy the hospital type models a bit and have a clinical approach. We have to have that for care reasons – we are a care facility – but we’re also people’s home,” Mr Price told *Australian Ageing Agenda*.

The centre’s sensory gardens were two years in the making, informed by a literature review and trips to various botanic gardens. Among the features of the gardens are a Japanese section, rose garden, veggie patch, raised garden bed, a fernery, and knickknacks dotted throughout as well as sculptures created by a local artist.

Every afternoon a group of residents go out and walk among the 100 meters of pathway that winds through the gardens, said Mr Price. Many sensory features, such as cowbell instruments and various signs, are designed to attract interest and trigger memories.

The centre engaged the local garden club to assist with selecting the plants for their scent and flowers.



“We had to be careful in picking the types of vegetables that we planted so that they’re easy to access, don’t contribute to people falling over and are edible,” said Mr Price

## Rainforest project

Just 50 meters from the gardens, on what was previously discarded land, Maranoa Centre residents are also now enjoying a rejuvenated rainforest – a fairly unusual feature for the middle of a town.

With guidance from rainforest experts, and the support of community network Landcare, the facility successfully rejuvenated the site, planting around 80 trees and adding numerous pathways and planter boxes.

The rainforest, now home to 53 different species, provides a relaxing and cool outdoor area for residents to enjoy on a hot day, Mr Reid said.

“Some of the residents used to play there when they were kids, under the trees; they remember it really fondly. Some of them still go down there, many years later in their life, and enjoy the same area,” he said

# Being A Volunteer with OPSO ...

by Roz Young

## DUTY IS LOVE.....

To be a volunteer for **Older People Speak Out** is an absolute honor as Speaking Out, Helping Out our vulnerable elders is a duty based on love and respect.

Seeing the faces of those who do not have the skills to find help for themselves - who were once distressed and are now finding peace because Older People Speak Out cares...

There is nothing more satisfying knowing one has helped older people breathe easier!

**TEACHING POSITIVE AGEING IS A DUTY  
BASED ON LOVE**

The aim of Older People Speak Out is Justice for Seniors through the promotion of Positive Ageing. We are an all-volunteer organisation, apolitical in outlook and we work with the Media and Government at all levels to advocate without fear or favour on behalf of seniors to resolve issues affecting older people highlighted through our research. We are active in the Community promoting Positive Ageing by example, by action and by education.

**OPSO gratefully acknowledges the support and advice  
of all our sponsors**



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