30 May 2022

BENETAS AND MECWACARE ANNOUNCED AS NEW AGED CARE AND DISABILITY PROVIDERS

As part of its transition out of direct service delivery roles in aged and disability services, Hepburn Shire Council is pleased to have been informed of the appointment of two new providers to service delivery in the Shire. Clients requiring aged and disability support in Hepburn Shire will receive home care from one of two providers from 1 July, Benetas or mecwacare.

All clients will have an uninterrupted and seamless transition of care to the new provider.

Benetas is a leading not for profit aged care provider with a mission to provide older Victorians, their families, and carers with a full range of quality community-based services such as home care, and in-home nursing; respite services; residential care and retirement living communities across Melbourne and regional Victoria. Benetas is committed to giving back and contributing a social dividend which sees any profit reinvested into growing and expanding services and initiatives.

Benetas has been chosen by the Commonwealth Government to deliver the Commonwealth Home Support Programme-CHSP, which helps senior Australians access entry-level support services to live independently and safely at home.

The second provider will be mecwacare, a not-for-profit, non-denominational charitable organisation which provides residential, community and in-home nursing care and support services for more than 20,000 Victorians who are aged or living with disability.

mecwacare has been chosen by the State Government for Home and Community Care Younger Persons Program-HACCPYP as the new provider of services to support younger people with disabilities, and their carers.

These changes follow Council's decision to transition out of aged and disability services in March 2022.

While Council has been providing these highly valued services to the community for many years, the Commonwealth's aged and health care reforms had made it unviable for Council to continue to deliver these services.

Mayor, Cr Tim Drylie, said that Council is proud of the services it has provided over many years and its staff who have often gone above and beyond to support the needs of the community.

"Our clients are some of the most vulnerable in the community and we will do our utmost to work with them and the new providers to ensure a smooth transition to the new system of care," said Cr Drylie.

"Council will also continue to play an important role in supporting older residents through our work to promote and support positive ageing in the Shire," said Cr Drylie.

Council's Chief Executive Officer Bradley Thomas said, "Council and staff will continue to advocate for vulnerable residents. We will work closely with our Disability Advisory Committee and continue to support disability access and inclusion in the Shire."

"I look forward to Council's adoption of its first Positive Ageing Strategy in the coming month," said Mr Thomas.

mecwacare is an integrated service network operated by more than 2,000 employees and 500 volunteers. Their staff are culturally and linguistically diverse, representing 89 nationalities and speaking 100 languages to match the needs of clients. It currently provides care to residents in Moorabool Shire and City of Geelong.

Benetas has been providing aged care services in Victoria for 70 years. Benetas was established in 1948 when a small group of volunteers from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne responded to an urgent need to provide care and support to older Victorians. Benetas services are delivered by 1,670 staff and 567 volunteers. Benetas currently provides services to clients in Macedon Ranges Shire and City of Ballarat.

Council has developed a draft Positive Ageing Strategy, which is now open for community feedback. Read the draft document at **https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/positive-ageing** or Council hubs and libraries and provide your feedback by 15 June.

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