



# Anam Cara Colac

From vision to reality  
(2004-2021)

  
**anam  
cara**  
COLAC

# Our Mission

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Our Mission is to provide the South West community with excellence in respite and end-of-life care within a home-like environment; embracing respect and compassion for all people.

# Our Values

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Respect Dignity Trust Compassion Community.

# Dedication

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This book is dedicated to all our guests, including their family and carers, who have entrusted us with their care over the past ten years, plus, all those people we will have the privilege of caring for, into the future.

# Acknowledgement of Country

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Anam Cara Colac respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians and their elders past, present and emerging and especially the Gulidjan (also known as the Kolakngat) people who occupied the Lake Colac region of Victoria - where upon Anam Cara Colac is founded.





# Welcome

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**“Hope is like a road in the country: there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence.” [Lin Yutang]**

I am proud to share with you this, our Anam Cara Colac Story, that began some 20 years ago. This story shines a light on the people of Colac and South West Victoria – and beyond – demonstrating what can be achieved, when care and compassion coalesce to serve the well-being of community.

In these pages you will meet some of our heroes who have played a significant part in establishing our community hospice. There are many other unsung heroes whose generous contribution also enabled the vision of Anam Cara House to become a reality. This outstanding achievement was due to the combined commitment and efforts of all these exceptionally fine people who understood the need for home-like palliative respite and end-of-life care and responded, helping in many and varied ways.

Indeed, when I trawled through some 20 years of archived information and photos preparing the material for this book, I felt quite emotional at times, reviewing the extent of the work completed and the sheer number of people involved in establishing and supporting Anam Cara Colac. As founder, it was both humbling, and at times an overwhelming experience. For without the support of each one of you this vision would have remained simply that, an idea. However, our combined efforts brought this vision to reality to provide care and service to our regional community. So, my heartfelt thanks go to every person who contributed to this story – who joined me on the road and to all who continue to support Anam Cara Colac in providing unconditional and home-like hospice care to the people of South West Victoria.

Within these pages you will meet many people who have become soul friends to Anam Cara Colac. You will read how our community hospice came into being and what it has achieved since opening in 2011. You will also read how Anam Cara Colac is planning for its future. I hope you enjoy reading the Anam Cara Colac Story. I believe it is an inspiring account of community cohesion, supported by people's compassion, generosity, and commitment. Most importantly however, the Anam Cara Colac Story is an ongoing story, founded foremostly on faith and trust in God and realized by an outstanding community of caring people.

**Diane Wright OAM - Founder & President**





## Our Journey of Faith

Anam Cara Colac has been founded as a result of a journey of faith, plus the prayers of many people, and certainly God's protection and blessing has covered our hospice since its inception. The name Anam Cara is Gaelic, meaning Soul Friend and this name was laid on my heart at the 2002 International Palliative Care Congress in Canada.

Anam Cara Colac was established with a point of difference, namely for whole person care. This care embraces the physical, emotional, psycho-social and spiritual care of all peoples connected to it. As such, Anam Cara Colac places great value on individualised and personalised care and on the importance of connection and relationship, alongside good clinical practice, and proper duty of care for our guests and all who are associated with the hospice.

The notion of soul care and the value of the sacred nature of the all-of-life journey is the essence of what has initiated, informed and founded Anam Cara Colac and will remain the benchmark and focus for our care and service going into the future.

**Diane Wright OAM**

## Anam Cara Colac Prayer

Lord we pray for your blessing on Anam Cara Colac and all who come here.  
Be the head of this house to comfort our guests  
To guide our managers and care team.  
To direct our governance and to ensure that the care and service provided at Anam Cara Colac is founded on love, respect and compassion for all persons.  
Amen.

### The Gate Of The Year

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."  
And he replied,  
"Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.  
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."  
Minnie Louise Haskins 1908

(This poem was read by King George VI in his 1939 Christmas Day broadcast. These same words have guided and encouraged me on my Anam Cara House journey.)

# An Honour To Be Part Of Anam Cara Colac

**I feel honoured to have been invited to contribute to the compilation of this historical recount of what has been a significant inclusion to the palliative care offering in South West Victoria for the last 10 years.**

From its very beginning, Anam Cara Colac has been, first and foremost, a labour of love for the local Colac and wider community. Along with tremendous assistance from its generous supporters in Melbourne, the Anam Cara community raised more than \$3.2million and provided over 12,000 hours of pro bono labour to establish the unique facility which offers choice and individualised care to people from throughout western Victoria who are looking for respite and/or end-of-life care.

Having moved to the area in 2017, my personal connection with Anam Cara Colac only commenced three years ago. Initially, there were several aspects of the operation and offering of Anam Cara that greatly appealed to me and I was keen to find out more.



I was particularly drawn to the underlying premise of Anam Cara that the support offered is home-like care. The entire facility has been created to enable what I believe to be quite an aspirational goal. The building is a large family home which has been remodeled to enhance the offering of 21st century palliative care in a setting where guest suites are available so that those at end-of-life are able to have their families stay with them. I can only imagine what a blessing this is for both the guests and their families.

Anam Cara Colac also holds fast to the belief that people needing palliative care should have their individual values, preferences and comfort requirements respected; that the guest is at the centre of the care model offered to him/her and that, ultimately, each guest's dignity and quality of life informs the manner of the care and support given. Until each of us reaches our own dotage, it is difficult to imagine how important this might be, but I believe that after a long life, well lived, this is a critical time for our guests to feel that they continue to be significant and that their choices matter, their opinions are heard and, above all, their dignity is maintained.

As a result of the founding and ongoing generosity of its community, Anam Cara Colac has been able to sustain its exceptional model of care over 10 years. It is incredible to me that this has been possible even as there is no accommodation fee for guests (this is on a donation basis only) so that the facility is open and available to everyone in the community, irrespective of financial bias, who may have need of it. As awareness increases and the demand for the Anam Cara individualised care continues to grow, I am excited that we are looking towards developing the offering to open for 365 days/year. This will bring new challenges, but I am so proud to have the opportunity to play a small part in continuing the provision of such a special and important choice of palliative care to our community.

**Marion Nott**  
**Vice President | Committee of Management**  
**Anam Cara Colac**





# Anam Cara Colac

Anam Cara Colac was established in 2011 in response to a community-identified gap in respite palliative care services for the community of South West Victoria. The community worked together to establish Anam Cara Colac raising more than \$3.2 million and providing more than 12,000 hours of pro bono labour. Now in its tenth year of operations, Anam Cara Colac is a highly successful palliative care service providing a gold standard of care, in response to an increasing demand for palliative respite care in our region.

On the outskirts of Colac in a tranquil and home-like setting, the unique model of care is tailored to meet the individual needs of each guest with the support of their own doctor thus meeting the goal of the Victorian End of Life Palliative Care Framework (June 2016) that: "All Victorians and their families receive the best possible end-of-life care that places them at the centre, where preferences, values, dignity and comfort are respected and quality of life matters most".

Anam Cara Colac is a fully accredited health provider under the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) and provides care under the National Palliative Care Standards. Anam Cara Colac is also a member of Palliative Care Victoria (PCV) and the International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care (IAHPC). Well governed with a skilled and stable community-based Committee of Management, it is an incorporated, not-for-profit, charitable organisation. Anam Cara Colac proudly provides comprehensive,

compassionate, and cost-effective respite and end-of-life care within a community setting. Our desire is to support, without financial bias, every member of the community at a time when they need it the most. Our hospice service is staffed by registered nurses and personal care assistants plus trained volunteers. The importance of family care is recognised, and accommodation and care support are also offered to guests' families, plus bereavement care.

Anam Cara is the Gaelic term for 'Soul Friend' and we understand that caring for a loved one with a chronic or life-limiting illness can be a very challenging time for everyone involved. Anam Cara Colac was established to respond to the need for specialised palliative care, as people in our community navigate this challenging and sacred time in their lives. Our name also reflects our point of difference, namely, that Anam Cara Colac offers physical, emotional, social and spiritual care - care of the whole person, plus person centred care - for both our guests and their loved ones. Another crucial point of difference is our home-like care. The choice in place of care for most people, is to remain in their own home. However for those people in our community with a chronic or life-limiting illness who are living at home alone, or even for those with a carer, Anam Cara Colac offers a choice in place of short-term care, in a tranquil and home like setting and is available to people of all ages and circumstances.



# Why Hospice Care?

The hospice model of care is prevalent and highly valued throughout the United Kingdom, Europe, Canada, The United States, New Zealand, South Africa, and Asia. The focus is on providing palliative and respite care within a social model of care that embraces both the patient and their family and maintains close links to the local community and community volunteers - offering both tangible and intangible benefits to all concerned.

Hospice care fulfils an important role in offering people a choice in place of care alongside home or hospital. Day hospice and residential hospice care, underpins home care – the recognised choice in place of care for 75% or more of the Australian population. And when home care is no longer possible, then hospice care provides professional and person-centred end-of-life care in a home-like setting.

The Modern-Day Hospice Movement commenced in the United Kingdom because of the vision and commitment of its founder Dame Cicely Mary Strode Saunders OM DBE FRCS FRCP FRCN (1918 – 2005) an Anglican, nurse, medical social worker, physician and writer who in 1967 founded St. Christopher's Hospice in London.

Concerned about the inadequacy of the care of the dying in hospitals, she revolutionised the way in which we care for the ill, the dying, and the bereaved.

Dame Cicely helped St. Christopher's become the first hospice to link expert pain and symptom control, compassionate care, teaching, and clinical research.

Dame Cicely held more than 25 honorary degrees and received many honours and awards for her work, including the British Medical Association Gold Medal for services to medicine, the Onassis Prize for Services to Humanity, The Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms for Worship Medal. In 1981 Dame Cicely was awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion; she gave the award money for construction of a new wing at St. Christopher's.

"Suffering is only intolerable when nobody cares. One continually sees that faith in God and His care is made infinitely easier by faith in someone who has shown kindness and sympathy." [Dame Cicely Saunders]

I had the privilege of a personal meeting with Dame Cicely Saunders, which was arranged at St Christopher's Hospice, only a few years prior to her death. A most gracious, intelligent, and committed woman, Dame Cicely encouraged and inspired me in my own endeavours with hospice care for Geelong and Colac.

The champion of the modern-day hospice movement Dame Cicely wrote: "You matter because you are you. You matter to the last moment of your life. And we will do all we can to help you die peacefully, but also help you to live well until you die."

Dame Cicely's words above, echo the philosophy held paramount by Anam Cara Colac.

**Diane Wright OAM**



**Dame Cicely Saunders OM  
DBE FRCS FRCP FRCN (1918 - 2005)**



# Who We Care For

The people that use our services come from a diverse range of backgrounds, socially and financially with one commonality, they are living with a chronic, life limiting illness. People can use Anam Cara Colac at any point after diagnosis. Illnesses such as cancer, heart and lung diseases, motor neurological and renal diseases are common in those we care for and often their needs are complex e.g., intertwined with dementia.

We care for people of any age; however, we often care for people who are frail and vulnerable and people who may come from a low socio-economic background. We also care for people from single person households or people whose family may not live locally or be available to support them, leaving them more prone to isolation. Our guests may also have a carer who is aged and themselves struggling to manage the role of carer.

In summary, we offer our care to all in the community including the homeless, socially vulnerable and people from all walks of life, or financial situations. This care is provided with compassion that reflects equality of care in an effective and dignified way. Upholding the hospice tradition of inclusivity, there is no set fee to stay at Anam Cara Colac although many guests make donations.

**"The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members."**

Mahatma Gandhi





## How Anam Cara Colac Benefits Our Community

Anam Cara Colac provides much needed local respite for carers and supports and underpins home care, thereby assisting to alleviate some of the physical burden especially for elderly carers and families. And when home-care is no longer possible or for those in the community living in a single person household (more than 20% of our population), Anam Cara Colac can also provide invaluable short-term respite and end-of-life care. Anam Cara Colac thus makes a difference in the lives of many people in our regional community.

Since opening, Anam Cara Colac has provided more than 4,820 episodes of respite care, including end-of-life care, overnight stays and day hospice care in our five-bed, home-like hospice and demand for our services is increasing. Indeed, we anticipate that with the pressure on acute health services and the increasing desire for home-based care, plus a gap in the 24-hour care for palliative services in our rural region, the need for our services and also for short-term respite care for patients will only increase.

As a result, Anam Cara Colac is currently extending its services with our Dying to be at Home Programme, a new initiative of our Community Liaison Nurse Naomi Lettieri. This programme offers extended home support from our nursing team and our volunteers, in conjunction with community palliative care provided through Colac Area Health.

Anam Cara Colac also provides another option when hospital or an aged care facility may not be age appropriate or the preferred choice. There is a growing body of evidence that community care provides value for money, relieves pressure on the acute system and is often better able to manage the needs of palliative care patients and those with chronic illnesses.

Anam Cara Colac stands out as a beacon in home-like respite and palliative care, shining a light on person-centred care and highlighting that big is not always beautiful in specialised health care.

Importantly during the 2020-2021 Coronavirus pandemic, Anam Cara Colac has been able to provide family inclusive end-of-life care for some 30 guests, plus support to families.

Our hospice design with an external door to each hospice suite has allowed family members (two at a time) to be screened and checked in for visits. COVID safe protocols were implemented and regularly revised according to government and aged care guidelines to ensure the safety of our guests, families and staff. Our guests' end-of-life journey was peaceful and supported by family and loved ones who were grateful to have the opportunity to spend time together, to say their goodbyes and create positive, lasting memories.



# Anam Cara's 10th Birthday

It's amazing to know that Anam Cara has been part of my life for 10 wonderful years.

I began visiting Anam Cara before it was officially opened in November 2011. Diane Wright invited me to come and have a look, I met Deb Payton who was the nurse manager, now we have Karen Eccles in that role who is such a caring person and has always been there for me whatever reason.

The first day I met some eager and willing volunteers who were practicing their hospitality skills on me. I can still remember how comfortable I felt there. We had a lot of fun and laughs, they were so caring, offering coffee or tea, and those volunteers are now some of my nearest and dearest friends.

Initially I decided to go to Anam Cara day respite to give my husband (who is also my carer), some time for himself. As it has turned out it meant so much more than I ever imagined. I felt so safe there, I was in such good hands, and I was shown how to make jewellery which I still love to do.

I feel that I have grown with Anam Cara as I still go every week for day respite to keep in touch with my friends. I also go and stay for a week every couple of months, it's like a social day every day as I get to meet other guests, nurses and carers who are all so lovely too. I have always felt so at home there and I believe it's because I fit in, my disability doesn't matter.

I want to thank you Diane for encouraging me all of those years ago. I love being a part of the Anam Cara community, and I intend to always be a part of its community, so here's to another 10 years.

**Happy Birthday - Michelle Bennett**



# Tribute From Denise Connor

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"Michael was a wonderful, brave and romantic man. We fell in love on the night we first went out, and he would sing me songs like Moonlight Gave Me You.

We loved the ambiance of our home on the hill overlooking Colac. I say this because our experience of Anam Cara at the end of his time with us, was a continuation of the life he loved.

His battle with cancer during the last 10 years he fought with strength, and I really wanted to care for him to the end but that became impossible.

Anam Cara was there for him. Most important was the peace - nurses didn't hurry and clatter about, but were calm and caring. I had complete trust in their care and their support for me was beautiful. For him to look out on the back paddock and see the gum trees and hear the kookaburras, be able to go for wheelchair walks out - what could be more soothing?

Even with the onslaught of Coronavirus, we were treated with compassion. I have lovely memories of incidences during those last days. So, Anam Cara, thank you to Diane Wright and all the staff there.

**I will be forever grateful."**



# How Anam Cara Colac Came Into Being

The story of Anam Cara Colac's establishment can only be told in conjunction with the story of Anam Cara Geelong's establishment, one followed the other, as this 10-year history will show. Anam Cara Geelong was envisioned because of my experience of working in palliative care in Geelong and the following is a summary of Anam Cara Geelong's establishment phase.

In January 1999, I started working with Geelong Hospice Care Association. This was not a residential hospice, but an excellent community-based palliative care service, founded in 1982 principally by Dr Trevor Banks OAM and Marjorie Walkowski to provide domiciliary palliative care in people's own homes.

My role with Geelong Hospice Care Association as a clinical family therapist plus grief and bereavement counsellor, was to provide support to patients living at home with a life limiting illness and support to their carers and other family members.

During my five years in this role, I heard patients, carers and family members say they wanted to keep their loved one at home for as long as possible. However, carers frequently reported being physically and emotionally exhausted. I heard and witnessed this anguish, time and time again, so much so that I felt moved to find a resolution. In Geelong at that time, the only option other than home care, was an old and austere palliative care unit at The Grace McKellar Centre or else admission to hospital, or an aged care facility, not everyone's choice in place of care, especially younger adults. After repeatedly hearing patients and carers lament this service gap for palliative respite and end-of-life care, the vision for Anam Cara Geelong was firmly laid on my heart.

Nursing colleagues Laurel Ling and Erika Pickering joined me in this vision, as did many other special people, including Dr Roger McLennan and Dr Daryl Pye.

So began a journey of faith that realised the establishment of a residential community hospice for Geelong – established by the community for the community. There was a period of talking to colleagues and exploring hospice care both in Australia and overseas and in 2002 a Hospice Steering Committee was formed in Geelong.

In 2004 a public meeting was held at the Wesley Church in Yarra Street Geelong.



Some 130 people attended this meeting, including Fr Kevin Dillon AM the parish priest of St Mary's Basilica, Geelong. Fr Dillon had recently experienced watching his much-loved mother Sheila, die in a hospital room in Melbourne and he stood up to speak in support of my vision for a home-like hospice for Geelong. After this meeting, I invited Fr Dillon onto our Founding Committee and he graciously accepted.

Over time Fr Dillon, with parish and archdiocese support, offered to vacate St Mary's Presbytery and re-located to a townhouse in Yarra Street, across from St Mary's. This provided a home for Geelong's community hospice – a very special home.

Following extensive fundraising and enormous community support, and with Frank Costa AO as our patron, Anam Cara Geelong opened three years later on Sunday 7 March, 2007, with a dedication service to a packed congregation in St Mary's Basilica. Laurel Ling was appointed our first nurse manager and Erika Pickering also provided invaluable assistance with the commissioning and ongoing hospice operations. Jenny George gave generous assistance training our volunteers many of whom had been with Geelong Hospice Care Association. As an aside, this was the year that the Cats won a premiership after many years in the wilderness!

Anam Cara Geelong's story unfolded with the help of many special people. Foremost Father Kevin Dillon AM and the people of St Mary's Parish Geelong, the committee members, ambassadors Lloyd Gosling AM, Helene Bender OAM, Bob Gartland and Norm Lyons our builder and generous philanthropist. There was most extensive community and philanthropic support, plus welcome Australian Federal Government support with a \$200,000 capital grant for Anam Cara Geelong and also Anam Cara Colac.

As Anam Cara Geelong founder it is very gratifying that since opening in 2007 with a loyal and dedicated nursing and volunteer team, it has been able to provide care and assistance to many people in Geelong and throughout that regional area, at a critical time in their life journey.

Anam Cara Colac's journey began in 2004 after Colac community members asked if I could replicate what Anam Cara Geelong achieved in my hometown. How could I refuse?

A Colac Steering Committee formed following an initial meeting on 17 November 2004 in Colac, attendees included myself, Judy Davis, Sandra Turner, Kerry Turner and Maryanne Retford, and so began extensive publicity and further discussion within the Colac community.

Once again a public meeting was proposed to further the Colac Hospice Project. This meeting on Wednesday 16th March 2005 at St Mary's School in Colac, received good community support. Neil and Yvonne Stewart attended and in late December that year I approached Neil Stewart

to ask him if he would assist by heading up a Capital Fundraising Committee for Colac's proposed community hospice. (Neil Stewart had a well-proven fundraising track record and was held in high regard within the community.) It was just on Christmas, however within a week Neil graciously agreed to my request.

Our Colac Community Hospice Project (later registered as Anam Cara Colac Inc.) required securing a suitable property or greenfield site, building and or renovation works and clinically commissioning the facility. Once operational the hospice would require ongoing governance, management, staffing and funding. This was a project not for the faint hearted.

2005 was a busy year, with an initial formation and planning period.

Then early in 2006, Wendy Hay unexpectedly contacted me (she would become a valued volunteer for some 10 years). Wendy suggested Wal and Gloria Everett's home Palm View Lodge on the outskirts of Colac at Barongarook West, may be a suitable home for our hospice.



Subsequently, Anne Mercer and I arranged to inspect Palm View Lodge. On stepping into the property's front hallway, we both knew in our hearts that this lovely home, with its tranquil and beautiful setting, could be the home for our Colac community hospice. How we would get the money to purchase Palm View Lodge we did not know. However, we did know, that if God had laid this on our hearts, He would enable it to happen - and He did. And so indeed, Neil Stewart ably assisted by his son Michael Stewart, plus visionary people on our hardworking committees and an army of supporters in our community worked together to establish Colac's own community hospice.



The Anam Cara lily - Stargazer  
In memory of Jacqueline Louise O'Toole (25.11.1974-19.2.2000)  
Daughter to Sue and Peter (dec)  
sister to Paddy, Kellie, Tim, Sally, and Ben. Jacqui will always be remembered as a vivacious and talented young woman with a most beautiful spirit and smile.





# Palm View Lodge

## A Home For The Community

With a potential home for our hospice now sourced, a great deal of extensive fundraising became imperative, to afford to purchase the property. The generosity of Socrates Papadopoulos and Peter McKay in donating a block of land in their Colac Industrial Estate plus Shirley and John Williams purchasing this land at auction was a defining moment. In May 2006 we were confident to enter into a conditional contract to purchase Palm View Lodge. Only 18 months later, on the 14 December 2007, the Barongarook West property was fully paid for, the result of quite amazing community and corporate support for our Colac community hospice.

During the time between taking legal possession of the Barongarook property and commencing our building works, we were thankful to have the services of live-in caretakers, Carolyn and Ted Codling who diligently cared for our future community hospice. Carolyn and Ted have become great friends of Anam Cara Colac and remain connected to the hospice, with Ted often helping as a volunteer whenever we need maintenance assistance. Thank you, Carolyn and Ted.

Meanwhile, our architect Geoff Lavender from Centrum Architects South Yarra, came on board to give his time pro bono and also committed to becoming a foundation member, a gracious gesture from a gracious man. Importantly too, Mark Rosevear agreed to be our pro bono building supervisor – a huge contribution. Mark was ably assisted by Tony Mahoney who made a significant contribution to the project. Henry Bongers, BDH Constructions too gave generously of his time and expertise. These four people are especially acknowledged on a plaque in the hospice's foyer. In 2008 the Australian Government provided a welcome \$200K Capital Grant towards Colac's hospice.

2008 also saw further steady fundraising to enable the refurbishment of the property and the inclusion of five purpose-built hospice suites each with access to an outside verandah.



Laurel Ling ACHG Hospice Manager, The Hon Richard Marles, The Hon Justine Elliott, Diane Wright ACHG Founder, Erika Pickering ACHG Hospice Nurse, capital grants announced for both Geelong and Colac hospices.

Anam Cara's Colac Capital Fundraising Committee began working tirelessly to connect with local individuals and businesses, plus philanthropic trusts inviting them to contribute financially. Neil and Michael Stewart, assisted by Brian Wood were the driving force on this front. In truth, since our inception, Neil and Michael Stewart have been stalwarts and great champions of Anam Cara Colac, as have Charles Stewart & Company's directors. Indeed, their General Manager Stephen Lawrence provided us with a great deal of practical day to day assistance, as we endeavoured to reach out to the community to galvanise support and interest for the hospice project. However, without doubt, the dedication and leadership of Neil Stewart and Michael Stewart has been instrumental in establishing Anam Cara Colac, and their unwavering support continues to this day.



**2008 Capital Fundraising Committee – Board Room Charles Stewart & Co**  
**L-R Tim Gore, Wayne O'Brien, Peter Groves, Stephen Lawrence, Judy Davis**  
**Back- Anne Mercer, Michael Stewart, Jeff Dennis (Warrnambool) Neil Stewart**

In 2008 Neil Stewart suggested we host an evening at our newly acquired property and invite major Colac businesses to inspect the future home of our community hospice. It was a most successful evening with a very good response, and a significant number of those attendees went on to commit to our funding appeal, becoming foundation members.

Our Capital Fundraising Committee approached individuals personally, inviting them to assist with the hospice project by becoming foundation members (which entailed contributing \$15,000). Many generous people came on board, including friends and family members. The initial foundation members included Charles Stewart & Co Pty Ltd., Diane's Aunt Dr Joy Bear AM, (who also contributed to the office set up for both Geelong and Colac) and long term personal friends of Diane, Susan and Michael Hanley. We were very thankful for this initial philanthropic support, which was a great encouragement to us at this early stage.

Also in 2008, our Anam Cara Colac Committee formed satellite groups across the regional area. This drew together small groups of committed "can do" women who successfully garnered broader community support and awareness throughout the region. An exceptionally talented group of women, they also formed a Combined Regional Satellite Committee and organised additional countless events, large and small, across Colac district. These women met regularly and faithfully fundraised for the hospice, and also assisted with our annual May gala events, having a lot of fun along the way.

The Barongarook, Cressy and Colac combined satellite groups proudly raised sufficient funds to each become foundation members.

Capital fundraising results by November 2008 \$1,422,713 raised, \$92,500 raised by our satellite groups.

In addition, under the skilful direction of Elizabeth Gore and her wonderful team of volunteers, and assisted by Michael Stewart, seven May gala events were organised in Colac over seven consecutive years. Liz then went on to co-ordinate three consecutive gala events for our Melbourne Committee, at The Park Hyatt in Melbourne in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

During that time and with a total of 10 wonderful events, Liz Gore and her dedicated team raised some \$1,000,000 for Anam Cara Colac. This was an outstanding fundraising effort for the hospice, especially given that in one particular year, Liz co-ordinated a May gala event in Colac plus our 2014 inaugural gala event in Melbourne. (The Melbourne gala event, raised an unbelievable \$250,000 in that one evening!) This was a champion effort, and we thank you Liz!





**Inaugural Anam Cara Melbourne Committee Left – Neil Stewart, Ashley Hunter, Diane Wright, Brian Wood. Right- Paul Erskine, John Dowling, Michael Stewart, Aurel Dessewffy**

Anam Cara Capital Fundraising Committee established a foundation fund to enable our future financial sustainability. To assist in this fundraising endeavour, our Melbourne Foundation Committee was formed in 2008.

The Melbourne Foundation Committee was the inspiration and initiative of Michael Stewart. People connected to our regional area via property ownership or business interests or because they were well known to our initial committee, were introduced to Anam Cara Colac. In a short time Michael had gathered a core group of committed and caring people to form our Melbourne Committee.

The members of this committee were well connected across South West Victoria, also from Melbourne and beyond with great networking capacity and vision. During this time, our inaugural Melbourne Committee successfully recruited further people who served on this committee for various lengths of time. The committee met monthly at the Delta Group in Port Melbourne, kindly provided for our use over many years by its Managing Director Con Petropoulos, a generous supporter of Anam Cara Colac. Our first Chairperson Ashley Hunter, brought enormous energy to the role, John Dowling kindly stepped into the role in 2012.

When our Melbourne Foundation Committee eventually went into recession, the combined efforts of this committed and fine group of people had raised significant funds for our foundation fund, which is currently professionally managed by JB Were in Melbourne and our Anam Cara Colac Financial Sub-Committee.

To this day however, the Melbourne Foundation Committee Chairman, John Dowling still provides significant support and philanthropic assistance for

our community hospice. Indeed, John continues as a valued hospice ambassador and he with his wife Ros, remain true Anam Cara Colac soul friends.

So it was that in March 2009, our renovations and building works could commence in earnest, because of the fundraising efforts of our Colac Capital Fundraising Committee and our Satellite Groups.

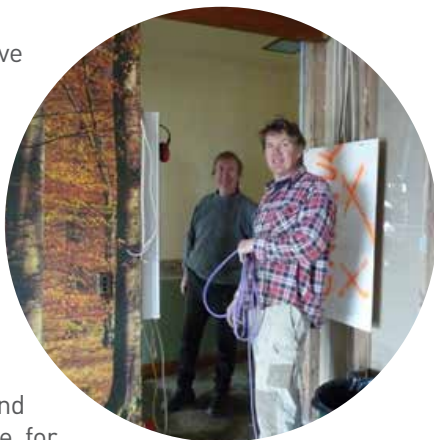
Our fundraising had also been enhanced by some additional major philanthropic support, including donations from McVilly Timber Terang, CMTF ( a Workcover payment transfer to our hospice), The Ian Potter Foundation, Paul Newman's Own Foundation, the J.T.Reid Charitable Trust plus some other substantial donations.

Initial building works progressed well, due to the generous support of Colac's major builders, BDH Constructions, Karacsay Constructions and Spence Construction plus builders Adam Hall and Shane Loubey and numerous associated sub-contractors. These Colac companies and local trades people all assisted our hospice project by donating time and expertise. Many local businesses also donated materials or supplied them at cost.

However, not far into our building works, the Australian Government's Economic Stimulus and Building Incentive unfortunately seconded most of our promised pro bono tradespeople and we had to wait patiently for approximately a year for them to come back on site. An unexpected hiatus to the progress of our hospice project, with the community waiting patiently for their promised community hospice. In fact, it would be a further four years before our community hospice project reached completion.

Nonetheless the fundraising continued, and we never lost sight of our vision to provide a first-class community hospice for the people of Colac and the South West Victorian Community. Thankfully a lot of goodwill and determination carried the day, alongside the hard work of the inaugural Hospice Committee of Management Executive: Diane Wright, Anne Mercer, Judy Davis, and Wayne O'Brien, who have been remarkable in their service to Anam Cara Colac.

In May 2011, five years after acquiring the Barongarook West property, our beautiful hospice was finally completed, ready to provide short-term respite and end-of-life care, for people of all ages in Colac and South West Victoria. An open day in May 2011 prior to the hospice fit out, showed our supporters and benefactors the completed building works.



Colin and Janice McKenna and some family members attended our May Open Day, and on that day Colin unhesitatingly committed to sealing our car park area. Colin has been a stalwart champion of Anam Cara Colac since our inception. He's generously supported our capital funding appeal, annually donated stellar auction items for our gala events and provides ongoing philanthropic support to this day. This loyal commitment by The Midfield Group, to our community hospice, is greatly valued.

Our many volunteers, especially our weekend warriors did not disappear on the hospice's completion but rather many re-badged themselves as grounds or maintenance or hospice volunteers, for which we are thankful. Some even re-badged themselves as cattle rustlers, as a guise for yet another invaluable fundraising initiative, The Anam Cara Cattle Club, which provided an invaluable income stream for some seven years to cover our hospice nurse manager's salary.

In late 2011, we prepared to clinically commission the hospice and we advertised for our first hospice manager. Deb Payton, with the palliative care experience and the Anam Cara heart that we needed, joined our team on the 5 September 2011 - complete with her capable husband Rob. Indeed, Deb said to us that she could see in hindsight that all her working life had been preparing her for the role of Anam Cara Colac Inaugural Hospice Manager, and we don't doubt that for one moment.

The much-awaited guest care would soon begin. In addition, we recruited an outstanding group of people in our initial volunteer training course, some of whom, along with Deb, were commissioned at our Thanksgiving Service in St Mary's Colac on 20 November 2011.

Deb certainly went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure we transitioned into our operational phase as smoothly as possible. Deb was assisted by many people including Robyn Barrand who generously assisted with our kitchen set-up and commercial certification including procedures around food handling and training staff and volunteers. Another invaluable volunteer was Kerry Turner who, with her experience as Deputy Environmental Services at PANCH, a Melbourne hospital, assisted us to develop and implement correct policies and procedures for our cleaning and linen services.

All these areas of operations are critical, as food preparation and meal services plus laundry and cleaning, are provided in house at Anam Cara Colac to meet our commitment to home-like care.

During her time with us, Deb most certainly proved that she had the capacity, the skill, and the heart to successfully take Anam Cara Colac into its initial operational phase. We were indeed blessed to have Deb and her husband Rob, himself a volunteer, as part of the Anam Cara family. Thank you Deb.



**Deb Payton  
Inaugural  
Hospice  
Manager**

This is a brief account of Anam Cara Colac's establishment phase, a most incredible journey of community spirit in action, or people power at work! At times, the journey was not easy. However, one might well ask, when has anything worthwhile, ever been easy! The result is a unique community asset that has been a great community achievement and is testimony to the spirit of care and compassion that exists in our region and further beyond.

Each individual person involved in the Anam Cara Colac journey has been a vital link in the chain that proudly brought our community hospice into being, our heroes. No doubt, these people would not label themselves as such, perhaps rather as ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Nonetheless, Anam Cara Colac's establishment has most certainly been the voice of our community and its owning, in part, the care of the dying, with a commitment to providing specialised and home-like respite and end-of-life care.

**We thank every single person, each one of you, our soul friends, as your combined efforts have enabled the realisation of our Colac community hospice.**



# Unique Care Model

Deb Payton, Anam Cara's first manager, is quick to appreciate the community involvement in bringing the hospice to reality and how that involvement continues to this day.

Deb, a qualified senior nurse with years of practical nursing experience and academic knowledge, started in the role in 2011, not long after she moved from Melbourne to Forrest with her husband for a tree change, she said Anam Cara was a lovely place to work.

Deb said when she started work at Anam Cara the local community had been working on the project for seven years.

"The whole thing is amazing really. All the people that created it are incredible."

Deb said she felt the hospice, and how it came into being, reflected the broader country community attitudes she'd observed. An attitude of resourcefulness and self-reliance, that if a community wanted something done, they do it for themselves, rather than waiting for someone else to provide it.

When she started in her role at Anam Cara it was yet to receive its first client and she was involved in implementing the facility's compliance and commissioning requirements. She said she worked closely with the management committee and saw how diligently everybody worked and how focused they were. The committee members were so dedicated.

"When Anam Cara opened its doors awareness of it slowly grew in the community through word of mouth," she said.

"It went along, and it gradually developed, it's a fabulous facility, but it was always going to be." She said there were similar facilities in other states, but Anam Cara was a unique care model "caring for the client and the family, in that way is very unique".

Deb attributed the staff and volunteers' approach to client care combined with the facility's physical set up as the contributing factors to the care model's success.

"It's the free access for the families and having the rooms where family members could stay. It's wonderful and is the most appropriate for clients in this circumstance."

"It's set up works, with the kitchen and the dining room, and it's a relaxed environment where you can have a cup of tea and talk to staff and volunteers. And the volunteers are appropriately trained and understand the concept of the model of care."

Deb said Anam Cara's palliative and respite care was considered in its approach to client needs.

"We've medicalised many things that are a normal part of life and death. But nursing here allows you to make it more part of life. Here the nursing looks at more than one aspect of client care from controlling their symptoms, to finding appropriate support for their spiritual and emotional requirements and managing family requirements. There is time to do all that at Anam Cara."

Deb said what's also unique about Anam Cara is the community around it, for example some of those volunteers have been involved for years "which is just incredible".

"It's interesting there were lots of people who were supportive of Anam Cara it wasn't like a hospital. The community had ownership over the facility," Deb said.

"It was a fabulous job to end my career in."



# Achieved By Community Spirit & Generosity In Action

## Thank You To Building Supervisors Mark Rosevear & Tony Mahoney And The Following Businesses & Volunteers

- A1 Air Conditioning
- Adam Hall Building
- Adam Harris Concreting
- AKD Softwoods – John Hayden
- Alec Vickers Concreting & Paving
- All Things Stainless
- Allan & Deidre Bidmade
- Andrew & Diane Wright
- Andrew Venner
- Andrew Hammond Plumber
- Angus McDonald Builders – Dale & Josh
- Anne Mercer
- Anthony McDonald
- Arnold & Kirkman Plasterers – Max
- Bartlett Brothers Stonemasons – Lee
- BDHConstructions Pty Ltd – Henry, John & Andrew
- Bert Winchcombe Tiling
- Bill & Julie Parsons
- Borwicks Trading – Geoff
- Brett's Carpets and Blinds – Shar, Tim & Fiona
- Brian McNaughton Excavations
- Calco Timbers – David Colless
- Centrum Architects Pty Ltd – Geoff Lavender & Ken Charles
- Charles Stewart & Co
- Civic Home Timber and Hardware
- Cliff Tann
- CMTP – Chris Meade
- Colac Cement Products – Greg Kerr
- Colac Cleaning – Jody Foley & Richard Ellis
- Colac Glass & Screens – Phil Gaylard & Rob Montano
- Colac Herald – Mary Gannon
- Colac Joinery Works – Joan Hislop
- Colac Otway Painting & Decorating – Sandy Maxwell
- Colac Pre Mix Concrete Suppliers
- Colac Woodturners Guild
- Cooky's Kanga Hire – Neil Cook
- Coragulac Quarries – Phil Boyd & Steve Lang
- CPS Design Print Signs – Chris Parsons
- Craig Davis
- Darren Burgess Vinyl Layer
- Darren Matthews Painting & Decorating
- Darren Robertson – Tree Trimer
- Daryl Osborne
- David Allen
- David & Janet Hopkins
- David Parker Plumber & Gas Fitter
- David Shelton
- David Smith Builder
- Deb Linton
- Deb & Rob Payton
- DMS Tiling – Dwayne Stephens
- Dollar Curtains – Elaine & Daryl Langdon
- Dooley Moore Builder
- Doug Paton Electrician
- Ed Morrissey
- Finishing Touch Joinery – Kevin Whitehead
- Frank Whitehead
- Gaylard & Missen Painters & Renderers – Travis & Graeme
- Geelong Fire Services Pty Ltd
- Geoff Fisk & Colac CFA
- Geoff Hunter
- Geoff Lavender
- Genua Bros Steel Fabricators – Vince, Damien & Frank
- GK & JM Holt Plumbing Supplies
- Glen Doyle Heating & Cooling Installations
- Gordon Thompson Builder
- Goullet Fire Systems Pty Ltd – Wayne
- Grant Place
- Greg Haggart
- GR & JA Johnstone Building Contractor
- H & S Electrical – Brett & Vicky Riches
- Haymes Paints
- Healthcare Furniture Australia
- Heather & Yake Weiss
- Henry Bongers
- Holcim Concrete
- Ian Jeffreys Bricklayer
- Ian McGlade Tiler
- Jarrod Gore
- Jeff Turner Builder
- Jim Burns Plumbing
- JK Windows & Doors – Joel Borch
- Joe Doyle Concreting
- Joe Zaia
- John Gatty
- Justin Robbins – Builder
- Karacsay Constructions Pty Ltd – George, Ernie & Carl
- Kerry Turner
- Kevin Hayward
- Kevin Walker Plasterer
- Kofield Bricklayers – Des McGuane
- L & W Plasterers – Mark Laurie
- Laurie Veale Bricklayers
- Len & Judy Davis
- Len Murfitt Bricklayer
- Lions Club Colac
- Lions Club Forrest
- Louie Presani Concreting
- Lyn Armistead
- Malcolm & Kay Gardiner
- Malcolm McConachy – Bricklayer
- MARC Furniture – Alex & Rosie Genua
- Mark Rosevear Builder
- Mark & Clare Wright
- Martin Dow
- Max Jenkins Tiling
- McNaughton Excavations – John, Peter & Andrew
- McGlynn Scott Building Contractors – Damien & Peter
- Michael Stewart
- Michael Dooley – Plumber
- Mick Holland Tiler
- Mick Melville
- Mike & Colleen Touzel
- Mini Mix Concrete – Rick & Chris Goodall
- Moran & Bamford Electrical – Mick & John
- Mitre 10 Colac
- Murray Kent
- Neil Stewart
- Neville Launer Builder
- Neville Holt Electrician
- Neville Towers Plumbing
- O'Dwyers Tyre Power – Geoff
- Otway Antenna Service – Graham Skinner
- Paint Right Colac – Dale Goodacre
- Paul & Jane Davis
- Paul Sammut
- Paul Fenton Electrical
- Pauline & Mark Rosevear
- PC & MJ Doolan Builder
- Peter Lynch
- Peter Mahoney Plumbing
- Peter Ponton – Welding
- Peter Thompson Electrician
- Peter Williams Tiling
- Phil & Kate Harris
- Piera Metals – Barry & Lyn
- Reality Kitchens – Peter Virgona & Adam Gaylard
- R Slater & Sons Excavation Pty Ltd
- Reece Hardware Supplies Pty Ltd
- Riches Electrical Contractors – Les, Peter, Russell & Sam
- Richbury Handrail Industries
- Rick Cheshire
- Rick McGillvray Painting & Decorating
- Riordans Hire Service
- Rob Jamieson Tree Stump Removals
- Robb Brothers Joinery – Darren & John
- Robyn Barrand
- Rodger & Bristow Excavations – Brian & Wayne
- Roland Kettle Plastering & Ben Kettle
- Ros Robinson
- Rosies Drycleaning – Darren & Sue Rosevear
- Rotary Club of Colac West
- RJ Paatsch Electrical Contractor
- Ryan Building Surveyors
- Scott J Parkhouse Earthworks
- Shalimar Nursery – Sue Betts
- Shane Fitzpatrick
- SA & DE Loubey Builder
- Simon & Julie Witham Landscaping
- South Western Sanitary Services
- Spence Construction – Peter, Glenn, Ross & Matt
- Spence Plumbing – David & Richard
- Stegbar Windows – Geelong
- Stephen Lawrence & Family
- Steven Arnold Renderer
- StevCom – Terry & Cory
- Stone Image – Tom & Donna Osborne
- Sue Spowart
- Ted & Carolyn Codling
- Terry & Lyn Harris
- 3CS MIXX FM
- The Elton Group
- Tim & Liz Gore
- Tony Alsop Structural Engineer
- Tony & Kathy Mahoney
- Tony McGann
- Tony Prytz
- TD & NM Frith Electrical Contractors
- Travis Holt Plumber
- Trevor Harty Painting & Decorating
- Trevor McKenzie
- Turtlescapes Landscaping – Paul Mahoney
- Tevelein Painters – Steve
- Unique Care – Wendy & Mark Hardcastle
- Vince Vinci
- Walsh Electrical & Refrigeration – Stuart & Sue
- Water Supply Specialists – Peter & Louise Devine
- Wayne Alexander Plumbing
- Wayne Knight
- Wayne O'Brien
- Western Waste Management – Darren, Maxine, Ken & Nola Hayes



# Weekend Warriors and Volunteers

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# Our Heroes

The vision for a community hospice for Colac started in 2004 and on 20 November 2011, almost seven years to the day, that vision was realised, due to the combined commitment, determination, passion and generosity of many, many people on our committees, many individuals and businesses in the community, service groups and philanthropic trusts and many other caring people.

Every person involved in the Anam Cara Colac journey has been an important link in the chain that has made our Community Hospice possible. For example, our weekend warriors (a term coined by Tim Gore, himself a weekend warrior) who gave countless hours to help establish Anam Cara Colac. Murray Kent who faithfully cared for the grounds for many years and now Peter Mulder and Roly Skinner continues on in this voluntary work. Martin Roche was our first volunteer maintenance supervisor; now others have picked up this role. Principally Phil Harris and Andrew Wright along with Tim Gore, Terry Harris, Paul Davis, Ted Codling and Ray Langdon.

Without doubt however there have been many people from our community who have made an extraordinary contribution to Anam Cara Colac and we'll highlight some of these heroes in the following pages.

- Founding Patron Neil Stewart, Patron Michael Stewart and their company Charles Stewart & Co Pty. Ltd., and Business Manager Stephen Lawrence.
- Melbourne Committee under Chairman Ash Hunter, succeeded by John Dowling.
- Anam Cara Cattle Club's Phil Harris, Andrew Wright, Tim Gore and Michael Stewart and the Richmond Family.

- Our inaugural Hospice Manager Deb Payton.
- Our inaugural Secretary Judy Davis.
- Liz Gore our volunteer and inaugural Business Manager and Events Co-ordinator. Liz co-ordinated fundraising events for Anam Cara Colac that generated some one million dollars.
- Our Satellite Committees.
- Our building heroes Mark Rosevear, Tony Mahoney, Henry Bongers and Geoff Lavender and a huge band of associated contractors and skilled tradespeople who came on board to assist in establishing Anam Cara Colac.
- The Colac Committee of Management members have also been remarkable and include Wayne O'Brien our inaugural Treasurer serving on our committee to this day - an outstanding contribution.
- Our current Management Executive, Karen Eccles, Business Manager Jodie Lemke, Community Nurse Liaison Naomi Lettieri, and Nurse Manager Sue Spowart plus our nursing and volunteer staff.

And last, but not least, our weekend warriors and our silent heroes who went above and beyond the call of duty, working quietly for many years to provide this community hospice service. All these people are to be thanked for their contribution and in many cases, ongoing commitment to Anam Cara Colac.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."** [Margaret Mead, Anthropologist]



**Powercor Colac Otway Business Awards' Special Judges Award recipient Anam Cara Colac, 13 October, 2012.**  
 Anam Cara House representatives proudly accepted the award on behalf of our generous and caring community. From left Andrew Wright (Cattle Club & maintenance), John Dowling (Chairman, Melbourne Foundation), Mark Rosevear (Building Supervisor), Phil Harris (Cattle Club & Committee of Management), Tim Gore (Cattle Club & Colac Foundation Committee), Wayne O'Brien (Treasurer), Rob Payton (Maintenance), Elizabeth Gore (May Event Coordinator, Hospice Volunteer-GuestCare) Ros Dowling, (Supporter) Deborah Payton (Hospice Manager) Kate Harris (Hospice Volunteer-Guest Care).





**Anam Cara Colac Open Day May 2011 L-R: Andrew Wright, Ash & Tanya Hunter, Colin & Janice McKenna & Family  
Back: Tim Gore, Tony Mahoney & Diane Wright**

## Our Major Benefactors:

- Neil and Yvonne Stewart
- Michael and Kylie Stewart
- McVilly Timber Terang - Barry McVilly
- The Anam Cara Cattle Club (with the Richmond family)
- The Midfield Group - Colin McKenna AM and family
- H & L Hecht Trust (Perpetual Trustees Co Ltd)
- Thyne Reid Charitable Trust
- Mortimer Petroleum - David and Kristine Mortimer
- The Gualtierio Vaccari Foundation

In 2013 Anam Cara House Colac was the recipient of a generous donation from the Gualtierio Vaccari Foundation. A portrait of Gualtierio Vaccari was kindly donated by his son Franco Vaccari and this hangs in our hospice foyer to honour the outstanding life of his father Gualtierio Vaccari and the significant contribution of the Italian community in South West Victoria.

Dr Isabel Joy Bear AM, was a Foundation Member of Anam Cara Geelong. Joy was a great champion and benefactor of both Anam Cara Geelong and Colac.



**Women from Colac's Italian community are warmly welcomed to Anam Cara Colac.**



**Dr Isabel Joy Bear AM**

# Vision Realised

Anam Cara Patron, former fundraising chairman and retired Colac businessman Neil Stewart knew immediately Diane Wright's community hospice idea was a service Colac needed.

Diane contacted Neil following a community meeting where she outlined her vision for the facility in 2005 and she asked him to lead Anam Cara's fundraising committee.

He committed to the role as chair after discussing the proposal through with his wife Yvonne and family because he knew this was a big commitment and he says in hindsight it was bigger than he realised.

He said he made the commitment because he felt he needed to be able to contribute towards this plan in some form or another.

"I felt there was a real need for it in Colac. We have good medical services here, we have aged care services, but we had a gap where there was no hospice, and that need convinced me to get involved, And I had the time, because I'd retired from active involvement in the company," Mr Stewart said.

Not long after joining the committee he inspected a property at Barongarook early in 2006 with Diane Wright that would go on to become the new hospice.

"I immediately knew this could be the one because there was nothing else in the district like it. And it appealed to me because of where it was and because there was eight acres of land in a picturesque spot. It had everything that would be suitable for the people who would occupy it in the future," he said.

In the first three months of 2006 there were 25 meetings to help develop the plan further. Neil said Diane was a woman who gets up and does things.

"She doesn't sit down and dream she's a mover and a shaker and you get carried along with her enthusiasm. And that's the sort of thing that I

enjoy I like to get on and do things," he said. Anam Cara's initial fundraising committee included Diane Wright, Neil Stewart, Chris Meade and John Hayden.

Neil, in addition to meeting with business leaders to investigate fundraising options, and Colac Otway Shire and other community leaders to let them know what was happening, was also working on plans to purchase the Barongarook property.

The committee developed a list of ideas, people and businesses that might assist in fundraising.

He said while the multi-national companies based in Colac weren't overly interested in supporting the idea, local business owners and community members were impressive in their support.

"I started the ball rolling with approaching all Colac's business owners with a proposal recognising contributors as foundation members for donations of \$15,000. It worked. I never had a knock back from anyone I spoke to."

"One after the other. They all wanted to help. We're so lucky in this town that we have these people here, and they're still here. It took off from there."

To broaden community involvement the Anam Cara fundraising committee established satellite committees in communities outside Colac.

"We set up satellite committees at Cressy, Swan Marsh, Barongarook, Birregurra and Carlisle River and they had their own fundraising and if they raised \$15,000, they became foundation members. They were wonderful."

"We also established the fundraising dinners in Colac at this point. They were a great success."

In December 2007, the Colac and district community had fully paid for the Barongarook property and set about refurbishing the building.

Neil said Anam Cara was a fantastic facility.



"It is entirely suited for the purpose its used for. Geoff Lavender a leading architect made a significant contribution in re-designing the facility to suit the hospice needs. And there was a lot of work involved in that. Others who made a significant contribution were Mark Rosevear and Tony Mahoney."

"It's important that these people are recognised in the history of the facility because of their contribution. I know Mark Rosevear spent almost 12 months away from his own business working at Anam Cara, he was instrumental in transforming Anam Cara in a big way," he said.

The fundraising then moved to Melbourne and saw the establishment of the Melbourne Committee through contacts that had a connection to the Colac and district area.

Neil said the Melbourne Committee was extremely important and one person on that committee, John Dowling was especially instrumental in generating funding for Anam Cara.

"All the time this was going on Diane Wright was working behind the scenes making applications to philanthropic trusts for funding for Anam Cara. And that's one of the reasons why that show is out there now because of her endeavours. And the most recent application is to the Victorian Government. She does a tremendous amount of work, she's gifted, she doesn't always win, but more often than not she does very well," he said.

The first money Anam Cara received from a government body was from a federal election commitment in 2007. Diane and Neil met with Tony Abbott in Geelong during the election campaign.

"He said he would give Anam Cara support. But he lost the election, but the Rudd Government supported the election promise. It wasn't a huge amount a money."

Neil resigned from the fundraising committee in 2011 at the same time Anam Cara opened to guests. He is Anam Cara's Founding Patron, he usually attends their annual meeting and regularly promotes the hospice in the community, which he says he will always do.



# Result Speaks For Itself

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Michael Stewart admits he likes a challenge, and he is not easily discouraged.

And while his 12-year role with Anam Cara provided a few challenges, the lifelong friendships, memorable experiences, and a sense of teamwork were rewards far greater than any challenge.

Michael, his father Neil, and Diane Wright were the founding members of a committee to raise funds to establish a hospice in Colac.

Diane Wright had approached Neil about forming a committee to raise money for the project.

Michael said he thought the project would be great for his father to take on in his retirement. Neil told him he would do it but there was one catch, he would like Michael to be involved also.

"I said I really don't have the time, but I relented and asked him what he needed, and he asked for a 12-month commitment. But he got his months and years mixed up because it ended up being 12 years!"

The trio formed the Colac Committee and set about looking for people that could open doors, attract sponsorship, donations and organise fundraising events including community events and sporting memorabilia auction nights.

"We were raising money on a vision, on hope, and faith. We did not have a building to show people something tangible. At that stage we were raising enough money to try and secure the right property.

"A lot of people thought it was a fantastic idea, there was some negative feedback but for me that was an inspiration to go even harder. There was a cross section of emotions and opinions in response to our plan. But you get that in life, but overall, the response was incredible. The Colac business community donated money, people supported the events and spent money, they were wonderful."

Michael identified the donation of a block of land to auction as a turning point in the group's fundraising efforts.

Melbourne businessmen Peter McKay and Socrates Papadopoulos donated a block from an industrial subdivision Michael was selling on their behalf, and

all sale funds would go towards Anam Cara.

"It sold for \$87,500 and bought by John and Shirley Williams who are wonderful supporters of the hospice," Michael said.

The Melbourne Committee was another Anam Cara fundraising group comprising of people either originally from Colac or those who had an affinity to the area. One of Michael's Melbourne clients, Con Petroplis made his board room available for the group's regular meetings.

"That committee was wonderful. It opened doors and opportunities that would never have happened otherwise, provided access to philanthropic trusts and to some wonderfully generous individuals," he said.

Michael's feedback from Melbourne committee members was that Colac had achieved something special that would not be possible in Melbourne or towns with bigger populations, because they did not have the same sense of community.

He said the response from people in our region makes you very proud to be part of this community.

"When we auctioned the block at the industrial estate we were on the cusp, we'd identified the property at Forans Road, and weren't sure we had the full confidence to go ahead and buy it. But when the block sold, and we knew the \$87,500 was coming our way, and it gave us the confidence to go ahead and sign the contract."

He said the next stage was the building's refurbishment and the building committee had some impressively generous people including builder Mark Rosevear, architect Geoff Lavender, builder Henry Bongers, Neil Stewart, Diane Wright, and Tony Mahoney, leading a team of volunteers.

"The hours they spent and all the time the volunteers contributed, and the businesses and individuals donated labour and time, it's astounding, breathtaking really. And even today when I tell people about the hospice and how it came into being it blows people away. It's a very special thing. Its history really, isn't it?"



Michael said he was proud to be part of the project and it reinforced how many wonderful people there are. People like his close friend and Melbourne Committee member Brian Wood, was selfless and kind. Brian and his family would never benefit from Anam Cara, but all he wanted to do was help other people. He was a shining example of good spirit and goodwill and upheld his Christian values – a very special man.

“The people I worked with on the project were inspirational. They would lift you when you thought you were running out of steam. I personally would get very exhausted, but then I’d sit in the committee meetings with such great people, whether it was fundraising, committee of management or the Melbourne committee, or I’d spend time with Diane Wright and Liz Gore and I’d get re-inspired,” he said.

He also concedes these same people provided lots of fun along the way.

“The auction nights were very entertaining. But a lot of work went into those events behind the scenes to make them a success.”

After completing the building’s refurbishment, the next stage was to ensure the facility’s financial sustainability.

“We’re very conscious of the facility’s ongoing viability, and because we had minimal government support, we established the foundation fund to generate income. The foundation fund is critical to the hospice’s sustainability,” he said.

Fundraising for Anam Cara continues but is currently on hold due to Covid and will hopefully recommence later this year.

Michael stepped down from the Anam Cara Management Committee after 12 years, and he said he treasured being involved, the friendships and the sense of achievement. In the early stages there may have been a few people knocking the project, but the result speaks for themselves.

“I’m determined, and the knockers never worried me, they made me go even harder.”  
He is now Anam Cara’s Patron and Ambassador, and often facilitates donations to the hospice.



# Praise For Community Effort

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Anam Cara's former business manager, and a driving force behind their major fundraising events, Liz Gore could not be prouder of the community who have made Anam Cara a reality. She says Anam Cara has two stories, one is about the unbelievable community generosity to get the place up and running.

"The fact that our community could build Anam Cara is an absolute achievement. This community is so generous, it's unbelievable.

"The other story is the unique model of respite and palliative care offered to guests, carers, and their families. She says when people walk through its doors, they experience its beautiful, calm atmosphere. You fully appreciate Anam Cara's value when you see a family with a loved one in the final stages of life. You see how beautifully they are cared for, and I remember thinking "wow this is what we have been working towards".

Liz Gore joined Anam Cara's fundraising committee in 2009 and during her years of involvement worked with the Colac and district and Melbourne committees to raise more than one million dollars for the palliative care facility.

She is passionate about the Anam Cara care model, and it is personal. She had two sisters pass away from cancer within three weeks of each other and they were being treated in Melbourne a long way from home, family, and friends.

"I could see how an Anam Cara would have really helped Anne & Barbara because they were being treated more than three hours from home. If they could have come back to the likes of an Anam Cara their physicians in Melbourne would have been happy with the care, and then their families could have come and met halfway to spend valuable time together in a beautiful and relaxed setting. You see Anam Cara not only cares for the guests, it's equally supportive of the families"

"Anam Cara was like a refuge for me at that difficult time, a really lovely and positive thing

in my life, and it was a way to channel my grief after my sisters died."

Initially her involvement included painting, working bees or whatever else needed to be done. She joined a team of volunteers working to transform the building from a home to a palliative care facility.

"We had many working bees, under the guidance of Mark Rosevear and Tony Mahoney, two of the best. I remember Diane would often provide delicious home cooking for us! We really formed a strong bond during this period and we had a lot of laughs along the way," she said.

At the same time as renovations were happening, fundraising committees were established, and the events started. Liz took a lead role in organising the inaugural Black and White Ball at COPACC with the Melbourne Police Band. This was the first of seven May events she coordinated with the help of local area committees and the various satellite groups.

Anam Cara's doors opened in November 2011, but a week before its official opening her nieces were killed in a car accident, and although she found it hard, she was grateful for the support she received from Diane, Michael, and the committee, who were like a family by this time.

In the facility's formative stages Liz worked closely with the first hospice manager Deb Paton and she said she was terrific; I did a lot of work with her. In addition to the milestone of opening Anam Cara's doors the next most significant was welcoming their first guest.

She said Anam Cara's model of care for those needing respite or in their final life stage, and their family offers a personalised, supportive experience. It offers flexibility in how families farewelled a loved one.

"In one instance a family organised a gathering and they all came to Anam Cara on a Sunday afternoon and had a barbecue in the courtyard, that was the final gathering for the person who



had passed away. So just that flexibility to which the family can farewell their loved one is just so important.”

As Anam Cara moved from the establishment to operational phase Liz took on the role of business manager. This involved the day to day running of the business, communications, tours of Anam Cara and open days.

She said in this role, she was able to see the increasing community awareness of Anam Cara’s model of care.

“By this stage Karen Eccles was the hospice manager, she was the perfect successor to Deb, and we just clicked, working closely together as Anam Cara continued to evolve.”

Liz took on a role on the newly formed Melbourne Foundation Committee and ran three major fundraising events, Champagne & Chandeliers, at Melbourne’s Park Hyatt.

“The first Melbourne event raised \$250,000, that was fabulous. They were incredible events and I worked with wonderful people. Most of those involved had a connection to Colac and district, whether they grew up here or had property here. The members of the Melbourne committee were the key to the success of these events, especially Michael.”

Liz said the Anam Cara committees, and our community had done an amazing job in making Anam Cara happen. Our community should be immensely proud of what has been achieved. It’s a real Australian Story!

Of course, none of it would have been possible without the vision and tenacity of Diane Wright.

“The close friendships I developed, and the opportunity to work alongside incredibly talented and generous people, along with my interactions with guests and families, were personal highlights during my time with Anam Cara. Diane and Michael particularly, were wonderful mentors to me, I learnt so much, something I will forever value.”



# Palliative Care An Invaluable Service

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John Dowling speaks from the heart when he talks about the importance of palliative care.

John's family experienced the supportive environment palliative care provides when his son died of a brain tumour in 2007.

His youngest son was treated in Cabrini's palliative care in Melbourne, and he said they looked after him so well, it was admirable, and it woke me up to what palliative care was.

John Dowling, Anam Cara Melbourne fundraising committee member, and former chair is a Melbourne businessman, said his personal experience made him realise that palliative care was as important to the family as it was to the patient.

"It's giving the family some relief, that was the case with Mark. Without Cabrini's care it would be a different story," he said.

"And that's exactly what Anam Cara does in providing palliative care. It gives support for families as well as for the people suffering the illness. It's an equal support as I see it, and that in turn makes it an indispensable service."

Coincidentally not long after this family tragedy his longtime friend Michael Stewart invited John to join the Anam Cara Melbourne Committee. The Melbourne Foundation Committee raised funds outside Colac for Anam Cara and engaged Melbourne-based people with South West Victoria interests. Two years earlier Michael had helped John find a property to buy at Carlisle River.

"Michael and Diane had decided to set up a fundraising committee in Melbourne. The fundraising in Colac had been wonderfully successful and that enabled them to acquire the property, and the community was also wonderfully supportive of the project to buy and renovate the property," he said.

"The local community were successful in creating this facility which could be described as an essential service. Diane, with her characteristic creativity and initiative, had already been instrumental in setting up Anam Cara House in Geelong and so decided to follow

a parallel course in relation to Colac."

"When Michael called me, knowing me as a fellow estate agent, we'd known each other for some years and having a lovely relationship, with one exception - he's an avid Collingwood supporter and I'm an avid Melbourne supporter, they were setting up the Melbourne Committee would I be willing to take part in it?"

John agreed. He said the committee met regularly and Michael with his characteristic selling skills persuaded others to join the group. The committee's purpose was to raise funds outside Colac, particularly metropolitan Melbourne. Our aim was to engage Melbourne-based people with South West Victoria interests. That meant every Collins Street farmer that had property between Melbourne and Warrnambool was part of our constituency as we saw them.

"It also enabled us to make connections with people who were philanthropic. Some of them were extraordinary with their philanthropy. People who are charitable have huge demands put upon them and receive hundreds of requests and they must choose, and they choose causes they consider are A, worthwhile and B, appreciative. By worthwhile I mean, charities that provide a service of undisputed quality and need," he said.

The committee wanted to identify philanthropic support from entities and trusts that would see merit in a small and specialised activity such as Anam Cara Colac.

He said from the outset we could see difficulty because supporting old age was not as popular as supporting younger people in need. But palliative care doesn't just apply to aged people. Anam Cara Colac has had palliative care residents in their 30s. Palliative care was simply end-of-life care.

"The idea of palliative care is something people like Diane Wright embraced and saw it as beneficial for the community, and good community wellbeing and that's been proven. Michael, Diane, and Neil embraced Anam Cara from the outset as being seen as a major Colac achievement. And it is. They can take the credit for that," John said.



The Melbourne Committee operated for eight years, and he said the group's efforts started to pay off from about four years onwards. It was a remarkably effective committee with good ideas, direction, and a valuable exchange of ideas with everyone having the same intention.

"It was through committee contacts that we were able to identify other financial supporters attracted to the idea of supporting a small charity with a strong emphasis on one service.

"Anam Cara's other attraction is all donations go towards the facility, not lost in administration costs. This is an attraction you can sell to potential philanthropists and benefactors: all money goes directly to the palliative care service - not a single cent goes anywhere else."

The Melbourne Committee found the right supporters. Then at the suggestion of a committee member the group decided to host gala black-tie fundraising events. He said the events were good fun and financially successful. We were astonished at people's generosity - the four Melbourne events raised more than \$800,000.

John remains involved with Anam Cara today fostering important philanthropic relationships that provide financial support for the palliative care facility.

"At Diane's behest I'll contact the trusts to seek the bequests renewal. Anam Cara is dependent on private support and the idea is to generate growth and protect the capital to be self-supporting, and I'm able to help providing advice in this area," he said.

"I'm willing to do so because it's so worthwhile. Its worthwhile to the point of being quite special. And living here, it's local to us so it's important to us to have something we support. I have the benefit of knowing people who can help and I'm grateful for the support they give Anam Cara."



# Mark Rosevear's Generosity Is Colac's Good Fortune

Colac is fortunate to have generous people such as Mark Rosevear and his generosity cannot be overstated.

Mark Rosevear, a builder, volunteered nearly three years of his life coordinating tradespeople and volunteers driving a building project refurbishing a large family home at Barongarook into the palliative care facility Anam Cara Colac.

Ten years on from finishing the work he says he's still impressed by the result and what it has given the community.

He first got involved when Anam Cara Patron Neil Stewart invited him to a meeting in 2007 to discuss a proposal to set up a community hospice.

He said Neil Stewart invited me to attend a planning meeting to discuss whether the project was achievable. And to see if I felt Colac's tradespeople would get behind it and donate labour to achieve its goal.

"For me this started an almost full-time three-year involvement, organising tradespeople during the week and then working with the backbone of the project, the weekend volunteers," he said.

"It never ceases to amaze me how much of the work was achieved by those volunteers. Of course, not taking anything away from the tradespeople involved, but the place would have not opened for about another two to three years without the volunteers working so bloody hard."

In the beginning Mark Rosevear and Neil Stewart had written to 140 Colac tradespeople asking them to donate time to the building project, and they received an impressive response.

He said it kicked off well we had an amazing response and got a lot of work done. They contributed around \$800,000 in labour plus materials and 12,500-man hours to the project.

Mark said this was a huge achievement.

"It was always going to be a huge task, as many factors come into play, when you're asking small businesses to contribute pro bono to a project worth a couple of million dollars," Mark said. He said his former business partner Tony Mahoney also played a huge role in supervising works.

"Once it was completed and we stood back and looked at it we realised it's a fairly wow project that we've achieved up there."

Mark has stayed involved at Anam Cara in a low-key manner since the project's completion and has seen firsthand the overwhelming benefits it provides the people using the facility.

He said it was satisfying to see the project finished and what it provides the Colac and district community.





# Camaraderie And Teamwork Gets The Job Done

Tony Mahoney nominated camaraderie and teamwork as the driving force behind the building project that transformed a former residence into Anam Cara Colac.

He says finishing the project, and knowing what Anam Cara Colac provided the community, was an impressive achievement and would take a lot to beat.

"It's a thrilling result and of course I'd always do it again."

Tony Mahoney, a qualified builder, worked on the project with his former business partner Mark Rosevear for about two years from 2009 until 2011.

"Mark had taken on the role as building coordinator which was a big job with the amount of work and time involved. As we were previously building partners, I was able to step in and help. I was also recovering from an accident and the work became part of my rehabilitation," he said.

"The camaraderie and teamwork played a huge part in keeping the project's momentum up. With all the volunteers getting along so well it was a pleasure to be involved. There were hiccups and frustrations of course but we all moved on quickly."

Tony said we were fortunate to have a terrific group of volunteers in addition to the trades people involved, there were about 30 or 40 people volunteering during the life of the project.

He said there was regular core group of extremely committed volunteers that were vital to the project's success.

"They would turn up one, two, three or four days a week and reliably every weekend, the weekend warriors as they became later known, they would turn up week after week to help," he said.

Not long after the project began the Global Financial Crisis hit and the Australian Government response to ramp up infrastructure projects absorbed many of the local tradespeople previously involved in Anam Cara's refurbishment.

Tony said the volunteers really stepped up as project plans changed.

"The original plan was to have trades people carry out all the work but that changed thanks to the Global Financial Crisis, and the government's schools project in response to the crisis triggered a need for more volunteer involvement because the trades people were all occupied building schools and doing other work."

"Without that massive volunteer input, as well as the trades people's input, we would've never got the job done. When everything was done, we were so happy with what we'd achieved."



# Anam Cara Colac's Operations Over The Past Ten Years.

Anam Cara Colac is a community funded incorporated, not-for-profit, charity organisation with a commitment to provide excellence in palliative respite and end-of-life care.

Our home-like environment and person-centred care focuses on guests' physical care plus their social, emotional, and spiritual needs. Our point of difference is our personalised care to meet the individual needs of our guests, the care is not time driven. We respect the choices and preferences of those in our care while fostering their trust and wellbeing.

Our day hospice and overnight respite care allows carers time out for themselves, enabling better long-term care of their loved one. This respite care underpins home care, assisting people to remain at home as long as possible.

The importance of family care is also recognised, and comfortable accommodation and care support is also offered to guests' families as required.

Care is provided under the certified National Standards of Assessment for Palliative Care (NSAP) and is accredited with the Quality Improvement Council (QIC). Anam Cara Colac is audited in line with QIC's Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) standards. QIP is a nationally recognised accreditation and certification organisation.

Anam Cara Colac's registered nurses and personal care assistants provide skilful and compassionate care with the support of trained community volunteers, in line with National Palliative Care Standards.

The community has increasingly experienced Anam Cara Colac during the past 10 years, as a steady growth in demand demonstrates. During this time, our guests, their carers and associated community members have variously described Anam Cara Colac as "the gold standard in care" with regard to the person-centred care, at our first class hospice facility in a tranquil rural setting.

## Summary

Since Anam Cara Colac commenced clinical operations in January 2012 achievements include:

- Accreditation - three cycles of accreditation have been successfully completed with QIC with a focus on continuous quality improvement.
- The establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (reviewed 2021) - a service agreement with Colac Area Health to ensure seamless care of community palliative care patients in our regional community.
- Implementing our Hospice in the Home Program.
- Developing respected relationships with regional general practitioners and other regional health providers, including emerging providers (e.g. Rosehaven Hospice, Mansfield).
- The employment of a Community Liaison Nurse to profile and promote our service to the community and provide information, education and support to people with a chronic or life-limiting illness, plus support to their family and/or carers.
- Building relationships with local and state government.
- Valuing our key stakeholders (both community and philanthropic partners) with regular communication and annual events.
- Remaining connected to our peak body, Palliative Care Victoria and staying attuned to current/future economic, social and political developments.
- Founding membership with The Victorian Compassionate Communities Network.
- Maintaining a close connection to La Trobe University Palliative Care Unit.
- Membership of The International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care.



# Our Funding Model

As a not-for-profit charity organisation our hospice operational income is from various sources. The breakdown of income from our 2019/2020 audited financials is as follows:

- ∞ 30% from Victorian Government DHHS Grant (to conclude 30 June 2021)
- ∞ 29% from community (fundraising, bequests, and donations)
- ∞ 21% from philanthropic trusts and investment returns (JB Were investment managers)
- ∞ Balance from funded guests (we are an accredited NDIS provider) and sundry income.
- ∞ Financial sustainability is always a goal and during the past 10 years we have successfully operated the hospice without recurrent government funding (the DHHS Victorian Government Grant was provided in 2018 as a one-off grant) and our funding has largely come from community, fundraising and philanthropic support.
- ∞ 2019-2020 – ACHC open 275 days Total cost of operation - \$725,650. This equates to \$2,639 per night to operate the five-bed hospice facility. Projected cost of operation in 2022 – 275 days approx. \$750,000pa; 365 days approx. \$1,000,000.

## Governance

Anam Cara Colac has a stable and experienced Committee of Management dedicated to ensuring the ongoing and robust review of all our operations. This governance and guidance is in line with palliative care best practices as well as continuous improvement reviews to ensure the wellbeing and safety of our guests, visitors and staff. Our Committee of Management is committed to a three-year accreditation cycle with the quality improvement council (Quality, Innovation, Performance – QIP). This accreditation is under the Health and Community Services Standards to ensure the organisation meets all standards and goals. Now in our third cycle of the QIP accreditation, triennially we have successfully met all standards and achieved all goals in the quality improvement plan, plus actioned any further recommendations.

We also have in place a strategic plan as a living document that is integral to our governance and is the Committee of Management's first item on its monthly meeting agenda. This ensures that our Executive reports on our priorities, measurements and outcomes, ensuring these remain in focus, and are reviewed and acted on regularly.

Our Committee of Management are also actively addressing succession planning to ensure ongoing strong leadership and the future good management of Anam Cara Colac.

**Anam Cara Colac has achieved a consistently high standard of guest care during the past 10 years.**

## Operational Facts To Note

The cost of operating Anam Cara Colac started at \$250k when we commenced in 2011 and now because of increased demand for our care, some 10 years on, our operational budget stands at \$750k.

Our Committee of Management is actively engaging with the Victorian State Government, requesting funding assistance.

## Financial Sustainability

Anam Cara Colac continues to maintain a consistent, dependable operational income-stream. The hospice is currently operating close to budget with a solid, annually audited, financial foundation. Astute governance, careful management, and growth in some income streams (NDIA and philanthropic trusts) has enabled our response to the growing demand for our services and to thereby increase operations from 240 to 275 bed-days in the past few years. Our goal is to open 365 days a year.

# Growth and Enhancement Of Service Delivery

Anam Cara Colac has contributed to the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) programme, a national collaboration aiming to improve palliative care patient and carer outcomes, through data collection and analysis. The use of the PCOC reporting tool assists in the assessment and management of symptoms for our guests/patients and reflects our commitment to excellence in palliative care. The PCOC collaboration and use of their reporting tool also provides critical benchmarking against like-organisations and assists in identifying the necessary support and training provided to our staff.

	Day Hospice Attendances	Days Open	Overnight Respite Episodes of Care	Nights Open
2012-13	113	51	137	77
2013-14	228	77	379	158
2014-15	377	140	465	153
2015-16	340	142	690	243
2016-17	396	138	519	227
2017-18	556	148	814	265
2018-19	521	140	830	249
2019-20	484	122	873	275
2020-21	361	90	737	281

	Individuals Supported Overnight	Number Of Admissions	End Of Life Care
2012-13	24	48	2
2013-14	26	72	1
2014-15	37	89	4
2015-16	46	87	3
2016-17	39	95	5
2017-18	68	111	6
2018-19	73	138	14
2019-20	71	128	18
2020-21	61	118	14

## The Coronavirus Pandemic

Anam Cara Colac, along with the rest of the world, felt the impact of COVID 19 in 2020/21. The emergence of the virus in Australia led to changes in protocols for health services, and a need for continuous monitoring of new guidelines to ensure the implementation all Health Department recommendations.

However, during the pandemic (2020/2021), the demand for end-of-life care at Anam Cara Colac has continued to increase. The regional community has found a sanctuary and great comfort in the provision of family inclusive, end-of-life care at Anam Cara Colac. Our hospice facility is uniquely placed to provide safe care due to low bed numbers, low staff turnover, rural location and the fact that all rooms have external access to a surrounding verandah. Consequently any visitors can be screened prior to entering the building and remain in each discrete suite. Families have been able to safely visit and spend time with loved ones, saying their goodbyes and creating positive memories. We have been extremely proud of our staff and executive, for providing compassionate and safe care at a critical time in people's life journey, ensuring our guests died peacefully with family at their side.

In summary, the very character and the reputation of Anam Cara Colac has been revealed in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic. As such, COVID-19 has marked the coming of age for our community hospice. The community has recognised that Anam Cara Colac could offer a safe sanctuary for care and families sought us out, especially for end-of life care, as they navigated this sacred journey, at quite an extraordinary time.



## Human Resources

Anam Cara Colac promotes a positive organisational culture and strong staff commitment in the following areas:

### Community Liaison, Education and Support

The Community Nurse Liaison role was established in 2017 to ensure the wide geographical area we serve is aware of, and informed about, our service. This role includes the development of a network and reaching out to the communities we serve.

Indeed, marketing and promoting our organisation in the community and an awareness of palliative care is integral to our service.

During the past four years our Community Liaison Program and Business Manager have consistently implemented creative ways to promote our services and provide information to our stakeholders and general community. This includes regular newsletters, posts on our Anam Cara Colac social media, use of local and community radio, local newspapers, podcasts, virtual expos, community education, meetings, public speaking events and open days.

### Staff and Volunteers

Anam Cara Colac has achieved a positive organisational culture plus strong staff and volunteer commitment. Our unique model of care offers nursing staff the opportunity to provide holistic, person-centred care which has assisted in attracting high calibre nurses. Our staffing situation is therefore generally stable and robust.

Community volunteers are recruited annually (except for during the Covid -19 2020 and 2021 lockdown period). Records show an additional eight new hospice volunteers trained in 2020. The training of volunteers is based on the Palliative Care Victoria Training Modules in line with the National Palliative Care Standards.

## Colac Area Health

Growth in our relationship with Community Palliative Care has seen a 30% increase in referrals for end-of-life care. Our MOU with Colac Area Health (updated in 2021) delineates our support for Community Palliative Care patients and respects their wish to live at home as long as possible and/or otherwise, to die at home. Following assessment by an experienced registered nurse, support is offered to provide respite for a few hours or overnight, on a regular basis as required. This may involve registered nursing support or personal care attendants.

### NDIS

Anam Cara Colac is a registered service provider with the NDIS. Referrals have been steady and provide an additional income stream that contributes to our overall operational budget.

### Collaboration

Anam Cara Colac was proud to support the development of the Warrnambool and District Community Hospice – Hospice in the Home, founded by palliative care specialist Dr Eric Fairbank AM and palliative care nurse Deidre Bidmade which opened in 2015. In addition, we have mentored and will continue to support Rosehaven Hospice, established in 2021 to care for the Mansfield and district community. We also value our long association with Friends of Northern Hospice in Tasmania – Barb Baker, Lyn Irwin and their colleagues - as they steadfastly advocate for the proposed Northern Community Hospice for Launceston and District.

### Victorian Compassionate Communities

Anam Cara Colac has been the driving force behind the establishment of the Victorian Compassionate Communities Network, leading to strong relationships and collaboration between like-minded organisations across the state.











# Anam Cara Colac Events

## 2010 M & F Brunt Trucking to Alice

(Including the Lindsay Fox Breakfast) raised \$75,000 and M and F Brunt Room is named in Merv and Fay's honour at Anam Cara Colac.

## Seven Colac and Three Melbourne Gala Events

Raised some \$1,000,000

## Gellibrand Cattle Club 2011-2018

Raised more than \$250,000 over seven years to support Anam Cara Colac's nurse manager's salary.

## Anam Cara Colac Arthouse Film Series 2005-2019

A significant fundraiser from 2005 *Ladies in Lavender* to 2019 *Downton Abbey*.

These regular film afternoons, once a month during autumn and winter, provided enjoyment for our community and kept Anam Cara Colac linked to our loyal community supporters.

Anam Cara Colac instigated charity film fundraisers and over time the idea was adopted and benefitted other not for profit organisations in our community.

Thank you to our faithful team of people who over many years facilitated our film afternoons – Anne Mercer, Helen Gibson, Mary McGrath, Judy Davis, Lyn Armistead, Sandra Turner, Lyn Harris, Kerry Turner, Joy Gullan and others. Also, a special thank you to Pauline Price who kindly assisted us throughout those 14 years.

## Community Appeals

Fit Out Appeal  
Paver Appeal  
Wine Drive

## Capital Fundraising Appeal

Foundation membership (\$15K)  
Naming rights for hospice rooms  
(See donation details in Addendum)

## Anam Cara Colac instigated The Colac Community Enterprise

This was established in conjunction with the Bendigo Bank and it is now known as Colac Connected Communities. This foundation provides philanthropic support for the Colac community.

The Colac and wider community contributed \$3.2 million dollars over some seven years to establish Anam Cara Colac - an extraordinary achievement.



# Pitching In To Bring Plan To Life

Judy Davis has had many roles during her time involved with Anam Cara Colac.

Her own personal experience has shaped her opinion and drove her commitment for the need of hospice care in Colac.

"My father-in-law had passed away not long before I joined a group discussing hospice care in Colac. I felt quite strongly about the need for hospice care so was very committed to the idea from the beginning" she said.

Judy Davis was part of a small group of eight people that met at Anam Cara Founder Diane Wright's house brainstorming ideas to make Anam Cara a reality.

And since then, she has been committee secretary, along with assistant treasurer as well as being heavily involved in gala fundraising events and monthly movie afternoons.

"Diane reached out to various people in the Colac community firstly to establish the committee and then to raise funds to establish a hospice. You could say I was Diane's personal assistant along with the day-to-day banking and reconciling of the bank accounts while Wayne O'Brien as treasurer dealt with all things financial."

When the hospice was up and running Judy joined the administration team at Anam Cara until her resignation from that position and the committee in 2015 when she moved from the area.

She said the highlight of her involvement was seeing the idea become a reality with the establishment of Anam Cara House at Barongarook open for guests, their families and being cared for by the wonderful nursing team in a beautiful rural setting.

"The building refurbishment was an enormous task lead by Mark Rosevear and Tony Mahoney, the pair gathered and coordinated the tradespeople and the volunteers to convert the former home into the hospice," she said

"Looking back, it was only achieved because of Diane's drive and faith, and the commitment of those that came on board."

"While it was a daunting task, it was amazing to see the community work and give together. The achievement is heartwarming and says a lot about the Colac community. I'm grateful I was involved in establishing the hospice for Colac and I'm a firm believer that it is a much-needed choice."





# Our Committee



2005 Committee



2007 Committee



2009 AGM



2009 Committee



2009 Melbourne Foundation Committee



2016 Committee



2018 Committee



2019 Committee

# Satellite Committee Fundraising





# More Than Palliative Care

Colac and district Catholic priest Father Michael O'Toole describes Anam Cara Colac as more than palliative care.

He says the community is fortunate to have the facility and he thanked founder Diane Wright for bringing everyone along on her journey in making it a reality.

Father O'Toole has been parish priest for 12 years and says longevity has its advantages. He knows the community; he has established contacts with lots of people, and he knew there was need for what Diane proposed.

He said Diane established the Anam Cara Colac committee, and a team of volunteers and tradespeople and through their actions overcame the initial community challenges about the need for a hospice and its proposed location.

"So much of the work was done by local tradesmen and volunteers, which was quite extraordinary. In many ways it became the quiet and silent work of those volunteers that transformed the building and community opinion. When it was opened it was impressive. It was an eyeopener. And appreciation for it grew the more people inspected it, and saw the beauty of the location, the space, and the amenities," he said.

"The more people experienced the facility, the wonderful nursing staff, and the caring volunteers the more they realised it was not just a place for the sick, but a place for their families. They experienced the hospitality, warmth, peacefulness and the beauty for the surrounds from the sunrises to the sunsets, you know that sort of peace."

Anam Cara Colac approaches care differently; it is a less institutionalised, more personalised approach and he says people realise when they go there it is all about them.

"It wasn't about the institution it is all about people. For example, when I called to plan a visit, I asked what time do they have dinner? And I was told when they want it. So that's just one example of the personalised approach to care that's unavailable or unachievable in larger institutions. At Anam Cara it's all about the guests, they are at the centre of the service. The service is flexible and adapted to their needs."

"They're able to do that because of the small numbers but it's also part of the philosophy and that's what families experience and the residents experience."

Father O'Toole's advocacy role allows him to make recommendations if he knows people are in need of Anam Cara's service.

He said Anam Cara has grown in response to community need. Now there were lovely day groups visiting each week and this helped family members in need of respite care.

"Guests go for the day and enjoy a lovely meal and afternoon teas with homemade scones and a cup of tea and sit down in a nice atmosphere. The visitors have built their own little community there." He often hears from families about their Anam Cara experience. He said he liked to let Diane and the nurses know about the comments, and pass on how grateful people were for the service provided.

"I think Diane has to be celebrated for what she has enabled, and the gifts she's drawn from the community. I think she's enabled people to share their gifts in the care of others."

"People get so much from Anam Cara's holistic care and beautiful surrounds. They appreciate it, it means a lot to them."

# Job Is The Pinnacle

Anam Cara Hospice Manager Karen Eccles considers her role a privilege.

Karen has had numerous roles throughout her nursing career but says this is the type of role you go into nursing for.

"At Anam Cara you actually get to connect with the people you're looking after, you get to give them all the care they need, and you feel like you're able to care for all guests equally," she said.

"And when I consider how hard people worked volunteering their time to get this place up and running, I feel it's a privilege to work here and keep it going."

And she does not think she will ever leave Anam Cara. "I'm never going to leave. I think I will always have a role here in some way, even when I am no longer working here, I will be doing something, I will be volunteering. It's in my soul now."

Karen started at Anam Cara as a casual nurse in 2012. This followed a visit to the hospice while working in another role.

"I was so impressed during that visit that I felt I had to be part of it. There was something about Anam Cara that appealed to me, and as I was leaving, I asked if they were looking for nurses and they were, I started one shift a month soon after."

Today, her role as hospice manager involves overseeing the requirements of the overnight guests as well as those of the day hospice visitors four days a week.

Karen said from year one up until present day there had been a steady increase in service delivery. There had been a slight drop as a result of Covid, where people stayed home during the past 18 months, but service delivery had started to increase again recently.

"We've had the busiest two months just gone, than we have had for the whole year. We have not had a night without guests and approximately three to four guests most nights. So, after a bit of a lull, it has been busier," she said.

When Anam Cara first opened day respite was the first service offered to the community. But as its reputation has grown, and the budget has grown, so have the services offered and now there is a fourth respite day.

Karen said now there were big busy groups four days a week. Currently we have seven guests on a Tuesday, six on Wednesdays, five on Thursdays and two on Fridays. Each group is quite different and unique.

"Some clients who come to the groups are dealing with chronic health problems and they live alone so coming here is really important for their social wellbeing. They have formed a very cohesive group and become incredibly good friends."

"Some come along and do knitting for charity and they've knitted premmy baby clothes, pouches for koalas and blankets for homeless people," she said.



"We don't have structured programs they're all flexible and very much whatever guests feel like doing on the day. Sometimes the volunteers just sit with clients and look through magazines. So, it's all very much whatever they feel like doing on the day and tailored to that."

Karen said we are trying to limit group numbers to five or six people, especially if there were people in need of more attention. And, to accommodate the Covid requirements.

"We have seven regular volunteers that come during day hospice and then we have another six that help around the hospice. If we're short staffed they will come in for the day or jump in where they're needed. Then we have a few that come on the weekends and work over the lunchtime and support the nurses. There are 12 indoor volunteers and three outdoor volunteers. It would be great if we had three regulars for each day of day hospice every week that would be ideal. And we now have funding for a fourth hospice day."

Karen said the response and feedback from guests and their families was overwhelmingly positive.

Karen said we receive lots of lovely comments and so many beautiful things people have said about their experience at Anam Cara.

"I feel extremely fortunate to have this role. I think it is the best job I have had in my whole life because it feels right, it does not feel like a job. Working here feels like it is an extension of my life and my family.

"I've had good jobs in the past but here I feel I've reached the pinnacle."





# The Anam Cara Cattle Club Story

The Anam Cara Cattle Club was established in November 2011, as an auxiliary support to Anam Cara Colac, with the aim of funding our hospice nurse manager's salary.

We were fortunate to be granted, rent free, the use of 200 acres of land in the Gellibrand Valley belonging to the Richmond Family, where calves could be bred and fattened for market.

Individuals, local businesses and syndicates took up \$1500-cattle club memberships which covered the cost of purchasing a cow and calf. Membership also included an invitation to the "Annual Cattle Club Muster" held at the Gellibrand property, to inspect the livestock and enjoy a social day.

In addition to managing our Cattle Club some of our committee undertook to implement a major environmental project at the Gellibrand property, in conjunction with the Gellibrand Landcare Group. This included removing willow trees and planting some 50,000 native trees along five kilometres of stream frontage to enhance the property – achieved by invaluable assistance from the Gellibrand/Kawarren community.

During the seven years of the Cattle Club's operations the aim of the Cattle Club Committee was to fund our hospice nurse manager's salary and this goal was most certainly met. Indeed, residue sales enabled that funding commitment to extend until 30 June 2020, even though the Cattle Club was

wound up in 2018. The total amount raised by the Cattle Club, during its seven years of operations, was more than \$250,000 – an outstanding achievement.

Thus, the Anam Cara Colac Cattle Club contributed significantly to the operations of Anam Cara Colac. And this venture was successful due to generous support of some key people:

- The Richmond Family for the use of their beautiful Gellibrand property.
- Michael Stewart for his valued support on many fronts.
- Our Cattle Club Members who donated towards the cost of our livestock.
- Our small but dedicated Sub-committee: Phil Harris, Andrew Wright Tim Gore, Michael Elton and advisor Tim Gibson, who ran The Cattle Club and cared for the property.
- Our loyal purchasers M.C. Herd and Midfield Meats.
- Our cartage contractors and various other rural suppliers and contractors.

[NB When, for various reasons, the Cattle Club went into recess late 2018, the cattle were gradually sold and with the Committee of Management's approval, the initial members' contribution (\$65,000) placed in Trust for Anam Cara Colac Inc. with JB Were, Melbourne in our Foundation Fund. Thus should the opportunity present itself to re-establish another Cattle Club, these funds will be withdrawn for this specific purpose.]



# Anam Cara Important To The Community

Ask Phil Harris about his role at Anam Cara Colac and he'll tell you he's one of a big band of energetic and enthusiastic volunteers that have helped create a very special place for Colac.

He says when I see the service Anam Cara Colac staff provide the guests I understand and appreciate how important this facility is to the community.

"Anam Cara has a gentle atmosphere, and the staff are terrific but it's not only end-of-life care it's the other services such as respite care and in-home care. Anam Cara is really nice for people to be able to wander outside or find a sunny spot to sit. It's great," he said.

Phil acknowledged Diane Wright's role in bringing people along on the journey in making Anam Cara a reality.

"Di is a very special person who put it all together. She's fantastic at raising funds and a great communicator. I don't think we could have done it much better than what we have at Barongarook," he said.

Phil has been involved with Anam Cara Colac since 2006. He was one of a team of volunteers called the weekend warriors helping to renovate the newly acquired building.

"It's been a tremendous experience being involved in Anam Cara, Kate and I are both involved, it's something we can do and share. We've met people from all around Colac that we hadn't known before. People from other walks of life. We were ready for it, the kids were off and gone. It was something you could have lots of involvement with and see what your support and fundraising was going towards."

"I joined the capital fundraising committee in 2008. It was a very active committee lead by Neil and Michael Stewart and involved in all sorts of events, one that included getting my head shaved with about 30 other people. But we were still only scratching the surface of the funding needed but the introduction of the Melbourne Committee really strengthened the fundraising."

Fellow fundraising committee member Tim Gore suggested the raising of calves to raise funds idea, kicking off Anam Cara's Cattle Club which ran from 2011 until 2020.

"I thought the Gellibrand property, my father had previously owned, and I was managing might be a possible location where we could agist some cattle or cut it for hay to raise funds and talking to the owners, the Richmond family about the idea, they quite happily supported it."

Phil Harris is currently a member of the Anam Cara Committee of Management and reports to the committee on building maintenance and upkeep of the surrounds. He's also called upon for his network of contacts developed during his years working on the renovation.

"I got to know people especially when we were renovating, and tradesman involved. It became quite a close-knit community. And we had lots of social functions, and we'd work and finish up with a barbecue and it's a bonding experience and built friendships that'll be everlasting. "Anam Cara still has tremendous community support."

Phil said although Covid-19 had provided its challenges, Anam Cara had still been able to provide an important community service for guests and their families. All the rooms were accessible from the balconies so family could easily visit or stay if needed as there was room for that too.

He said Anam Cara was providing a service that other towns were looking to replicate such as Mallacoota, Warrnambool, and Mansfield.

Phil said he thinks about finishing in his volunteer role every so often, but with encouragement from Di and conceding it's not much of a demand on his time, he pushes on.



# Anam Cara Colac's Future Plans

As we move into our second decade of hospice care Anam Cara Colac's governing body has its eyes firmly fixed on maintaining our home-like and gold standard of care, to continue to serve our community. To achieve this, it is imperative that we hold fast to our founding mission and values, while at the same time being flexible and open to the possibility of change. In truth, change has been with us continually over the past ten years as we have steadily increased our service delivery in response to the community's need and in line with our operational budget.

The 2021 Oceanic Palliative Care Virtual Conference, attended by several of our staff, highlighted the importance of flexible and strong organisational structures and systems, including the importance of advocacy, data and evidence, digital health, quality standards and benchmarking. Anam Cara Colac is currently completing its third triennium of accreditation according to the requirements of the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Standards and Accreditation Program. We also undertake continuous quality assessment under the National Palliative Care Standards, and through the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration [PCOC] to ensure a gold standard of guest care and benchmarking via data collection.

We also benchmark our care – with good results – against relevant reports and recommendations from our sector's peak bodies Palliative Care Australia [PCA] and Palliative Care Victoria [PCV]. For example, in PCA's Palliative Care Australia Report: Palliative Care 2030 Report. [Palliative Care Australia 2018] a road map for the next ten years highlights that best practice palliative care is both person-centred and family inclusive, delivered in the setting of the person's choice and with their death to be in their preferred location. The report also highlights those comorbidities will become an increasing factor in palliative care due to chronic progressive illnesses with longer disease courses (for example dementia). This report also stresses the importance of Innovative Models of Care, (underpinned by consistent Data Collection, Community Awareness, and Community Based Care (including timely respite options), plus Advance Care Planning and Bereavement Care. Anam Cara Colac's model of care and service delivery stands up well against this report and against the guidelines of Palliative Care Victoria's Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020.

Furthermore, our care already delivers a significant number of recommendations for palliative care, in line with the 2019 Aged Care Royal Commission's Report. In particular "an increased focus on person-centred choices and person-centred control of their own care".

This Report also contains significant recommendations for the enhanced provision of palliative care regarding such matters as, improved service delivery, individualised care, and increased funding to the community sector.

In fact, since establishment, Anam Cara Colac has been prescient in developing a local and community-based model of care focused firmly on choice in place of care, person-centred care and support to families/carers – all key criteria in the fore-mentioned documents. Most certainly big is not always beautiful and providing people with a choice in place of personalised home-like care and underpinning home care is now clearly highlighted as optimal and best practice in palliative care for our ageing Australian population.

As we look to the future then, our Committee of Management is mindful of careful and capable planning, plus strategic thinking and strong leadership for Anam Cara Colac's ongoing sustainability and operational efficacy. We are also committed to maintaining our mission and culture while providing optimal care to our guests and families, thereby making a difference to the community we serve.

Simultaneously we must be aware of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the many other issues that are reverberating across Australia's social, economic and political spheres. Certainly, there will be impacts on the health sector, perhaps most especially on not-for-profit charity organisations, as our increasing ageing and chronically ill population places pressure on demand for both services and funding.

Nonetheless, the organisations that survive and even thrive in this climate of change, will be those who see these challenges as opportunities for innovation, and look for alternative or enhanced ways of operating into the future. That is the challenge now before Anam Cara Colac. How we respond, will undoubtedly determine where Anam Cara finds itself in another 10 years.

In a Palliative Care Australia (PCA) media release 6 May 2020, the Chair of Palliative Care Australia, Professor Meera Agar stated: "All Australians who need palliative care are simply not having access to services when they need to, particularly at home and in community settings. As we prepare for an ageing population and other unexpected stresses to our health care system, like COVID-19, we must look seriously at reforming our system to ensure it can meet people's needs into the future."



2021 Committee from back left, Lyn Harris OAM, Phil Harris, Andrea Langdon, Helen Gibson. Front left, Diane Wright OAM, Tim Gore, Marion Nott, Wayne O'Brien. Absent Dr Ian Mackay.

In the light of the above comment from Professor Agar, it is remarkable that as far back as 2004 our vision for a community hospice commenced and, since 2011, Anam Cara Colac has been providing gold standard community based palliative respite and end-of life care to the people of South West Victoria.

However, we will not be able to rest on its laurels, so to speak. Anam Cara Colac's plans for the future will include continuing to liaise with our peak bodies, Palliative Care Victoria and Palliative Care Australia, actively lobbying State and Federal Government for recurrent funding and continuing to liaise with our local government, Colac Otway Shire for their valued advocacy and support. In addition, close associations will be maintained with both our philanthropic supporters, and new relationships developed with the community that we serve.

Undoubtedly there will be future developments for Anam Cara Colac, as evolving palliative care needs in the community stretches the scope of our care. For example, our Hospice in the Home service, launched some three years ago, may well be expanded – this is certainly the vision of our current Hospice Manager. A further area of possible development is around paediatric palliative care, enabling Anam Cara Colac to offer care to children with life-limiting illnesses and provide support for their families. Consequently, the need may also arise to review our infrastructure and increase the number of our hospice suites or add to our day hospice space. Our resourceful management

executive is also finalising a new initiative sourced from a U.K. Hospice, Pay for a Day Giving Programme with hopes that this will provide another income stream alongside guest and family donations and our Bequest and Giving Programme.

I recently heard it said that a successful organisation is built on good people who support one another - this has been true of Anam Cara Colac since its inception. Anam Cara Colac currently has a skilled and passionate management team leading our nursing and volunteer care team in our day-to-day operations. We also have a committed community management committee overseeing the governance of the hospice - fine people who value and safeguard Anam Cara Colac's unique culture.

Our focus remains firmly on providing excellence in care (physical, emotional and spiritual care) within an home-like environment. We must also focus on leadership and succession planning, along with a likely exponential increase in service demand with its concomitant financial and operational challenges.

Yes, undoubtedly the future will bring new developments over time, in response to the community's needs. However, we are confident that Anam Cara Colac will continue to provide care to the community making a difference in people's lives at a critical time in their life journey.



# Closing Words

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We can all benefit from the sharing of our own story ensuring that our history and culture are not lost and enabling us to build on past knowledge and experiences, moving into the future. Similarly, the story of an organisation's origins is important and Anam Cara Colac's story is no exception.

Indeed, Anam Cara Colac's story is an extraordinary example of how a caring and compassionate community can contribute its joint skills and energy to achieve what, at the outset, seemed to be an almost impossible goal. A goal complicated by the fact that hospice care has a long and distinguished reputation across the globe, while in Australia the knowledge and understanding of hospice care, has not been so familiar. Therefore, informing and educating the Colac and district community about the value of hospice care was paramount from the outset. The hospice model of care was established some 60 years ago in the United Kingdom and every town or county has its own local hospice.

The hospice model of care is informed by a medical perspective and a perspective addressing people's emotional and spiritual needs, and of their loved ones. This inter-related medical, social and community model of care is now being referred to as the gold-standard of care, and the goal of many communities. In fact, requests for information and advice and support to set up other similar hospices in Australia, regularly come to us at Anam Cara Colac.

Anam Cara Colac certainly believes that our model of care stands up well in provision of community based and person-centred care.

Anam Cara Colac is a unique model of care and as such presents unique challenges for management and governance. However Anam Cara Colac also offers unique rewards, both tangible and intangible, to all its associates. The understanding of our point of difference and valuing our founding history and culture is pivotal to the future of Anam Cara Colac. Indeed the appreciation of the sacred nature of end-of-life care is the essence of what has initiated, informed and founded Anam Cara Colac. This is the founding blueprint or DNA of our culture both now, and into the future, that informs, and defines our care.

We still have work to do to help communities understand hospice and palliative care and when it can be accessed.

We also have advocacy and lobbying work to do, strongly bringing the case before government for hospice funding. To achieve this, we will work with local, state, and national agencies and other like services to improve understanding of the value of hospice care, and advocate for funding support.

The Anam Cara Colac story is a most wonderful story, that we are proud to tell. We are proud that during the past 10 years, Anam Cara Colac has provided care of immeasurable value. Indeed, since opening Anam Cara Colac has provided 5,451 episodes of care to 364 people, 70 of whom have been cared for on their sacred end-of-life journey. We are both humbled and thankful that our story shines a light on the incredible journey of faith upon which Anam Cara Colac has been founded and, hopefully, upon which it will continue, to provide outstanding care to the community, long into the future.

## We Thank Them

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Each individual person involved in the Anam Cara Colac journey has been a vital link in the chain that proudly brought our community hospice into being, our heroes. Nonetheless, Anam Cara Colac's establishment has most certainly been the voice of our community and its owning, in part, the care of the dying, with a commitment to providing specialised and home-like respite and end-of-life care. We thank every single person, each one of you, our soul friends, as your combined efforts have enabled the realisation of our Colac community hospice.

# Foundation Members

- Dr I. Joy Bear
- Charles Stewart & Co P/L
- Michael & Susan Hanley
- Neil & Yvonne Stewart
- Michael & Kylie Stewart
- Ray & Maureen Wheadon
- Geoff Lavender & Margie Drake
- Socrates Papadopoulos  
Colac Industrial Park
- Peter McKay  
Colac Industrial Park
- Barry McVilly
- CRF (Colac Otway) P/L
- BDH Construction
- Merv & Faye Brunt
- Lynton & Elsie Evans
- Budget Furnishings
- Chris & Marilyn Meade
- D & K Richmond P/L
- Clarke & Barwood
- AKD Softwoods
- Spence Construction
- Midfield Meat International  
P/L WHK Ltd
- ET & EW Murnane P/L
- Colac Hosts
- Richardson & Dennis Insurance
- Cressy Satellite Group
- Colac CBD Satellite Group
- Barongarook Satellite Group
- A L Lane Foundation
- Bendigo Bank Community  
Enterprise
- Mortimer Petroleum
- PMF Foundation
- Landpower Colac





# Initial Time Line Of Community Hospice Project

## 17 November 2004

Initial working party established

## Jan – March 2005

Working party worked towards creating public awareness

## 16 March 2005

Public meeting held at St Mary's Parish Centre

## 27 April 2005

Committee established

## May 2005

Business Plan draft

Website established in conjunction with Geelong

June 2005 End of Financial Year function

## 31 July 2005

First fundraiser held – film afternoon – with overwhelming support

## August 2005

Meeting with government representatives

## 20 August 2005

Registered with ATO for ABN

## 25 August 2005

Registered with ATO for Tax File Number

## 27 August 2005

Bingo Charity night

## 9 September 2005

Bridal Parade fundraiser

## 25 October 2005

The Colac Community Hospice Project Inc. formally incorporated

## 23 December 2005

Special meeting held to discuss

possibility of Palm View Lodge as Respite Accommodation Facility – Meeting with Mr Neil Stewart

23 January 2006 Capital Fundraising Committee formed to obtain funding to purchase Palm View Lodge – Neil Stewart, Michael Stewart, Diane Wright, Anne Mercer, Chris Meade, John Hayden, Wayne O'Brien, Stephen Lawrence

## 14 February 2006

St Valentines Wanawong Garden Party fundraiser

## 19 March 2006

Charity Golf Day – Colac Golf Club

## 24 March 2006

ATO approval for endorsement for charity tax concessions and deductible gift recipient.

Special Project Fundraising Committee formed to source capital for Palm View Lodge

## April 2006

Bulb drive fundraiser

Shopping Expo organized by Meriba to benefit Colac Community Hospice Project

## May 2006

Conditional contract signed to purchase Palm View Lodge

## 15 July 2006

Poseidon film evening

## 27 August 2006

Mrs Henderson Presents film afternoon

## 6 October 2006

Spring Fashion Parade – Two Rooms on Main Street and The Clothes Box

## 26 October 2006

Jindabyne film evening

## 30 October 2006

Planning application approved

## 15 December 2006

Twilight Auction of industrial allotment donated by Socrates Papadopoulos and Peter McKay and purchased by John and Shirley Williams, Colac Toyota

## 11 February 2007

Colac Hosts Colac Cup function – funds to benefit Colac Community Hospice Project

## February 2007

Visit to Bendigo Bank, Bendigo to discuss Colac proposal for Community Enterprise

## 22 February 2007

The Pursuit of Happiness film evening

## 12 March 2007

Stewart McArthur visit to Palm View Lodge

## 13 March 2007

Satellite groups invited to view Palm View Lodge

## 23 March 2007

Inaugural annual meeting of the Colac Community Hospice Project Inc.

President Diane Wright, Vice President Anne Mercer, Secretary Judy Davis, Treasurer Wayne O'Brien, Fr James Bishop, Helen Gibson, Michael Stewart, Cathy Jubb, Vince Vinci, Tony McGann.

Having secured a home for Anam Cara Colac, 2008 marked the commencement of some major fundraising to now establish the hospice.

# Diane Wright OAM- Her Anam Cara Journey

Palliative care holds a special place in Diane's heart. Diane's journey with palliative care spans some 25 years and, in this time, she has made a significant contribution to the community, in founding Anam Cara Geelong and Anam Cara Colac.

Tertiary training in community health, coupled with professional experience in palliative care, alongside a strong family tradition of community service has resourced and inspired Diane. Firstly, to initiate the development of Anam Cara Geelong.

"I saw hundreds of people during a five-year period when I was working with Geelong Hospice Care Association (a community domiciliary service) and heard a recurring theme. Namely, that most people wanted to remain at home and be with their families at the end of life, however family members and carers were at times becoming emotionally and physically exhausted with providing continued care at home. I became quite passionate about resolving this problem. Clearly carers needed a break, with some short-term respite to recharge their batteries, so they could continue providing care at home. And for those people who for whatever reason could no longer stay at home, or those who lived in a single person household, there were limited choices for end-of-life care."

Diane was motivated by her care for people and her belief in the sanctity of the end-of-life journey. So, with determination and extraordinary community support she went on to realise Anam Cara Geelong in 2007, and then in her own hometown, Anam Cara Colac in 2011. These sister hospices (with separate legal entities) were established by the community, for the community because of the outstanding contribution of individual community members, service clubs, business and philanthropic trusts.

"Since establishment, Anam Cara Geelong and Colac has had the privilege of caring for many, many people requiring respite care and end-of-life care. We have also been able to provide support to guests' loved ones, plus follow-up bereavement care. I am thankful this has been made possible because of our compassionate regional communities and I am very proud of our care teams and volunteers for their specialised and skilful care."



The Anam Cara Colac journey has presented many highlights for Diane, but it is the people she has had the pleasure of meeting along the way. These have included colleagues, patients (guests) and their families,

various committee members, volunteers, some wonderful benefactors and many caring and generous people. Indeed, valued friendships have been formed over the years, on the Anam Cara Colac journey.

"Professionally, I have also met some very inspiring people, including Dr Balfour Mount (Canada), Dame Cicely Saunders (United Kingdom) and in Australia, Dr Bruce Rumbold OAM, Dr Eric Fairbank AM, Fr Kevin Dillon AM and Professor Sandra Legg AM. In particular, the Irish palliative care physician Dr Sinead Donnelly (now working in New Zealand)

inspired me with a documentary she and her brother produced - Living and Dying in Ireland. Sinead gave me the name 'Anam Cara' (from the writer John O'Donohue). Living and dying is a natural process, and everyone deserves the best possible care right up until the end of their life. As a society we are measured by how we care for our frail and ill people, and I believe by compassionately providing a high standard of palliative care and addressing the holistic needs of patients and their carers, we are showing the value we place on human life."

Looking at the future of palliative care, Diane believes there is a strong need to improve access to quality palliative care services especially in regional, rural and remote Australia. "Australians need to be offered a choice in place of care, whether that be in their home, an aged care facility, a hospital or a hospice. This care must also be timely, skilful and compassionate and made available to all."

On her Anam Cara journey Diane especially acknowledges the support of her husband Andrew, plus the support of her family and friends.

"There has been, and still is, an outstanding team of people who have joined me on the Anam Cara journey - ordinary people doing extraordinary things!"



# Vale

## We Pay Tribute To Our 70 End-Of-Life Guests Cared For in The Past 10 Years

And We Remember With Gratitude:



**MICHAEL ELTON**  
(RIP 18.09.2020)

- Capital Fundraising Committee
- Melbourne Foundation Committee
- Anam Cara Cattle Club



**MARY-ANNE RYAN**  
(RIP 07.03.2021)

Committee of Management



**MARTIN ROCHE**  
(RIP 26.07.2019)

Volunteer Maintenance Supervisor



**MURRAY KENT**  
(RIP 15.11.2017)

Volunteer Groundsman



**KEVIN MATHESON**  
(RIP 20.12.2020)

Volunteer Gardener



**DR ISABEL JOY BEAR AM**  
(RIP 08.04.2021)

- First Foundation Member of Anam Cara Colac
- Generous supporter of both Anam Cara Colac and Anam Cara Geelong.

# Brian Wood

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**VALE –  
BRIAN NORMAN  
JOHN WOOD  
(19.10.1940 –  
20.01.2021)**

Brian was a loyal and valued member of Anam Cara Colac's past Melbourne Committee and a great champion of Anam Cara Colac. Even though Brian lived in Geelong, he, and his wife Elizabeth, embraced and supported our Colac hospice wholeheartedly – a most generous and selfless contribution.

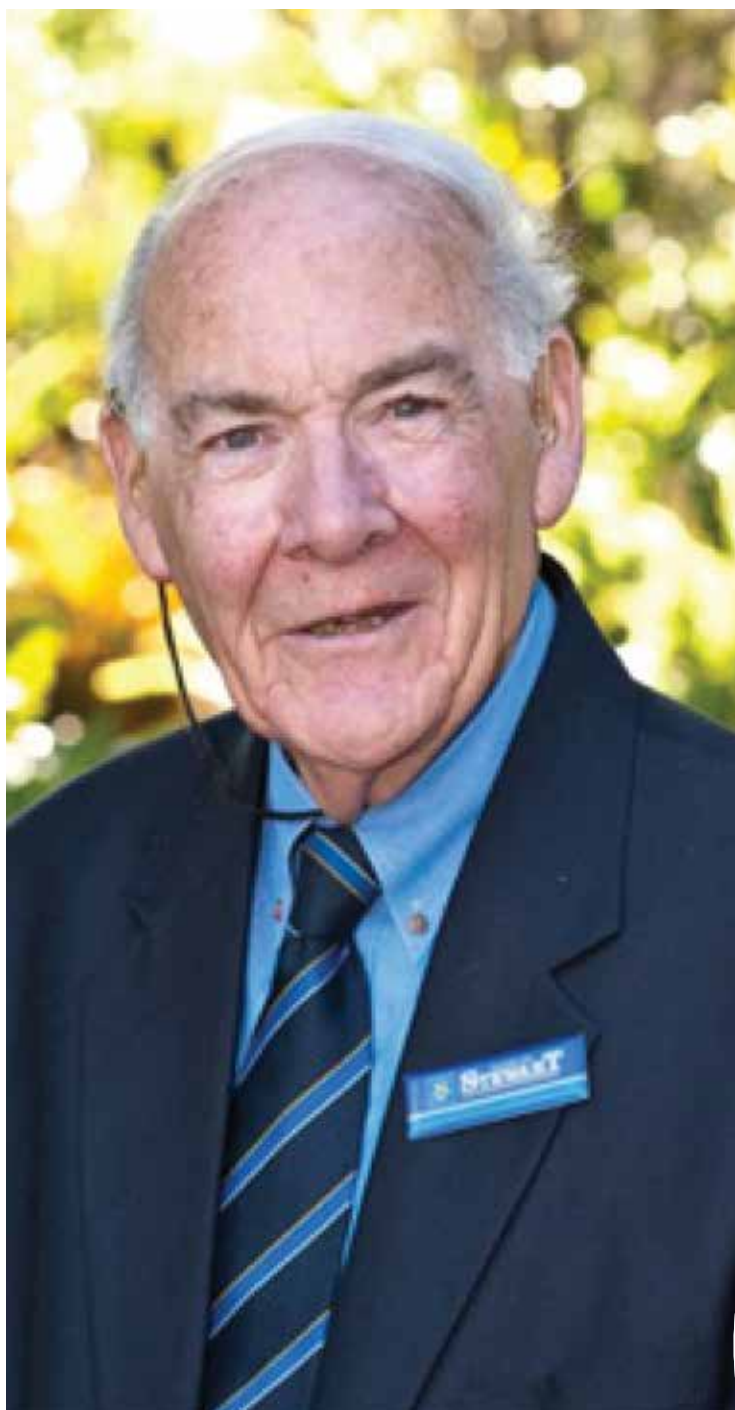
A man of integrity, insight and enormous energy, Brian has been an invaluable advisor and mentor to Anam Cara Colac and to me personally.

Brian consistently gave of his time and skills to our Colac community hospice with our best interests always in his heart and on his mind. His wisdom, integrity, commitment, and encouragement, along with his larger-than-life gregarious manner will be fondly remembered at Anam Cara Colac.

Robert Costa, speaking in May 2021 at the funeral of his brother Frank Costa AO, defined the meaning of philanthropy as being "the love of humanity - giving of one's time, energy and one's self to your fellow man".

This is a very apt description of Brian's life. Brian will always be highly regarded as a champion and soul friend of our hospice. On Sunday 23 May 2021, it was an honour to dedicate our Quiet Room at Anam Cara Colac in memory of Brian and named the Brian Wood Prayer Room.

Vale Brian Wood, faithful friend and respected champion of Anam Cara Colac.



# Anam Cara Colac Furniture Fit Out

## Our Thanks To These Contributors

### **Ian Rollo Estate Foundation:**

Installation of carpet and safety vinyl

### **Grosvenor Foundation:**

Completion of volunteer training room

### **Helen Macpherson Smith Trust:**

Laundry fit out

### **Harold Mitchell Foundation:**

Fit out of volunteer training room

### **Newman's Own Foundation:**

Materials to complete hospice rooms

### **The Collier Charitable Fund:**

Installation of fire safety services

- Robyn Alexander
- Len and Lyn Armistead
- W. Boylan
- Val Bubb
- Colac Group of Better Hearing
- Joy Evans
- Helen Gibson
- Tim and Elizabeth Gore
- Phil and Kate Harris
- Ray and Wendy Hay
- Bronwyn Hickman
- Nola Kavenagh
- Mick and Kath Lark
- Joan McGlagon
- Pat and Kevin Maher
- E. A Monahan
- Rosemary Murnane
- Ron Neille
- Margaret Newton
- Jean Shalders
- Society of St Vincent de Paul Colac
- Shirley Pitman
- Ebony Reynolds
- Brendan and Roslyn Scanlan
- Cam and Lois Stewart
- Mrs E. J. Tanis
- Ursula Tiodcimlate
- Denise Touzel
- Heather Tucker
- Nicholas and Mary Fourniotis
- Brenda Armistead
- Sue Blower

### **Ian Potter Foundation:**

Building of new dining room off the courtyard

### **Graincorp Foundation:**

Materials for access ramp/deck

### **Meriba Service Club:**

Hospice lounge fit out

### **Lions Club Forrest:**

Installation of timber decking

### **Estate of Ruth Roche:**

Courtyard renovation

### **Colac Community Enterprise:**

Dining area fit out

- Mary Brown
- Carlisle River CWA
- COPACC
- Kay Gardiner
- Sharni Gill
- Ian and Joy Gullan
- Terry and Lyn Harris
- Len and Gwen Higgins
- Patricia Jukes
- LC Kirkpatrick
- Phyllis McDonald
- Trevor McLaren
- Robert and Dawn Missen
- Peter and Helen Morey
- Mary Neal
- Bronwyn and Peter Nice
- Mavis Ough
- Colac Chorale Group
- Sheila Pearce
- Ken Rechter
- Gwen Robinson
- June Sherry
- Ross and Jacqui Soares
- Lyn and Rob Tate
- Timeless Interiors
- Colleen Touzel
- Bev Whelan
- Andrew & Diane Wright



# Anam Cara Colac

## Major Funding Contributors

### \$50,000

- Neil & Yvonne Stewart
- Michael & Kylie Stewart
- Socrates Papadopoulos & Peter McKay – Colac Industrial Park
- Barry McVilly
- Chris & Marilyn Meade
- The Midfield Group – Colin McKenna & Family
- Alan Myers AO QC
- Anonymous Trust
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- Newman's Own Foundation
- The Gualtiero Vaccari Foundation
- Melbourne June Gala 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
- The Thyne Reid Foundation
- The Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Colac Gala Event 2018
- GWA Griffiths Estate
- H & L Hecht Trust

### \$25,000

- Collier Charitable Fund
- CRF (Colac Otway) Pty Ltd
- A L Lane Foundation
- AMP Foundation
- Estate Ruth Roche
- Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation
- Cressy Satellite Group
- Colac CBD Satellite Group
- Norm Tann
- 3CS/MIXXFM
- Mortimer Petroleum
- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)

### \$15,000

- Dr I J Bear AM
- Charles Stewart & Co Pty Ltd
- Michael & Susan Hanley
- Ray & Maureen Wheadon
- Geoff Lavender & Margie Drake
- BDH Constructions
- Merv & Faye Brunt
- Lynton & Elsie Evans
- Budget Furnishings – David Harris
- D & K Richmond Pty Ltd
- Clarke & Barwood Lawyers
- AKD Softwoods
- Spence Construction
- Crowe Horwath
- ET & EW Murnane Pty Ltd

- Colac Hosts
- Richardson & Dennis Insurance Agency
- Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation
- Landpower Colac Pty Ltd
- PMF Foundation
- John T Reid Charitable Trust
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- Grosvenor Foundation
- Barongarook Satellite Group
- The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
- Graincorp Operations Ltd
- Colac Community Enterprise Foundation
- The Gall Family Foundation
- Acciona Energy
- "MAE01 Soul Friend" Erskine Family Trust

### \$10,000

- Wettenhalls Group
- Gary & Leni Dempsey
- Lions Club Forrest
- Elton Group
- Carlisle River Satellite Group
- Delta Group
- The Marian & EH Flack Trust
- The Danks Trust
- Pardoo Cattle Company – M & A Joyce
- Argento Panels
- Ross Higgins
- Westpac Foundation

### \$5,000

- Barbara & Margaret Gaylard
- Gordon Bros P/L
- Dove Livestock
- Ed & Edie Monahan
- Gary Redford -JG Johnstone Real Estate
- Dyson & Jennie Scott
- Coffey Hunt Chartered Accountants
- Sears Business Agents
- David Falk & Co
- Noel & Robyn Cuolahan
- Warrnambool Ag
- Costa Family Foundation
- Ern Hartley Foundation
- HF Richardson & Co
- Archie & Hilda Graham Foundation
- Rural Finance
- Meriba Service Club
- Alex Pappas
- Colac Investments

- Wade Family Trust
- R Slater & Sons P/L
- Pirron Yallock Satellite Group
- Michael Washington Headshave
- Irene Zappelli Artshow
- Harold Mitchell Foundation
- GMHBA
- Yokin P/L
- G & E Jones Trust
- Colac Water Supply Specialists
- Coles Coachlines
- Murray 2 Moyne Respite Riders
- Suncorp Metway Ltd
- Tim & Elizabeth Gore
- Bank of Melbourne
- FRRR – Gardiner Foundation
- AK Rechter
- J & M McMaster
- Paul Riordan

### \$2,500

- Midway P/L
- Colac Toyota
- Clearwater Logging & Transport Co
- FRRR – The Wicking Trust
- Lorne Real Estate
- Ray & Wendy Hay
- Dooley & Catherine Moore
- Peter & Jenny McConachy
- Leo Delahunty
- Landlink Opteon
- Melb St Clair Reunion Lodge No 17
- BWC Wilson
- Tim & Helen Gibson
- Uebergang Foundation
- Phil & Kate Harris
- Rob & Pam Jamieson
- Geelong Advertiser
- Stringer Clark Lawyers
- Moore Stephens Melbourne
- Rodger Constructions
- Liftquip P/L
- Ross & Robyn Alexander
- Rod & Deb McClure
- Birregurra Satellite Group
- St Vincent De Paul Society Vic Inc
- Honda Foundation
- Palliative Care Victoria
- Shane Jacobson
- Henry Bongers
- Ace Travel
- Newskills
- Thompson Family
- BT & IC Delahunty

Updated AGM Nov 2019

# Palliative Care Victoria ~ Life Membership Making A Difference; Making Soul Friends

November 9, 2018

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**Diane Wright was awarded Life Membership of Palliative Care Victoria at its 2018 Annual General Meeting for her inspiring leadership and significant contributions to the development of palliative care in Victoria. Diane received the award from PCV Chair, Barbara Hayes.**

**Diane shared her story with Kate Wellard.**

## Formative years

"There was always a spirit of commitment to the community in my family. My father and mother were key members in establishing the non-for-profit Royal Guide Dogs for Victoria. As a family we were always involved in working bees and fund-raisers. Dad was also a member of The Melbourne Apex Club – (ironically his Balwyn Apex Club initiated the Colac Apex Club) so by example community service was always part of my life," Diane comments.

Every morning after breakfast, before rushing out the front door to school, her father would ask a 12 year old Diane the same question. A question that has stayed with her for decades.

"Every morning he would look me in the eyes and in a playful but earnest tone he would ask 'what difference are you going to make in the world today Diane?' Dad probably didn't know it at the time, but his routine questioning inspired, encouraged and spurred me on to make an impact and as an adult, to drive meaningful change," says Diane.

And even though this humble and incredibly modest woman wouldn't say so herself, she has had an enormous impact on the quality of life of hundreds of Australians. Diane has also been a trail blazer in paving the way for innovation in regional palliative care.

"While completing a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology) I started my career working at Yarra Valley Grammar School where I was very impressed with an innovative Hearing Unit to assist hearing impaired children. Some years later, having moved to Colac in Western Victoria and with a growing family, I was privileged to implement the Interchange Program (now Gateways Support Services), a not-for-profit organization that supports children with a disability, by providing social and recreational opportunities and much needed respite for

their families. After matching over 100 children with suitable carers, I could see the tangible difference this was making. I then decided to study further, completing a Graduate Diploma of Social Science (Clinical Family Therapy)," says Diane.

## Sources of inspiration

Diane went on to complete a Post Graduate Diploma in Adolescent Health & Welfare at Melbourne University and a Masters of Counselling & Human Services at La Trobe University. At La Trobe University she was mentored by Jean Rumbold, her supervisor, and also met Dr. Bruce Rumbold OAM, who was incredibly passionate about a community model of palliative care – "both inspired me".

Subsequently, working as a Palliative Care Counsellor in Geelong, Diane was inspired by the work of Dame Cicely Saunders and in 2002 met with Dame Cicely at St Christopher's Hospice in London and also with Dr Trevor Banks OAM in Geelong. Diane was encouraged in her vision of creating a respite and palliative care facility, which would provide a high standard of care within an 'home like' environment.

"As a palliative care counsellor, my role was to provide support for people who had been recently diagnosed with a terminal illness or to provide support to families, especially in their bereavement phase. Over my five years of working with many, many patients and their families, I noticed a common theme that I couldn't forget and which troubled me. People with a terminal illness wanted to remain at home and their families wanted the same thing; however, they became burnt out and towards the end of a loved one's life it became ever more challenging," comments Diane.

"My father also had another saying that has stayed with me during the years: 'If you see something that needs to be done, don't wait for someone else to do it.' I saw this gap in service in care and felt strongly that something needed to be done about it," remarks Diane.

And with this, Anam Cara House Geelong and Anam Cara House Colac, two Community Hospices in Western Victoria, were born – "with outstanding community support, plus the support of my husband and family and also my Christian faith," adds Diane.



### **Anam Cara houses established in Geelong and Colac**

Anam Cara House Geelong was established in 2007, followed by the opening of Anam Cara House Colac in 2011. Diane's leadership, in firstly initiating a massive fundraising drive and then taking the dream forward to the fit out of St Mary's Presbytery in Geelong and then the purchase and refurbishment of a property in Barongarook West, near Colac, has enabled the people of Geelong and South West Victoria to have access to an option for palliative and end of life care that is truly unique.

"I researched deeply and travelled widely, taking inspiration in palliative care trends from across the world in developing Anam Cara Geelong & Colac. In fact, in 2002, I came across the phrase "Anam Cara" (used by Irish poet John O'Donohue) while attending the Canadian Palliative Care Congress and hearing the outstanding palliative care physician Dr Sinead Donnelly use this phrase in a documentary. Anam Cara is the Gaelic phrase for 'soul friend' and this resonates with the holistic care, including spiritual care, offered through the service at Anam Cara House both in Geelong and Colac," says Diane.

The Geelong and Colac Hospices have expanded annually and continue to evolve since first opening, demonstrating a clear need for this type of care and also responding to community need.

### **Broader, ongoing impact**

Diane's impact on palliative care does not stop there.

"I want to share our community model of hospice care and also support others who are making great strides in this space. So Anam Cara House is proud to be associated with Warrnambool & District Community Hospice and to have connected with Lakes Entrance Hospice, the Hospice Care Association of Northern Tasmania and recently with the newly initiated Mansfield Community Hospice, to name a few," says Diane.



# Future Site of the New Anam Cara



## The New Anam Cara Geelong A Plan For The Future

This story would be incomplete if we fail to mention Anam Cara Geelong's development of the New Anam Cara. This facility is designed to be home-like and to accommodate a range of hospice services and end-of-life palliative respite choices for people living with a life-limiting illness. Services will be available to everyone and accessible to all people regardless of their life or financial circumstances. This new hospice has been planned, in response to the growing needs of the greater Geelong region and the necessary provision of a larger, purpose built, first class hospice facility.

This is an exciting and visionary development that is now well in progress, under the very capable direction of Anam Cara Geelong's Board of Management with Chair Diana Taylor.

Currently under construction, the New Anam Cara is a dedicated twenty-bed hospice, located on the Waurin Ponds Campus of Deakin University. This new facility will provide a significant boost to local hospice services and access to more respite care in the community. Importantly, a signed Research and Teaching Agreement with Deakin University, will also result in an ongoing hands-on teaching partnership between the university's faculty of health, its school of medicine and Anam Cara Geelong.

The New Anam Cara is an important initiative to serve Geelong and the wider community. It is a new chapter in the Anam Cara Geelong story, continuing the work providing invaluable and specialised palliative care to the regional community.

## Vale

Frank Costa AO died on 2 May 2021. Frank graciously accepted my request to be patron of Anam Cara Geelong and was also a supporter and benefactor of Anam Cara Colac. A true champion of many people and organisations, the accordance to Frank of a State Funeral was indicative of the high esteem in which he was held by the Geelong and wider community.

**Vale Frank.**



To quote Dr. Bruce Rumbold, Director of the Palliative Care Unit at La Trobe University,

**“One of the greatest improvements to care of the dying, would be for dying to be owned by the community and not just the health system.”**

## Acknowledgment Of Contributors

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Hero interviews and stories, and publication co-ordination – Johanna Wade, Reddi Media, Colac.

Publication design and printing co-ordination – Melanie Swan, Coast Print, Torquay.

Photography – Jodie Lemke, Johanna Wade and Anam Cara Colac photography archives.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Anam Cara Colac's story. To the individuals who agreed to interviews to share their story. To our photographic stars, and our in-house photographer and publication assistant Jodie Lemke. Special acknowledgement to Mrs Anne Mercer, our inaugural vice president, and faithful archivist for many years.

Thank you to Johanna Wade, Mel Swan for generously donating their time to produce Anam Cara Colac's story. And also, our appreciation is extended to Ray and Andrea Langdon for their generosity to enable the printing of this publication.



A place like home.

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