

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.

Upcoming Events

- Parkinson's Support Group
- Bereavement Support Group
- Memory Lane Dementia Group
- Carer's Support Group

For further information regarding the above groups, please contact us

- 1 June - launch of our Community Appeal
- 21 July - Community Cuppa from 11.00am
- 8 August - Dying to Know Day

We acknowledge the valuable contribution to Anam Cara Colac, of the following, businesses, individuals, organisations and community groups:

- Charles Stewart Real Estate
- MJ Nocera Pty Ltd
- Calco Trusses & Timber
- Colac Mens Shed
- Rotary Club Colac West
- Allan & Pauline Symons
- R Slater & Sons
- Matt Cirillo, Photography
- Acciona Energia
- The Angior Family Foundation
- StevCom
- Goop Digital
- LavaNet Camperdown

QIC Accredited Organisation Member - Palliative Care Victoria Inc (PCV)
Member - International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC)

Anam Cara Colac acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians and especially the Gulidjan (also known as the Kolakngat) people who occupied the Lake Colac region of Victoria.

A word from ... Maryjane Crabtree, President

As you all know "Anam Cara" is Gaelic for "Soul Friend" - a concept that beautifully conveys what we aim to be for our guests and their carers over their journey after receiving a diagnosis of a life-limiting condition.

We aim to support anyone in the Southwest who is diagnosed with such a condition to live the rest of their life as well and as fully as possible.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers deliver person-centered care that manages our guests' symptoms including pain, discomfort and anxiety; enables them to achieve the things they want to do with their lives after diagnosis; and helps to comfort them and their carers throughout their experience.

We care for our guests regardless of their ability to pay. The only requirement is the need for our care. The total care cost, on average is \$2,600.00 for overnight care (for all guests who are staying) and \$310.00 for day respite. Some of this cost is covered by fluctuating grant funding and in a few cases, by insurance, a home care package or the NDIS. The rest is paid for by generous donations of money and in-kind support from our community and of course is supported by the work of our wonderful volunteers.

This year we will exceed our goal of providing 1,000 episodes of overnight care, and we recently added a fourth day to our Day Respite program.



It is really rewarding to know that our service is meeting a genuine and growing need.

Of course, extending our service means that we are running more staff over more shifts. Employee expenses form 80% of our total expenses and have doubled since 2018. The majority of salary costs relate to clinical staff and we keep our administration very lean.

The Board recently held a strategy day to develop our thinking on what we can achieve for our guests and our community over the next five, ten and fifteen years. Whether we can continue over that horizon depends on a number of things, mainly - are we continuing to meet community needs, can we attract and retain a high-quality clinical workforce to meet expanding demand, and can we obtain secure and sustainable funding as our expenses continue to grow?

I know that many of you will have had personal experience of the growing need for our service and have expertise and contacts that can help us develop our future planning. Please contact me at Anam Cara if you have any ideas that you can share.

Contact Us

50 Forans Road, Barongarook West, 3249
PO Box 508, Colac 3250
p. (03) 5233 8203
e. manager@anamcarahousecolac.org.au
w. www.anamcarahousecolac.org.au

Soul Friend

As we grapple with these questions and find a way forward, we again turn to our community for help with our Annual Giving Appeal.

Last year we raised \$108,000 in our appeal. Every cent of that went straight to our direct expenses and helped us to achieve our goal of always being ready to accept any guest at end-of-life, always accommodating emergency carer respite, and extending our day respite service.

This year, our community is hugely stressed by the worst drought any of us has experienced.

While we know that budgets are tight, it is more important than ever that we can provide our care regardless of our guest's financial means, especially to those in hardship. This year, a generous local supporter has agreed to match every donation up to \$100,000.00. So this year, your donation will have double the impact! Will you, our loyal community, join together with us and donate to our appeal so that we can continue to serve?

Maryjane Crabtree
President

Community Appeal 2025

As a community-run hospice, we do not receive ongoing government funding and rely heavily on grants and community donations. Contributions and donations allow for Anam Cara Colac and our wonderful team of nurses and carers, to give respite to guests and their families. A beautiful thank you was received from one of those families recently.

"My husband and I have accessed Anam Cara Colac services through the Parkinson's Support group since 2017. Over that time I have been able to gradually increase the access to day respite and then overnight respite care.

Having a break through overnight and day respite for me has meant that I have the peace of mind of knowing I have some time to myself which is a lovely thought. I can have some unscheduled time.

Anam Cara Nurses have also helped my husband's symptoms, for example the nurses helped to identify health concerns and suggested changes, so he is more stable. His symptoms are easier to manage because of this, and I can keep him home and out of permanent care.

I cannot speak highly enough of Anam Cara."

Gratitude

In the past two months Anam Cara Colac has received \$17,150.00 in donations from our guests and their families.

We are grateful for this support which enables our ongoing respite and end-of-life care to the community.



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COLAC

2025 Community APPEAL



All donations are
tax deductible

Find Us

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On Facebook - "Like" us on Facebook to keep up with the happenings at the hospice.

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a
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home

Soul Friend

Did you know ...

For the months of March, April and May, we have had:

- 253 episodes of care over 84 nights.
- That's 3.2 guests per night on average.
- Day respite had 134 attendances.
- We have supported 3 guests with end of life care.

Respect - Dignity - Trust - Compassion - Community

Respite news ...

Our beautiful respite ladies received a visit from Annie - a miniature dachshund which brought smiles to all. Annie is the daughter of our resident four legged staff member, Nigel. Our respite programs provide guests with support and opportunities for social interaction. A range of activities are available according to guest preferences. There is an RN, specifically trained support staff and volunteers on site. For information on day respite, please contact the office.



Anne, Bev and Liz enjoyed a visit from "Annie"



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Soul Friend



Sandra Mary Turner (12.3.1948 - 18.5.2025)
Life Member of Anam Cara House Colac.

Sandra was on our foundation working party making a significant contribution to our establishment and initial fundraising. Sandra was an extraordinary woman and a highly regarded member of our Anam Cara family. Our sincere condolences are conveyed to Darryl, Mandy and Michael and all her family.
VALE SANDRA

Diane Wright, Founder & President Emeritus

Helen Speirs has been a part of our Anam Cara family since 2015. We thank you Helen for your support and friendship and wish you all the best.

Some words as I retire

"Nursing was my chosen career, 48 years a good long time. So many memories along the way, I treasure them as mine.

Colac Hospital was my training ground, it launched me on my way, then the big smoke called me, I ventured there one day.

A theatre nurse was my first calling, the Austin made me that, Mid then at the Royal Women's, another feather in my cap.

I've nursed in a lot of places, from the largest to the very small, from wee babies to the golden oldies, a privilege to nurse them all.

Night duty has been my chosen hours, probably made me slightly crazy, but now it's time to sleep the norm and become a little lazy.

I've seen a lot of changes, too many here to tell, and boy I've had a lot of laughs and made a bit of merry hell.

It has been said I should go on, at least another year I'm told, there are things to do and places to go before I get too old.

I will not miss the driving, the wildlife out at night, the tradies in the morning, they can give me a fright.

Here I've been pretty good at ironing almost every night, I've busted a couple of ironing boards with my vigor and my might.

Now that I am leaving there's a couple of nights going free, don't all fight over them and try to not miss me.

So now at Anam Cara, I'll end this great career".

Helen Speirs.



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Did you know ...

In the 2023/2024 financial year:

- we provided 944 episodes of care (an episode of care is a guest staying overnight).
- our day respite program has provided for 434 attendances..
- 37 volunteers provided a total of 3,600 hours of their time in many different ways.

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Hospice Update from ...

May marked a special month for us. We had the opportunity to open our doors and celebrate Palliative Care Week. Autumn has brought lots of activity to Anam Cara Colac. In this special month, I would like to share some examples of Palliative Care in action at Anam Cara Colac and help dispel some of the myths that people have in relation to the true meaning of Palliative Care.

With the cooler days there is more time to spend indoors in front of the fire where we talk of the weather, the drought in the south and the floods to the north. Guests share stories, experiences and wedding photos. We hear, in wonder, the amazing talents of our guests, from our new day respite guest who plays the piano accordion with expertise, to those that tell stories of their childhood that give great inspiration to others. This allows people to experience unrushed interactions with each other, staff and volunteers. Time spent together, and a shared meal helps to foster community connections in a compassionate, caring and often fun and humorous way. *This is Palliative Care in Action.* People should be able to access Palliative Care at any point after diagnosis. Accessible care assists people to live a rewarding life, improving quality of life while coping with the challenges of illness and also supporting carers to have time out.



There are times in our lives when we need a navigator, a guide to assist us through challenging times. Staff at Anam Cara Colac provide guidance, support, and reassurance. Effective care and navigation involves understanding physical, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs, then offering help and resources to find a way through uncertainty. By being a steady presence, a "soul friend" we can help alleviate problems and reassure people that they do not have to face these challenges alone. The staff at Anam Cara Colac, use their inquiring expertise to identify solutions, to advise and support, escalate concerns to GP's or refer to the many other wonderful services that we have in the region.

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Hospice Update continued ...

This is Palliative Care in Action. Helping reduce the need for hospital admissions, emergency admissions and underpin people and carers to stay in their preferred place of care - home.

We continued to have the honour of caring for many people and their loved ones, over the last few months, some for respite and others for end-of-life care. We work in partnership, build strong relationships of trust and reliability, where other supports may be limited. The deep care, connections and advocacy of families with their loved ones at the end-of-life is a privilege to witness for our team. We support with experienced Nursing care, trained staff and volunteers deliver care, which helps to decrease symptoms and improves comfort. *This is Palliative Care in Action.* Improving quality of life through caring for people who are dying, supporting carers and families through possibly the most challenging time of their lives, with empathy, compassion and respect.

We are agile, growing, and changing to respond to community needs. We are developing more essential services focused on helping people from the first contact with Anam Cara Colac, through our Pre-Assessment processes with a dedicated Pre-Assessment Nursing service, and a Community Outreach program to connect with more people in our community. *This is Palliative Care in Action.* Providing services which improve quality of life at the earliest opportunity.

If you are wondering if Anam Cara Colac can help you or your loved one, please feel free to call us.

Palliative Care Week

In May we had our annual Palliative Care Week event with Carol Kahn, Program Manager from Memory Lane as our guest speaker. Memory Lane is part of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Victoria and is a one-of-a-kind service in the State. Memory Lane takes people in palliative or end-of-life care someplace of meaning to them. That special place may be a favourite holiday spot from years past, a beach where they spent time as a child, or a trip back to the family home. It may also be somewhere they have not been, but are keen to go, such as to see the snow or watch the fairy penguins. Some trips are to events – weddings, funerals, graduations and footy games are amongst the trips we have facilitated for Victorians from around the State. It was fantastic to hear some of the stories of impact and experiences of the recipients of the service. Another wonderful service working in the Palliative Care space.

Naomi Lettieri
Hospice Manager



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