

The Link

Silverchain Foundation Newsletter

Helping Hands program makes inroads

As the weather warms up and we welcome spring, I have been incredibly grateful for your generosity in helping us support our clients over winter with Helping Hand grants.



These short term, urgent financial relief grants mean our care teams can give clients greater dignity by meeting their social and economic needs beyond their physical health. With the rising cost of living, we've had an increase in applications for these grants, and I wanted to share how your generosity is supporting people in their time of need.

One of Silverchain's clients, Jordan, receives a disability support pension. He had been living without a working microwave or toaster for months, which was the main way he prepared food for himself. With no family or support network, he was unable to replace these essential appliances. A member of his care team noticed this, and applied for the grant to restore

Jordan's ability to prepare meals independently. This simple intervention significantly improved his quality of life and nutritional wellbeing.

One of our palliative care clients is the father of young children. Adrian and his family were navigating a perfect storm of financial stress: sudden loss of income, significant debt, and delays in Centrelink support. With no buffer to fall back on, Adrian was struggling to provide basic necessities for his family. Thanks to a Helping Hand food voucher, Adrian was able to purchase groceries and daily essentials.

Every gift, big or small, makes a difference in the care and services we can provide. In this edition of The Link, you'll find an update from our Research & Innovation team on the latest

in their mental health work, including a new initiative to alleviate loneliness for older people.

Thanks to your generous support in our most recent appeal, we are also starting new research into the best ways of supporting older people with complex mental health issues. You can read more inside. Thank you for your support. Yours sincerely,



Bronwyn Perry
Executive Director,
Silverchain Foundation

Thank you from our care teams



“Each day, our care teams are committed to delivering high quality care to our clients. My aged care team look after thousands of older people and are always looking for ways we can improve our care.

“The generous support of donors to Silverchain Foundation means we are able to provide holistic care and support, looking after our clients’ emotional and social needs, not just their physical care needs.

“Thank you for enabling our care teams to go above and beyond for their clients, and use the best technology and support tools available to make a real difference in our clients’ health.”

Carolyn Bell, Registered Nurse and Silverchain’s Executive Director, Aged Care (centre of photo)

For people receiving palliative care, your donations make a profound difference

Through Silverchain Foundation's Helping Hand program, your generous donations deliver practical financial support to people in need.

Silverchain Senior Social Worker Ellie Branch works in our palliative care team.

When families are facing some of their hardest times, Ellie knows when every other avenue is exhausted, Helping Hand will be there.

"With one of my clients, his wife was struggling to buy food for their family," Ellie said. "When a family's income is diminished because someone can't work, it can put tremendous strain on the family's finances. My client's family were only buying the bare minimum of food and only the cheapest options available.

"When people near the end of their life, often their appetite is diminished, and they just don't feel like eating, so food selection is important.

"I applied for some short-term financial support for the family through Helping Hand.

"When the wife received a \$200 supermarket voucher, she said something that really stayed with me.

"It was so simple, but you could tell it meant a lot. She said, 'I can finally buy my husband the expensive yoghurt that he likes – it's the only thing he will eat at the moment!'



"When you're facing such challenging times, often it's not the practical difference Helping Hand makes that really stands out, it's the emotional impact of this small gift.

"Often my clients' families are going through a lot of stress. When we're able to help alleviate one area of stress, like the stress of putting food on the table, it

gives the whole family some breathing space to address what's going on emotionally.

"It may mean they can just enjoy time together or even just acknowledge how hard it has been. **I think it's this emotional benefit that makes the biggest difference.**"

Thank you for lending a Helping Hand.

Bringing connection to the table: The Silverchain Lunch Club



When Margaret lost her husband, her home – once filled with conversation and laughter – grew quiet. Mealtimes became the loneliest part of her day.

“It’s not just the food,” Margaret shared. “It’s the company I miss most.”

Sadly, Margaret’s story is all too common. Many older Australians live alone and experience loneliness and isolation – something that can significantly impact both their mental wellbeing and physical health, including their nutrition.

That’s why Silverchain is introducing the **Silverchain Lunch Club** – a pilot program designed to connect older people through a weekly online lunch and conversation group. With just a computer or tablet device (and a little support if needed), participants can enjoy lunch from home while chatting with others about shared experiences, memories, or simply what’s on their minds.

We’re currently surveying aged care clients across Western Australia to shape the Lunch Club around their preferences. The pilot will then help us understand how this program may improve participants’ sense of connection, emotional wellbeing, and even their food intake.

For some, we’ll also provide access to CareWindow, a simple video call device, to make sure no one is excluded because of technology or financial barriers.

We believe everyone deserves the joy of social connection, no matter their age or circumstance. But we need your help to ensure the Silverchain Lunch Club delivers on its promise.

With your support, we can test and refine this program so it can be offered more broadly to older people across Australia. Your donation helps cover the cost of equipment, support, and ongoing evaluation, ensuring this initiative can truly make a difference.

To support the Silverchain Lunch Club and help us build a more connected future for older Australians, please consider making a donation today. You can scan the QR code or call 1300 650 803 and ask to speak to the Silverchain Foundation team.



Advancing complex mental health care and research

Your generosity is already making a powerful difference in the lives of older Australians living with complex mental illness.

Thanks to your support, Silverchain is developing and testing new tools and training programs that are helping our aged care teams identify and respond to complex mental health challenges earlier – giving older Australians the care they need.

Thanks to your support, we'll be able to:

- **Empower our aged care teams** with training to recognise and respond to complex mental health challenges early like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, hoarding, and problematic alcohol and drug issues.
- **Reduce avoidable hospitalisations** by ensuring older people receive the right mental health care in their home.
- **Support older Australians to live with dignity and confidence** through early intervention and compassionate care in the home.

- **Fill critical gaps in care** with practical, evidence-based tools designed by our leading research and innovation team.

Your generosity is helping Silverchain lead the way in addressing one of the most overlooked health challenges affecting older Australians today.

While aged care has long focused on physical health, we know that quality care means caring for the whole person – including their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Sadly, complex mental health conditions often go unnoticed or untreated later in life. Yet the likelihood of experiencing these conditions increases significantly for Australians in their 80s and 90s – with rates matching, and sometimes exceeding, those seen in younger people in their teens and 20s. Our care teams are often the first to identify when someone might need more support.

Silverchain's Director of Research Discovery, Adjunct Professor Tanya Davison, says the support of our donors is turning research into action.

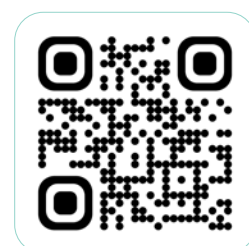
"Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are empowering our care teams to provide greater access to mental health support for people receiving aged care at home," Dr Davison said.

Silverchain Senior Research Fellow Dr Marissa Dickens said addressing a critical gap in mental health care will allow older Australians to live with greater independence in their own homes.

"When we identify a client with mental health concerns and escalate this the right way, we can significantly reduce avoidable hospitalisations, protect our clients, and improve their quality of life," Dr Dickens said.

You have helped to fund critical research to transform home care for older Australians, with work underway on a practical, scalable solution for complex mental health conditions that can be built into everyday home care services. This could mean fewer people falling through the cracks, fewer preventable hospital presentations, and more older Australians living with greater dignity, confidence and individualised care and support.

Thank you for helping us deliver compassionate, connected care. **To learn more about how we plan to better support older Australians living with complex mental health conditions, scan the QR code.**



Training the trainer to improve care

Thanks to your generous support, Kimberley received a Silverchain Foundation Care Scholarship and is thrilled to achieve her long-term dream of studying a Master of Clinical Education.

Kimberley is Silverchain's Allied Health Educator, meaning **your support will empower Kimberley to deliver better training and education to her colleagues across Silverchain.**

Kimberley's journey to clinical education followed more than a decade as a physiotherapist, including time in the UK and with an integrated allied health team.

Thanks to these broad skills, Kimberley recognised a gap in her colleagues' education and is now able to help improve our allied health care.

"Financially, I couldn't afford to study a Masters of Clinical Education. The Silverchain Foundation Scholarship means I can pursue my personal goal of raising a family and my career goal of advancing my knowledge to better support our clinical teams. With this study, I'll be able to help improve our training and education program, and have an impact across Australia," Kimberley said.

"Being able to achieve my goal thanks to the generosity of the Foundation supporters means the world to me. Thank you."

"It's exciting that Silverchain Foundation is backing me, and helping me achieve this personal and professional goal."

Kimberley Williams, Silverchain's Allied Health Educator



Why I became a donor: a grateful husband's tribute



Russell and Jackie on their travels across WA.

For Russell, the decision to give to Silverchain was deeply personal.

When Russell retired from his office job in Perth in 2020, life was full of promise. He and his wife, Jackie, traded in their old caravan for a new one and joined the local caravan club. Together they explored country towns, shared long weekends with their daughters and grandchildren, and enjoyed the freedom of the open road.

Their only connection to Silverchain back then was a quirky coincidence – years earlier, the family had bought a small second-hand car once used by a Silverchain carer. They never imagined how important that name would become.

In late 2021, as they prepared to downsize their home, Jackie found a lump in her breast.

Over the following five months, during cancer treatment, Silverchain became a lifeline.

“The regular visits from a warm and caring nurse to help Jackie with medications and dressings were priceless. They even supported us with mobility aids to help move safely around the house,” Russell said.

Russell faced the heartbreaking reality of losing his beloved wife. In the most challenging of moments of their journey, Silverchain's palliative care team was there – not only with expert medical care but with genuine compassion.

Jackie passed away just five months after her diagnosis, in 2022. The care that Jackie received left a lasting impact. Today Russell supports Silverchain as a Sterling Supporter, with a monthly

“I support Silverchain so that other families can be cared for like we were,” Russell said.

“The very least I can do is pay it forward to ease the pain a little for others who may find themselves in a similar situation.”

donation as a quiet tribute to the love of his life.

“I give in memory of my adorable Jackie. We were married for nearly 48 years,” Russell shared.

“Silverchain has earned my eternal gratitude for the tender care they gave her in those last few painful months.”

Russell says he gives to Silverchain because their care went beyond what he expected. It was personal, thoughtful and human.

Thank you Russell for sharing Jackie's story.

If you would like to share a story of gratitude for Silverchain services or donate in memory of a loved one, please call **1300 650 803** or contact fundraising@silverchain.org.au

Ways you can give

Your generosity helps us continue our work to ensure more Australians can receive the care and support they need, in the comfort and familiarity of home.

Make a one off gift

Every gift to Silverchain Foundation helps us enhance the care our clients receive.

Phone

Call **1300 650 803** to donate over the phone using a credit or debit card.

Online

Go to **silverchain.org.au/donate** to send a gift via our secure online donation form.

Mail

Send your cheque to:

**Silverchain Foundation
6 Sundercombe Street,
Osborne Park WA 6017**

Please ensure your bank is still offering cheque services.

Leave a gift to Silverchain in your Will

By leaving a gift in your Will to Silverchain, you will help shape the future of in home health and aged care for generations to come. Your legacy will empower our clinical and care teams, and our innovators, to create real change for all Australians.

Please call **1300 650 803** and ask for the fundraising team, or send us an email at **bequests@silverchain.org.au**

Sterling Supporters

Set up a regular donation via direct debit or credit card to become a Sterling Supporter and help provide ongoing funding in our areas of greatest need.

Call **1300 650 803** to set up your regular donation today.



You can also support Silverchain Foundation through your local container deposit scheme.

For more information visit **silverchain.org.au/containerdeposit**

You can make a difference today.



Scan the QR code to donate or visit **silverchain.org.au/donate**

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*Shaping the future
of care together*