

Shining the spotlight on WA seniors

Seniors Week celebrations, held from November 10-17 this year, will feature an array of events and activities across Perth and regional WA to recognise the outstanding contributions of the state's senior residents.

People young and old are invited to take part, with important information around initiatives, products, services and programs available for individuals seeking to ensure their golden years, or those of a loved one, are enjoyed to the fullest.

Dive into Seniors Week with this 20-page supplement featuring a variety of WA organisations that strive to improve the lives of seniors, be it through physical and mental health and wellbeing, retirement living accommodation, mobility, recreation or simply making the most of every day.



Children the antidote for Oryx Communities residents

It's the kind of unexpected friendship that will put a smile on your face – residents at Oryx Communities' The Richardson aged care facility in the heart of leafy West Perth are sharing their skills, stories and time with young children.

Oryx Communities Chief Executive Officer Michelle De Ronchi said these interactions were invigorating and energising for residents, with evidence contact with children could help reduce loneliness and depression in the elderly.

"We understand this is one of the leading mental health disorders in late life and, as such, preventative measures are an ongoing focus for us at Oryx Communities," she said.

"These interactions are also beneficial to the children, especially those who do not have grandparents of their own, as they learn about ageing and develop interpersonal skills with people from a different generation."

Earlier this year The Richardson arranged for children aged eight to 10

to interview residents and help them prepare for meal time, while a recent grandparents day saw residents invited to bring in their grandchildren.

"This was a great opportunity for the residents to introduce their new friends to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren," Ms De Ronchi said.

"It will be a similar experience when we celebrate our first birthday at The Richardson open day on November 9 and invite our residents to bring their family along for some entertainment, cake cutting and refreshments in our courtyard."

Ms De Ronchi shared the story of a staff member at The Richardson who brought her daughter to work after church most Sundays.

"The daughter of one resident pulled me aside to say what a difference the child's visit made to her mother's day, and that she had noticed improvements in her mother's speech after the visits," she said.

"We are very keen to nurture these

interactions and are looking at how we can formalise staff bringing their children to work. We are currently doing a risk assessment to understand the level of supervision and stimulation needed for both child and resident."

After 12 months of operation, The Richardson has reached 50 per cent residential capacity. There is availability across the range at various price points, with the popular option for couples to adjoin rooms.

The facility's open day will take place on Saturday November 9 from 1-4pm, with an expert aged care financial advisor to present an information session on the day at 2pm.

Call 9381 2800 to book, or visit www.therichardson.com.au for more information.

Intergenerational development at the Queenslea in Claremont

One of the first initiatives of its kind in Australia, Oryx Communities' Queenslea development at Claremont will house retirement living, aged care and a state-of-the-art child care centre in the same facility, allowing for increased communication opportunities

between residents and children, beyond planned interactions.

Oryx has identified three such communication types – sensory communication, which refers to hearing the children rather than speaking to them directly, incidental communication such as seeing the children as a resident passes by and self-initiated communication, where a resident located near the children makes independent contact.

"It's not just planned activities that have proven benefits for the elderly, but spontaneous meetings, as there is no active decision required to drive the interaction – it is instantaneous," Ms De Ronchi said.

"We have all felt ourselves smile as we pass a laughing child and we look forward to seeing many smiling residents when we open the Queenslea in 2021."

