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| A picture containing diagram  Description automatically generated | Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing Voice for Seniors |

the community sand bagging, evacuating residents from flood waters, and he worked closely with the Australian Defence Forces to ensure the timely construction of the temporary bridge at Ollera. Mr Thompson, 37, was first elected to the [Division of Herbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_of_Herbert) at the [2019 federal election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Australian_federal_election) as the youngest member of the lower house. His re-election takes him into his third term as the Federal Member for Herbert and he is currently the Assistant Shadow Minister for Defence. In 2018, Mr Thompson was awarded a [Medal of the Order of Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_the_Order_of_Australia) for service to the welfare of veterans.

The Federal election

As the dust has cleared and the results in Townsville saw a 1.9% swing to the incumbent LNP Member for Herbert Mr Thompson, who picked up 63.7% of votes against Labor candidate Edwina Andrews with 36.3% of votes. The father of two young daughters, who served with Townsville’s 1st Battalion RAR and was injured in Afghanistan, is passionate about Townsville and is known for his willingness to help all residents who contact his electorate office. During the recent Townsville floods, Mr Thompson was seen in

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

 Secretary Lisa Paull and I made a presentation to the Queensland Parliament Education, Arts and Communities Committee Inquiry into Elder Abuse in Queensland, held in Townsville on 13 May. While our presentation was well-prepared, Lisa writes, “Facing the parliamentary committee on elder abuse was a deeply emotional experience. While we were well prepared for our presentation, nothing could have prepared us for the harrowing stories shared by everyday Australians. Despite the heavy atmosphere, we felt genuinely respected, heard and valued. It was encouraging to see the committee taking its role seriously, listening and asking salient questions of all presenters, who included Bill Mitchell, Principal Solicitor at Townsville Community Law and sisters Megan Ross and Julie Quealy. After the hearing we were grateful to for the chance to speak to ABC Radio and share our message more widely.”

Vicki Trevanion

# Harvest 2025

Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing (TRCOTA) is an independent not for profit organisation, created to protect and promote the interests and wellbeing of all Seniors in the Townsville region. A chapter of the Council of the Ageing Qld. Inc. (COTAQ), Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing has supported the interests of Seniors for almost 50 years, taking your views to government and the community to ensure your needs are met.

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Voice for Seniors is based on information from other sources. While every care is taken in the information therein, TRCOTA does not warrant or represent that it is free from error. TRCOTA also does not accept responsibility for any articles or entries published herein. `

SENIOR’S HOME MAINTENANCE SERVICE NOW WITH LIFETEC & ST.JOHN’S

LifeTec have taken on the City Council’s home maintenance and minor modifications service for seniors. This service is for people over 65 or aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders over 50. For more details contact LifeTec on 1800 996 887. For Seniors enquiring about the Lawn Mowing service that is now handled by St. John’s Home Maintenance Service. Contact the home maintenance services officer, Margaret Shears on 472 53777. More details on back page.

COME & LEARN TAI CHI QIGONG SHIBASHI

Come and join a happy healthy class of men and women of all ages. The deceptively simple 18 movements of Shibashi are relaxing and easy to learn. While improving fitness, flexibility, balance, coordination and concentration, this holistic exercise also promotes a feeling of inner calm. First lesson is Free. Classes conducted Tuesdays from 1.30-3pm and Fridays from 9.30- 11am at the Annandale Community Centre, Annandale Central Shopping Centre, Macarthur Drive. For details contact Ji llian on 47751640

 

COST OF LEAVING

Many retirement village residents are unpleasantly surprised by the high costs of leaving the village. In order to secure a unit there is a steep entry fee. This is not a purchase price, but an interest-free loan to the village operator (hundreds of thousands of dollars).Then there are monthly fees similar to mortgage or rental payments, and exit fees. And then the unit needs to be returned to its original condition throwing out windows shutters, ceiling fans even lifting floor tiles and restoring carpeted floors. In many cases large sums are deducted from the ingoing loan meaning residents don’t have enough to pay for aged care. With few exceptions village residents don’t discover they have been taken advantage of until after contract termination and settlement.

With monthly costs and exit fees factored in residents will likely end up paying a lot more for a retirement village unit over the long run than they would for a strata unit or even a normal residential lease.

This makes a retirement village far more expensive than owning or renting.

Apart from the financial impact, a system where the cost of housing is paid when a resident leaves can create incentives for operators both to end residencies prematurely and artificially extend them.

 Housing for the Aged Action Group has documented cases of village operators both pressuring residents to leave so they can collect exit fees and delaying the sale of a unit so they can continue collecting maintenance charges. There are often villages that are badly managed, poorly maintained, or where managers routinely bully and harass residents but the residents can't leave because they lose tens of thousands in exit fees and have to pay an outsized ingoing contribution to move elsewhere.

 Reforms of recent years

 Since 2019 in New South Wales village operators are required to hold regular meetings with residents to explain what their contracts actually say, focusing especially on how much of their ingoing contribution they could expect to get back and how long they'd have to keep paying fees after they'd moved out. The new disclosure rules put a fine point on the issue of exit costs. In one contract reviewed following the reforms, a prospective NSW village resident stood to lose $120,000 of her $515,000 in-going loan if she left the village anytime after 90 days.

 Other state reforms of recent years have targeted historically long delays in residents receiving what’s left of their ingoing loan known as an exit entitlement. In Victoria, for instance, village operators now have to refund up to 85% of the estimated refundable portion of an ingoing loan before the unit goes to a new resident, to help pay for aged care. In South Australia, operators have to pay for a departing residence age care facility and then they can extract that expense from the exit entitlement once it’s paid. In 2022 WA passed reforms that required village operators to pay back exit entitlements within 12 months and to cover age care costs for departing residents. If necessary during the waiting period, costs would be deducted from the exit entitlement. Prior to this change it could take three or four years for former WA residents to receive what they were owed.
Handmade Memories – A Legacy Stitched in Time By lisa Paull

The other day, during a casual chat with a colleague about childhood haircuts and handmade clothes, I found myself swept into a current of memories. It reminded me of growing up in an era—and a household—where store-bought clothing was a rarity, especially for children and women.

In my family, clothing wasn't something you bought. It was something you made.

My grandmother was a tailoress. My grandfather, a cobbler. My mother, a milliner. Each of them worked with their hands, shaping beauty and function from raw materials. It was a kind of artistry that surrounded me daily. Our wardrobes were not filled with brand names, but with pieces sewn, knitted, and cobbled with love and unmatched craftsmanship.

At Nan’s house, the whir of a sewing machine was as familiar as birdsong. She’d sit for hours, her thimble-tipped fingers stitching with astonishing precision. Down in the basement, Grandfather would be working on the last, tapping nails into soles, his face furrowed with focus and pride. My mother’s workroom was a treasure trove of colour and texture—rolls of fabric, tulle draped over chairs, and boxes brimming with feathers, beads, and ribbons. It was like living inside a couture workshop.

When we stepped out as a family, we were a spectacle of handcrafted elegance. The women wore dresses, hats, gloves, and polished shoes with matching purse. The men, dignified in suits and ties, their leather footwear gleaming like onyx. We girls were dressed in delicate creations: flouncy dresses with satin sashes, hand-knitted cardigans, frilly socks with lace trim, and—perhaps my favourite of all—Mary Jane shoes in every imaginable colour, each one made by my grandfather’s hands.

But, as it happens in so many coming-of-age stories, adolescence brought a shift. I got a casual job at a local boutique that sold crocheted clothing. The handmade pieces were trendy in a bohemian sort of way, yet I couldn’t help but notice the irony: I began to turn my back on my family’s creations, favouring these mass-produced items instead. I wanted to fit in. I didn’t want to look "different." At the time, I thought I was stepping into independence.

Now, looking back, I feel a deep ache of regret. My grandmother could have easily replicated—if not surpassed—the designs I proudly sold in that shop. I never gave her the chance. I never asked. I was too eager to carve out a modern identity to realise the treasure I had right in front of me.

I wonder now how she must have felt. If she noticed the subtle dismissal of the tradition she'd poured her life into. If her heart quietly broke the way mine does now, when I think of all the opportunities I missed to celebrate her work, her artistry, her love stitched into every seam.

In today's world, handmade clothing is often seen as a rare gem. Back then, it was our way of life. And now I understand: I wasn't just wearing clothes—I was wearing history. I was wrapped in legacy.

GAPING HOLE IN SENIORS’ DENTAL CARE

In 2022-23, 16,000 seniors were admitted to hospital for treatment of painful dental

issues. That figure is expected to rise to

22,630 by 2027-28, a massive 42% increase.

Dentists warn that without intervention, most seniors will continue to suffer from preventable and painful dental diseases, while waiting years for basic treatment. Average delays to see a dentist range from 139 days in South Australia to a whopping 1,429 days in Tasmania in the public system.

A Seniors Dental Benefits Schedule as advocated by the Australian Dental Association, would provide $1132.00 of free dental treatment to eligible seniors with a healthcare card, every two years.

DIGITAL DEVICES MAY HELP WARD OFF COGNITIVE DECLINE IN OLDER PEOPLE

An analysis of nearly 60 studies involving 410,000 people over 50 has found that those who spend more time using smartphones, computers and the internet are less likely to have cognitive impairment – and more likely to have slower cognitive decline – than those who spend less time on these devices.

It seems that digital technologies encourage behaviours that help preserve cognition in the first generation of people to have access to them at an older age.

This provides a counter for the usual knee-jerk stance that “technology equals bad” for the brain. Certainly, for the over-50s, “digital dementia” is NOT a thing!

AGED CARE CHANGES

July 1 will see the Aged Care Act and the transition to the Support at Home program begin. The focus of the Act is on empowering older people, their rights and equitable access to services.

Support at Home replaces Packages and Restorative Care, offering more flexible and personalised care.

The Single Assessment System should make it easier to connect with the support needed.

The Fee-For-Service model means residents will pay a percentage of the cost of each service depending on their means.

Changes to ongoing care fees means there will be a non-clinical care contribution and a hotelling supplement contribution.

The new act will protect whistleblowers who report issues in aged care, ensuring they are not penalised for raising concerns.

*MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION*

I wish to become a member of *TRCOTA*

*Please circle*

 Single Member ($5)

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(Post this form to TRCOTA

 PO Box 92, Garbutt East 4814 or scan and email to trcota @bigpond.net.au)

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 We are very grateful for her support.