

Reaching a milestone of 75 years is no mean feat for any organisation. What is it about Resthaven that has sustained its mission for all this time? I think that the answers to this question go back to its beginnings.

The Methodist Conference of 1932 was held against a backdrop of great suffering, as the depression bit into the Australian economy. Resources contracted for both the State and Church, unemployment rose, housing was of a poor standard, and there were many elderly people who had served the church all their lives, yet had no home or family to care for them.

At the Conference, the Rev CE Schafer brought forward a practical suggestion to help these people – the establishment of ‘a home for elderly people to provide security, serenity, and rest in life’s eventide.’ Three years later, the 1935 Methodist Conference established a home for aged women, at Brighton, to be known as ‘Rest Haven’.

Resthaven purchased the Leabrook site in 1944 and the Malvern site in 1953. The Murray Bridge site was established in 1957, the Mitcham site purchased in 1959 and the Westbourne Park site in 1967. With the help and support of staff and volunteers, Resthaven then moved forward with the establishment of residential sites at Marion (1974), Bellevue Heights (1979), Paradise (1980), Craigmore (2004), and, most recently, Mount Gambier (currently under construction).

Community Services were also established at Elizabeth, Manningham, Marion, Onkaparinga, Paradise, Kilkenny, Murray Bridge, and the Limestone Coast.

Throughout Resthaven’s long history, the vision and mission of providing ‘a home for elderly people to provide security, serenity, and rest in life’s eventide’ has been respected. This is in no small part due to the quality of Resthaven’s Boards – another important element in our success.

Last year, the current Resthaven Board considered Resthaven’s ‘Vision and Mission’ statements, and consolidated them into a ‘Statement of Purpose’; for Resthaven to ‘provide older South Australians and their carers with outstanding care and support.’ To this was added a ‘Statement of Values’ – that Resthaven values respect, integrity, choice, individuality, independence, belonging, resourcefulness, safety and wellbeing. These are the values embraced by the staff, volunteers, residents and clients of Resthaven. To me, the underlying ‘mission’ of Resthaven’s beginning is one element in explaining its long life.

Another element in Resthaven’s survival is the role of volunteers. Currently, an army of volunteers enrich the lives of our residents and clients, providing input and activities to complement the work of our staff.

Of course, none of Resthaven’s good work is possible without our staff, another critical factor in our success. Throughout the years, Resthaven staff have not only been outstanding employees, but have embraced our mission and values. They have a dedication to our residents and clients that is exceptional.

Even after 75 years, Resthaven continues to provide support for older South Australians in need of care, and we, the people of Resthaven, continue to resonate with the mission of our founding fathers.

Carole Davidson

President, Resthaven Board