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## Media Release

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13 October 2010

### Valuing the Past for the Present and Future

#### **This year, Resthaven celebrates 75 years of service to older South Australians**

‘Over the years, many things have changed. One thing that hasn’t is our commitment to supporting older people and their carers,’ Resthaven Chief Executive Officer Richard Hearn affirmed.

‘It is easy to forget that in the early years of South Australia’s settlement, there was no government welfare support. Services for the elderly were very limited. Many relied on Christian charity to survive. That is why it is remarkable that during the Great Depression, the Methodist Church embarked on a new Home Mission, and called it ‘Resthaven’. The name was chosen as it evoked feelings of ‘safety, serenity and rest in life’s eventide’.

‘For several years, talk of a ‘home for old folk’ had been discussed, and Annie Pearce, wife of Rev John Pearce, took three ladies with nowhere else to live into her own home at Brighton. The Methodist Conference of 1935 endorsed ‘Resthaven’ as a new priority for the church. There was no funding - just faith that this worthy cause would find generous support from the Church.

‘When we look at Resthaven in 2010, it is amazing to see what has grown out of that first initiative. In the words of the Rev. Norman Lade, it was to provide, ‘a home for aged women, where in a tender, gracious and sympathetic environment, lonely women might forget their loneliness, where among their own generation and experience they might find light and warmth and good fellowship.’

‘Resthaven was officially opened on May 11, 1935, by Lady Kidman, wife of the prominent pastoralist, Sir Sidney Kidman. Later in 1935, with mere faith and belief in the cause, the first Resthaven property was purchased - Shirley Gardens, at Payneham.’

‘Today, Resthaven has nine locations offering residential care to 1,000 older people, as well as providing care and support for around 7,000 people living at home through our Community Services. Recent expansion of community services to the Riverland and Strathalbyn complement the metropolitan, Murraylands, Adelaide Hills and Limestone Coast services. A new residential facility is currently under construction at Mt Gambier and plans are being considered for further expansion to Pt Elliot and Aberfoyle Park.

‘Yet despite all the immense changes and developments experienced throughout Resthaven’s 75 year history, the essence of our mission has not changed. Resthaven continues to provide outstanding care and support to older South Australians and their carers. In 2010, we recognise and embrace the rich diversity of the Australian community, value inclusion, unity and tolerance and respect the dignity of each individual, paying due regard to their country of birth, language, culture and beliefs. Resthaven’s commitment to building links with communities is evident through our multicultural programs.

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'We are committed to working and developing services in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner. With ABS 2006 census statistics indicating that one in six people over the age of 65 do not speak English as their main language at home, and with the older CALD population increasing faster than those born in English speaking countries and in South Australia, this is an imperative.

Resthaven continues to advocate on behalf of older people for **choice, access and sustainability** and to ensure that aged care has a voice. Our aim is to encourage change that will improve services and ensure the industry can be viable into the future.

Demand for aged care support is stronger than ever, yet the political landscape and regulation means it is difficult to meet the needs. An increasing focus on support services to assist people to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible has resulted in a plethora of in-home care and support services for older people and their carers in addition to residential aged care and accommodation. Those entering aged care facilities are increasingly frail and many have multiple chronic conditions. With fewer people entering the workforce to offer the support needed, technology will play an increasingly important role.

The current Productivity Commission report, due to be released in December, will indicate future directions for the sector as a whole. It is anticipated that older people will increasingly have to pay for their support as they age, and strategies to ensure that people are able to access quality care and support are critically important.

The future holds opportunity and challenge as our population ages and the workforce reduces. Predicted increases in the number of people with dementia will impact significantly on support services. Aged care is a specialty area that will become a dominating factor in a society where one in four people are aged over 65 years of age.

Resthaven plans to continue to give frail older people the care and support they need for the optimal quality of life achievable.

Our committed staff continue to provide loving care and support in what can, at times, be trying circumstances. It is the reason Resthaven became a reality that drives the belief in the future - that older people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and enjoy safety, serenity and rest at life's eventide.