

# Media Release

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## Community celebrates targeted aged care services



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**annecto's** Northern Office celebrated the official launch on Monday of its *Community Initiatives* programs to help improve the quality of life for older people who have become socially isolated, and the people who support them.

At the launch, entertainment provided by the SongBirds Choir comprising over 20 supported older people, kept the audience enchanted while the unveiling of the Art Mural Project, comprising six mixed-media panels created by the Art Group took place. Keynote speaker Mr Kelvin Thomson MP, Federal Member for Wills, highlighted the increasing older population, new government initiatives in the aged care sector, and the challenges for organisations such as **annecto** to meet the growing needs of seniors across the state.

The **annecto** Northern Office currently provides a central focus for 15 diverse groups engaged in socialising and pursuing interests for older people from a range of linguistically diverse cultures. The *Community Initiatives* activities offer older people the opportunity to meet with their peers, form friendships and use services that are available to them through interaction with different staff members and other stakeholders.

'We are currently supporting over 1500 individuals and their families through our aged care services', says **annecto** CEO Estelle Fyffe. 'Using a person-centred approach, we tailor activities and services to reflect the linguistically diverse culture of the people we support'.

Current activities coordinated by the Northern Office include:

- Groovy Gals – a group which engages in diverse activities in the community.
- Italian Prayer Group – a group of women with support workers who attend their local Catholic Church prayer service once a week meeting afterwards for discussion, coffee and cake.
- Men's Group – with activities such as touring the MCG, going fishing or going to the movies, and exercise and swimming.
- Employed Carers Saturday Group – a higher needs dementia group which includes activities such as creating 'life books', craft, music, DVDs, or baking cakes.
- Carer Support Group – an informal group for carers to enjoy peer support.
- Art Group – a new initiative involving older people and their carers in partnership with a resident art student and volunteers
- Christmas parties – meals, gifts and entertainment for those without families living nearby.

**annecto's** future plans include 'Phone Link', a program using volunteers to provide social interaction to people over the telephone, the 'Intergenerational Day Group' to assist all generations to interact on a regular basis and learn from each other, and 'Carer Support Days' to support carers and provide respite for the person they care for.

**annecto – the people network** is an independent, not for profit association located in the northern, eastern and western metropolitan areas of Melbourne, the Grampians and the Loddon Mallee region, and is committed to increasing opportunities and choices in the community for people with a disability, older persons and their carers, and to realising a more inclusive society. **annecto** is an approved provider of aged care services with the Department of Health and Ageing.

**Photographs taken from the launch are available on request.**

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