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Hi, Rosie

Kilkivan Aged Care group strikes deal with Trilogy Care, Mable to help aged residents

Small rural communities in the Gympie region facing the heartbreak of being forced to send ageing loved ones to care facilities far from home have been shown a new way of doing things that could be a way around the problem.



[Elizabeth Neil](#)

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About 100 senior rural residents of the Gympie region attended the public launch of a bold collaboration between the Kilkivan community and two innovative companies recently, aimed at fixing the heartbreaking situation that has resulted in elderly residents being forced to leave their communities to go in aged care.

Kilkivan & District Community Care Association has been campaigning for years for more aged care services in the communities west of Gympie.

Its new partnership agreement with Trilogy Care will enable the community management of in-home aged care packages, with support workers sourced from the Mable online platform.

The founders of Trilogy Care and Mable, James Whitelaw and Peter Scutt respectively, attended the Kilkivan launch and delivered speeches about their personal motivations in forming the companies.



Linda Doolan, James Whitelaw, A Sempf, David Melloy and Brad Grieve. About 100 senior rural residents of the Gympie region attended the public launch of a bold collaboration between the Kilkivan community and two innovative companies recently, aimed at fixing the heartbreaking situation that has resulted in elderly residents being forced to leave their communities to go in aged care.

“The exciting collaboration, modelled on the Bell Cares pioneer example, aims to address the current challenges associated with receiving appropriate, efficient in-home care by capitalising on local knowledge and relationships, and local workers,” KDCCA president Rosie Fitzgerald said.

“The arrangement is designed to improve the efficiency and options for holders of in-home aged care packages, while also stimulating the local economy and providing regular paid work for locals,” she said.

Key organiser and MC of the event, KDCCA treasurer Lynda Sempf said she was thrilled with the response of the local community to the launch.

“We had people from Kilkivan, Goomeri, Woolooga communities present, as well as visitors from Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay,” Ms Sempf said.

“There is so much local support for this ageing-in-place project – I think there are positive times ahead for those who want to age well in our community.

“The three speakers, including our president (Rosie Fitzgerald), gave really pertinent insights into why we need this new approach to in-home care in our area.

“There’s still a lot of work ahead of us to get the Trilogy-Mable collaboration operating really effectively, but we feel encouraged and confident.”

According to a 2022 report, as of 2016, western Gympie region towns Goomeri and Kilkivan had an average population age of 49-years-old, with one-third of its residents aged 60 or older.

This was in stark contrast to the median age of Southeast Queensland residents at 37.

But despite that statistic, Kilkivan lacked appropriate health services such as a [full time GP and aged care facilities](#).



Kilkivan aged care

Enter the Kilkivan and District Care Association, led by Ms Fitzgerald.

Ms Fitzgerald said the association had spent the better part of three years fighting for aged care facilities in the town, but the community had been begging for something to be done for more than 25 years.

In 2019, the community group began calling for an aged care facility to be built in Kilkivan, but Ms Fitzgerald said the focus had recently shifted.

“As we did further research, we realised nearly everyone just wanted to be able to stay in their own homes,” she said.

So we decided there was absolutely no need for an aged care facility, per se; what we needed instead was an integrated concept.”

As a result, the community group began petitioning for steps to be taken for the benefit of the ageing population, which included transport to take residents to Goomeri, Murgon or Gympie; adequate in-home care; accessible, affordable rental accommodation and a multi-use community hub building.

At the time of publishing, two out of the four of these have been established through a community bus – aptly named the KilkiVan – and through the community group partnering with Trilogy Care and Mable to provide in-home care.



The KilkiVan (pictured) is a community bus responsible for taking residents to Goomeri, Murgon or Gympie for necessary appointments and outings. Photo: Rosie Fitzgerald.

The developments meant a majority of residents, many of which had lived in Kilkivan their entire lives, did not have to suddenly relocate.

Ms Fitzgerald said it was “such a relief” for impacted residents.

“It’s been very disheartening and demoralising when much loved, long term locals have been forced to relocate because we haven’t been able to achieve this faster,” she said.

She described the lack of health services in the town as “inhumane and cruel” to those affected.

“I feel like we’ve got something to celebrate now ... it gives them hope.”