



With the arrival of spring comes the joyful sounds of birdsong, laughter, and for many of us, music drifting through open windows and doors. Music has always been part of life's soundtrack, but did you know it can also play an important role in supporting wellbeing as we age?

We recently spoke with Registered Music Therapist, Bec Davies, who said that while we may not all consider ourselves musical, "we can all be musical, and can all benefit from the positive effects of music. It is all around us – in the car, on the radio, even in shopping centres."

For older people, music can spark memories and conversations, help reduce

stress and anxiety, and even support physical health. "Music activates all areas of the brain – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, communication and spiritual," Bec explained. "It can motivate movement, help lower blood pressure, aid sleep, and support meaningful social engagement."

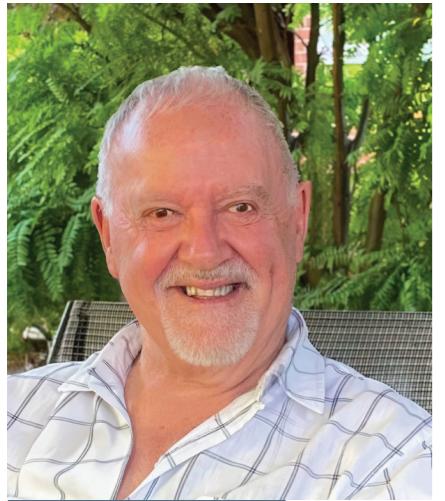
Music is also a powerful connector to personal history.

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Above: Allan, Lorraine, Anne, Rob and Fiona enjoy morning tea and music at Toorak Gardens.

NEW SITE UPDATE

Exciting progress continues at our developing Yankalilla site. A planning application for 14 units has been submitted, with a decision expected in November. We'll be asking our current residents for ideas towards the internal design soon. Construction will commence in 2026, bringing much-needed housing for older people in the southern Fleurieu.



RESIDENT PROFILE

Allan Woodman has called Cottage Homes Toorak Gardens home for six and a half years, happily coordinating social events including Sunday morning teas, Christmas parties, Australia Day celebrations and happy hours.

Originally from Melbourne, Allan moved to Adelaide in his 20s where he worked in fashion retail before opening his own café. In 1985, during the buzz of the first Adelaide Grand Prix, he launched "Lunch on the Parade" at Norwood, which he ran for 26 years. "The staff were like family," Allan recalls, still touched when former customers stop him in the street to share fond memories.

Allan's love of music and art was nurtured through his 42-year relationship with his partner Bob. Today, he continues to share his creativity as a volunteer at Urrbrae House, where he arranges flowers, organises events, and guides tours. "I like to keep busy – it keeps me connected and happy," Allan says. 

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Favourite songs or artists can bring back treasured memories. "Hearing music from their younger years, like The Beatles or Neil Diamond, can prompt memories, conversations, and reflections on times gone by. It can be a lovely way for families to connect with someone," said Bec.

Technology may have changed how we access and listen to music, but the emotions remain timeless. Records and tapes once carefully collected may no longer be easy to play, yet today's digital tools make it easier to find those favourites again. Whether it's listening to the radio over breakfast, singing along to a familiar tune, or sharing a playlist with friends, having control over music choices helps people feel connected and engaged.

Music is also inherently social. At Toorak Gardens, a group of residents gathers each Sunday morning to share news, chat over a cuppa, and enjoy a backdrop of tunes provided by resident Allan Woodman. The music sets the tone for friendship and connection.

For many residents at Cottage Homes, music is at the heart of living well, and a way to keep spirits high and memories alive.

In this newsletter issue, we're delighted to share some of these connections to music and the joy it continues to bring to lives. 

Discover the joy of music in your suburb! Adelaide councils and community centres share opportunities for older South Australians.



Meet Malcolm A LIFETIME AT THE PIANO

For 92-year-old Findon resident Malcolm Anderson (pictured), music has been a constant thread through his life. Born into a musical family, Malcolm's mother was a piano teacher and his father a pianist who played by ear. His sister played too. "The piano seat was never cold in our house!" he recalls.

MUSIC THROUGH LIVES

For many residents, music has been more than entertainment – it has been a companion, passion, and source of joy across the years.

92-year-old Joan Baseby has been surrounded by music since childhood. Her father played piano for silent movies, and Joan herself studied piano from the age of seven. While she stepped back from classical piano at 19, her love of music never faded. Six years ago, through volunteering at the William Kibby VC Veterans' Shed, Joan discovered the ukulele. Today she plays regularly with community groups, and her cheerful strumming is a welcome sound in the Glenelg community where she has lived for 16 years.

Ascot Park resident Charmaine also discovered her gift early, able to play the keyboard by ear as a child. She played

piano for years and still enjoys her beloved organ, purchased more than 40 years ago. "Playing nearly every day brings special memories of my childhood, of friends and family," she says. "Music has always been my life." The soft notes of her organ continue to bring comfort, joy and a strong connection to her past.

Mitcham resident Ron Doig pursued his boyhood dream later in life. In 2012, with guitar in hand and a gospel song co-written with his grandson Jonah, Ron took the stage at the Barmera Country Music Awards – and proudly took home second place. "It was so special," Ron recalls. He still enjoys performing gospel songs that share hope, faith and connection with others.

At Prospect, Fred has lived and breathed music for more than 40 years. An Adelaide-born entertainer, he has



played at countless venues and once released a solo album titled Welcome to My World. He fondly remembers Adelaide's vibrant live music scene and still loves to perform. Today, Fred entertains neighbours in the site's hall with his guitar and on the piano, creating moments of fun and connection.

From childhood memories to careers and new hobbies, music continues to enrich lives across Cottage Homes communities. 

digitised from his original 76-year-old pencil writings.

He also enjoys sharing music with others. In August, Malcolm celebrated his 92nd birthday playing piano for his family and friends, and his neighbour once described one of his performances as sounding like "autumn leaves blowing along a footpath."

"At last, I'm getting somewhere!" Malcolm says with a smile about his decades of playing. 

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As 2025 draws to a close, so too does our current Strategic Plan (2022–2025). Work is now well underway to shape the next chapter for Cottage Homes, with a new plan to guide us from 2026–2028.

Our Board has engaged Troy Forrest from Strategy Road to facilitate the process, ensuring input from across our community. Visitors, committee members, the Board and our CEO have all contributed to discussions about priorities for the future. In August and September, the Board participated in two intensive four-hour workshops, exploring key directions and opportunities.

We are now finalising the plan, which will be launched later this year. Our vision and mission remain the same, with a continued focus on providing affordable housing to older people in need. Once complete, the Strategic Plan will be distributed to stakeholders and available via the TCHI website. 



Top: Charmaine from Ascot Park celebrating her 40th birthday.

Above (left): Joan from Glenelg.

Above (right): Fred from Prospect.

Right: Setting for planned Cottage Homes at Yankalilla.



Above: Architectural render of the planned Cottage Homes at Yankalilla.

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