

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Catherine Butterfield, Media and Communications Consultant, Mercy Health

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Mercy Place Dandenong residents receive vaccine

Mercy Place Dandenong residents were the first from Mercy Health's 34 residential aged care homes to be vaccinated against coronavirus on Thursday.

Among the first of the residents vaccinated at the Dandenong home was a grateful Edith Gonsalvez, a former nurse, who is more used to administering injections than receiving them.

"I worked in general nursing and in midwifery but I also spent many years working in the hospital's blood bank," Edith said. "I would be called at any time of the day or night to collect blood, to group it and cross match it and then go and insert the blood into the patients. So I had no trouble receiving the vaccine yesterday."

Edith, who turns 97 next week, said she had no hesitation around having the coronavirus vaccine.

"I was not worried about receiving the vaccine at all, in fact, I was anxious about waiting to have it," Edith said. "I could see how quickly the virus was spreading around the world and how many people had passed away from coronavirus and I thought, maybe that could be me if I don't get this protection."

Grateful to see so many Mercy Place Dandenong residents roll up their sleeves so early in the vaccination program, chef Ben Pilois expressed his gratitude to everyone involved in the best way he knows how – with a delicious cake, decorated with a simple but heartfelt message, "Thank you from Mercy."

Mercy Place Dandenong Service Manager Ralf Pelz said there was "a great atmosphere around the home" during the vaccinations on Thursday, and that residents were relieved and grateful to receive their jabs.

"This is a significant milestone and a great way to repay our residents and staff who have worked so hard to keep our home and the community safe throughout the pandemic," he said.

"The past 12 months have been incredibly challenging for our residents, staff and the local community. We are all optimistic that this vaccine is the first step towards us beating this terrible virus."

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