

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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

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Double the celebrations at Mercy Place Dandenong

Mercy Place Dandenong resident Beryl O'Neil thought all her birthdays had come at once on Thursday when she received her second COVID vaccine dose on the day of her 91st birthday.

"It's the best birthday present I could've had," she said.

Beryl, along with 83 other residents and 22 Mercy Place staff members, warmly received her second vaccination at the aged care home following her initial dose three weeks earlier.

"I was very happy to be given the vaccination," she said. "And it didn't hurt one bit either."

Also grateful that Mercy Place Dandenong residents were early recipients of the vaccine was Tamara Kassis, who supported her grandfather, resident Fawzi Fazaa, as he was given his second dose.

"We've been very careful with our Jido (grandfather) throughout the pandemic," she said. "It's such a relief that he's now had his vaccinations. As a precaution, we haven't taken him on outings from Mercy Place Dandenong since he had surgery last year. But now, we can go back to going out for our regular trips to local cafes for coffee and catching up as a whole family at Easter time."

Mercy Place Dandenong Service Manager Ralf Pelz, who also had his second shot on Thursday, said that spirits were high as the vaccination team administered the shots.

"I think that for many of our residents, having the vaccination was not only a relief, but it was also a cause for celebration," he said. "The mood was definitely upbeat. The past 12 months have taken a toll on our residents and staff, and while we have made every effort to keep our residents active, engaged and entertained within our home and grounds, feeling confident to go out into our community and to mix with a broader network of friends and family will be wonderful for everyone."

"As an organisation that takes pride in its whole-of-person care approach, we're very grateful that day-to-day life for our residents will look somewhat closer to those pre-COVID days."

As a part of Mercy Health, Mercy Place Dandenong has had direct access to Mercy Health's infection control and clinical expertise throughout the pandemic. On Thursday, a Mercy Health team oversaw the vaccinations, which were administered by Aspen Medical.

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For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

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