

MEDIA STATEMENT

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“We would love our iGEN program to be a catalyst for generational change in the way we care”

Mercy Health strongly endorses a proposal by The Y that lobbies the next Federal Government to enlist and train thousands of young people to forge long term careers in aged, disability and childcare sectors.

Mercy Health supports The Y’s challenge to the next Federal Government not only to adopt the proposal but to develop it further along the lines of Mercy Health’s own ground-breaking intergenerational program in Bendigo (Victoria) established in 2020, albeit its full potential was interrupted a little by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The intergenerational program involves Year 10 students from Catherine McAuley College and their teachers who undertake weekly visits to Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged to interact and build connections with residents.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen says a cornerstone of Mercy Health’s vision is to support a plan to encourage young people to take up careers in aged care.

“We would love our iGEN program to be a catalyst for generational change in the way we care and we are already seeing the results. Even though our full plans for iGEN have not been realised yet due to the pandemic, the modified program already has delivered material benefits for both our residents and the students. We are keen to roll this out further as we have seen first-hand how this improves the outcomes for both groups.

“Young people have the capacity and openness to gain experiences that help them form the sort of positive relationships with older people that can deliver better care. This approach is underpinned by a deep appreciation for the fundamental human rights that need to be a part of aged care for the future,” Adj Prof Cornelissen said.

“Our program works within mainstream schools, but we would love to see an organisation like The Y extending that reach beyond the typical classroom to create opportunity and pathways for young people in all walks of life to take on a career in care. The opportunities are endless and the benefits could be felt for a very long time,” Adj Prof Cornelissen said.

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