



## Media statement

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### Music therapy brings happiness to both seniors and staff

Mercy Place Lathlain volunteer Ella Scott has been playing the harp for residents at the inner Perth (WA) aged care home for more than three years, something which she says in turn relaxes, soothes and often has a profound effect on the seniors, many of whom are living with dementia.

And on the eve of International Day of Happiness, a global celebration spearheaded by the United Nations which calls for joy to be given a greater priority in everyday life, Ella says her weekly music therapy sessions also brings joy and happiness to residents almost as soon as she begins to play.

“I’m always careful to watch residents’ body language, as several of the seniors are non-verbal, and it’s incredibly rewarding to watch them gently relax and let go as they listen to the music and experience the vibration of the strings,” says Ella, who lives in nearby Carlisle but who started life in the small town of Murchison in the Tasman Region of the South Island of New Zealand.

“In many ways I fell into volunteering at Mercy Place Lathlain after regularly visiting a friend,” Ella says. “I now have the pleasure of playing the harp every week to residents - it’s such a soothing and calming instrument,” she says.

“Everyone seems to enjoy hearing the notes drift along the corridors and I very much feel that the instrument lifts the atmosphere and brings joy not only to residents, but also to the staff as well.”

Mercy Place Lathlain Service Manager, Pammy Singh, says Ella’s weekly visits are a real highlight for everyone at the home and brought a great deal of happiness, pleasure and comfort to residents.

“International Day of Happiness reminds us of the importance of injecting joy, pleasure and also laughter into our daily lives, and Mercy Health is very much focused on ensuring our residents are able to experience all of these emotions regularly,” she says.

“Mercy Health is incredibly grateful to our very special volunteer Ella who has built up really strong connections with many of our residents over the years, their faces really do light up when they see her, and for many the happiness she brings is a real highlight of their week.”

**ENDS**