

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2016



Aged care leadership program launched in Adelaide

Relationships are at the heart of an award-winning international aged care leadership program launched in Adelaide this month.

Fourteen senior managers from South Australia's aged care industry undertook the My Home Life (MHL) Leadership Support program at St Hilarion and ACH Group across two weeks.

The MHL England (Professor Julienne Meyer CBE, City University London) and MHL Scotland Director (Professor Belinda Dewar, University of West of Scotland) were invited to deliver the program by the SA Innovation Hub, a community of aged care providers who are working together to share knowledge, learn from each other and implement new ideas to support older people.

The program started 10 years ago in the UK and builds on the more traditional person-centred, customer-facing approaches by placing more emphasis on relationships and engagement.

"We believe that relationships are important, so that means valuing the staff members, family members and the person receiving the service, knowing that these people are interdependent and work together," Julienne says. "We also focus on caring conversations, because we believe that relationships depend on the way we talk to one another."

MHL began as a small project to pull together what is known about best practice in care homes, but grew into a social movement that promotes quality of life for people who live, die, visit and work in care homes. Starting in England, the MHL message resonated and quickly spread across the UK into Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

"People are going into care homes older, sicker and frailer, and the workforce needs to be supported and upskilled," she says. "These issues are prevalent around the world. The way in which society often doesn't value older people and their experiences has a knock-on effect on those who work in the sector. That's what's great about collaborating internationally; we can draw on each other's learning and explore best practice together."

Belinda says another point of difference with the program is its 'appreciative enquiry approach'. "Our starting point is to work out what's working well and to understand why, rather than focusing on problems and trying to fix them. We look at beautiful practice and why it is working well to give us the answers to solve the things that perhaps aren't working so well."

SA Innovation Hub executive officer Sarah Rhead says the MHL program is all about promoting cultural change within organisations. "Our sector is experiencing rapid social, technological and political change," she says. "It is important that our leaders are ready to embrace that change and to create a positive future together."

According to the latest Department of Social Services analysis of Commonwealth funded aged care workforce activities, over the next 35 years the aged care workforce will be required to triple from 352,145 people to 827,100 people in 2050.

The My Home Life program will return to South Australia next year. To find out more, please contact Sarah Rhead on 0428 871 839.

About the SA Innovation Hub

The SA Innovation Hub is a community of practice in action which translates ideas, innovation, learning and research into practice.

Guided by our shared vision, we work with older people to improve and support quality of life - providing the customer with positive choice in how they live.

The SA Innovation Hub was launched on 10 October 2014 by Minister Kevin Andrews and our current focus is on Continuous Quality Improvement, Customer Engagement, Governance and Leadership with members and their teams collaborating to share knowledge, learn from each other and implement new ideas to support older people.

Our members include:

- ACH Group
- Barossa Village
- Bene
- Boandik Lodge
- Helping Hand
- James Brown Memorial Trust
- LifeCare
- Resthaven
- Southern Cross Care (SA & NT)
- St Hilarion

For further information, interviews or comment, please contact Anna Randell on (08) 8159 3632, 0417 856 361 or ARandell@ach.org.au.