

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Empathy suits trial a first for aged care

ACH Group is set to become the first aged care provider in Australia to trial 'empathy suits' as part of an innovative staff training pilot.

The not-for-profit organisation has purchased three Premature Ageing Unisex Leisure (PAUL) Suits, developed by the University of Sydney's Department of Rural Health over the past decade for use in aged care settings.

University of Sydney Health Education Officer Paul Bennett spent the day in Adelaide today to kick start the pilot, setting out his research and explaining the potential benefits on offer.

"An ageing population worldwide makes it increasingly important that health students understand issues that older people face and can provide empathetic care to them," he said. "Many young people who begin their study have had no experience with people who are living with a disability or have complex health needs and these suits give them a unique insight into not only the physical changes but how it feels to be looked at differently."

ACH Group General Manager People and Culture Nichole Tierney said the pilot project aligned with ACH Group's service delivery philosophy.

"This is about training our staff to appreciate what it feels like, by putting them in the shoes of an older person or a person with disabilities. It's about enabling them able to use a strengths-based approach when they are supporting a person to live well regardless of their health challenges.

"It's not about building pity for a person, but empathy, because you experience those challenges for yourself."

"We look forward to working with the University of Sydney to develop an innovative training model to be launched later this year."

It is expected the suits will be introduced as part of Level Three training requirements for ACH Group's 800 care and support workers.

End Media Release

About ACH Group

ACH Group is a not-for-profit aged care organisation that has been offering services to support good lives for older people in South Australia since 1952.

As well as accommodation options across Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula and East Melbourne, the group offers a range of health, wellbeing, respite and support services, help at home and social activities.

Our 1700 specialist staff and hundreds of volunteers share the belief that older people should be valued and respected, connected to their communities and in control of their lives.

For further information or comment, please contact Jani Baker on 0417 856 361 or at jbaker@ach.org.au