

Media Release

9 November 2020

VMCH's innovative program shortlisted for award

VMCH has been named as a finalist in the Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)'s 2020 innovAGEING National Awards.

The innovAGEING National Awards celebrates the achievements of those who have made the aged care industry more consumer-centred, or successfully found new and better ways of doing things in the service of older Australians.

VMCH has been shortlisted in the Increasing Care and Service Productivity category, for the implementation of the Umps smart power plug technology for at-home aged care clients.

Smart tech Innovation

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart said that the Umps technology works by learning the client's usual routine and can send an alert to a carer or family member if their routine suddenly changes – potentially due to a health or safety issue.

"This was implemented to enable our clients to remain safe at home, when face-to-face contact was limited," said Ms Smart.

"One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the increase in social isolation, especially for those who are older, live alone, or are vulnerable. The introduction of Umps allowed us to take extra steps to support our clients by offering technology which allows them to stay safe and connected.

"Even if we come away empty handed, this shortlisting is still a valuable recognition of our innovation and customer-focused service provision, during what has been a very difficult time."

Valerie, is one of VMCH's Home Care Packages clients. She lives alone and has periods of confusion. Her Case Manager, Samuel suggested that she would get value out of using the Umps technology.

"She was a bit perplexed about it at first," said Samuel. "But once I went out to visit her and a chat about it, she agreed that it would be good to have. Her confusion has been getting worse and she doesn't have any family close by. She used to live with her husband, but he passed away, so she is definitely more isolated now."

When the system arrived, Samuel installed the plugs onto the items she uses every day, her radio, kettle, TV, her fridge, and bedroom lamp.

"I am glad she has the system set up now. It's a failsafe, if anything happens to her, we will know and can send help. It's a bit hard sometimes when our clients live alone. It's always a worry when we call and there is no answer, so this is a backup, and we are able to make sure she is ok."

The *innovAGEING* National Awards ceremony will be held (virtually) on 26 November.

Image: Valerie, a VMCH client who installed the Umps technology in her home during the COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne.

Media enquiries

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About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic not for profit organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. We stay true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives, providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey. We provide a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.