

Media Release

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A call for social justice in the digital economy

Saturday 20 September is World Day of Social Justice.

The theme for 2021 is: A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy. The digital economy is transforming the world, however, the COVID-19 crisis has shown the growing digital divide, particularly in terms of the availability, affordability and use of information ICT and access to the internet.

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart says the organisation worked hard throughout 2020 to ensure those who were vulnerable were provided with opportunities to learn how to navigate and embrace technology.

“We've done this in conjunction with YourLink, whose mission is to open up the digital world for seniors. We're obviously working very hard to keep the people we support physically safe from the virus, but we've also had to adapt and become innovative in various ways to keep people engaged and connected,” she said.

“We have clients from our Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), who, thanks to our Tea and Technology program, have learned how to use an iPad for the first time.”

The ‘Technology at Home’ program is part of the broader VMCH ‘In-Touch’ program, providing individuals with a device and training from YourLink.

Antoinetta Tenace is 84 years old and lives with Alzheimer's Disease. Her daughter, Anna, has been caring for her mum for two years in the family home, which has its challenges, especially during lockdown.

“The lead up before the lessons can be difficult, but the minute she logs on to Zoom and she sees everyone, she is very happy.”

Anna says her mum uses her iPad regularly, whether its listening to Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, watching Italian movies, or receiving emails from her children and grandchildren – she is embracing all that technology has to offer.

Similarly, Billie Kempton has been supported by VMCH's Carer Support Program as her husband Laurie's full-time carer for four years.

Weekly training sessions with YourLink tech gurus have helped Billie to connect with family interstate via FaceTime and catch up with fellow carers supported by VMCH via Zoom.

For Laurie, aged 80, communication is vital. “The first time we were locked down he was cut off from everything and he really aged dreadfully,” Billie said. “But he's been joining in the iPad training sessions and it really inspires him. He actually picked the iPad and was having a go himself, playing some dementia games, which is a huge step for him.”

For more information about VMCH visit www.vmch.com.au

Image: VMCH case worker Caitlin getting Antoinetta Tenace set up on her iPad.

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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.