

Inter-generational playgroup expands across region

Hot on the heels of the hit ABC TV series 'Old people's home for 4-year olds', another innovative inter-generational playgroup is set to be expanded across regional Queensland.

Moving Moments is a dynamic program connecting seniors with fun activities and a network of children and young people. People over 65, and First Nations people over 55 who live in Biloela, Hervey Bay and Caloundra are encouraged to join.

The program is run by Lutheran Services, who will facilitate as many as five sessions each week with up to 10 seniors at a time, and local children.

Lutheran Services Creative Engagements Advisor David Gerrand said the Moving Moments project gives older people agency and purpose, as well as a sense of joy.

"Our 'VIPs' as we call them - seniors over 65 and First Nations people over 55 - become more animated the longer the program runs," Mr Gerrand said.

"When I started this project, I knew that this would seriously benefit the VIPs – what I didn't realise is that the children receive such wonderful benefit too.

"Their confidence, language skills, behaviour and general wellbeing has also improved through their connection with the VIPs."

The program is funded by Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN.

The PHN's CEO Pattie Hudson said the program, which will soon start in Biloela, Hervey Bay and Caloundra had already been run successfully with seniors who are living independently in Buderim and Gympie.

"We are absolutely delighted to be bringing Moving Moments to even more of our residents across the region," Ms Hudson said.

"We know that many older people really struggled during the COVID lockdowns.

"They missed out on face-to-face contact with family and loved ones, and it's had a real impact on quality of life.

"Social interaction is such an important part of healthy ageing, and we know that programs like this can improve the wellbeing of our seniors."

Activities are flexible depending on the needs of participants both young and old and could include anything from attending a local play or concert – and possibly even putting one on - to simply going on a picnic.

Moving Moments participant Shirley Gartner said she hoped the program would benefit children's lives by teaching manners and providing them with a grandparent figure.

"I have always loved children, so when the Moving Moments program first started, I was delighted to participate," Ms Gartner said.

"Through the program, I've become nimble and more active, joining the children in their song and movement time.

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“Each visit, I feel like I learn just as much as the children.”

Seniors and First Nations people over 55 who are living independently in Biloela, Hervey Bay and Caloundra can register their interest in being part of a Moving Moments program near them by phoning 1800 960 433.

More information is available online at www.lutheranservices.org.au/moving-moments.

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For more information contact: Jasmin Midgley, Senior Media and Communications Officer, Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN on 5456 8116 or 0451 300 050.