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Chapter 8: Whither MIVA-MIVA? Mallacoota District Health and Support Services (MDHSS) moves away from residential Aged Care Units. (2005-2017)

The Mallacoota Inlet (retirement) Village (MIVA-MIVA) Project, was a joint project between the Mallacoota Senior Citizens and the Mallacoota District Bush Nursing Committee. In 1979 the Senior Citizens group took on the responsibility for raising money for the Mallacoota Inlet retirement Village (MIVA). They worked with the Bush Nurse committee to raise money for, and plan the Retirement Village.

In 1983 the Bush Nurse and the Senior Citizens launched the Mallacoota Inlet (retirement) Village Appeal (MIVA). It became known as the MIVA-MIVA committee, a sub-committee of the Bush Nursing Centre. Originally an appeal committee. Once there was the prospect of a government subsidy for the centre, the duties of the sub-committee were extended to include approaches to government departments, and the whole building program. The name was changed to the MIVA-MIVA *Project* committee to reflect its added responsibilities. (Source: Don Finley)

Members of the original MIVA-MIVA committee included Doug Sewell (Secretary), Anke de Gues, (Treasurer), Dot Bruce, Len Stevens, and Don Finley, Jimmy Bridle, and others. Cedric Gilbert, the main architect for Stage 1 of the MIVA project, drew plans for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the MIVA-MIVA retirement village project. The Department of Environment (Now DSE) granted three adjoining blocks of land. One block for MIVA-MIVA Stage One, where the Bush Nurse currently was, and two blocks for MIVA-MIVA Stage 2 Nursing home and hospital. These they marked as reserved for “hospital”. (See Chapter 2 for more information)

In 1991 the Mallacoota Bush Nurse withdrew from the MIVA-MIVA Project citing “lack of demand” for an Aged Care hostel, and that their cost analysis found that a hostel would not be “self-funding”. When the Bush Nurse disbanded the MIVA-MIVA sub-committee, the sub-committee simply became independent, registered its name as MIVA-MIVA Inc., asked for the money they had raised to be transferred to them as promised, and asked for permission to build Stage 2 of the MIVA project on the land they had previously agreed with the Mallacoota Bush Nurse and Shire, that they would build an Aged Care hostel on.

MIVA-MIVA Stage One had proposed to build four units for the aged. The first two were constructed in 1989. Immediately after the dumping of the Aged Care Hostel plant in 1991, the Bush Nurse built the next two Units for the aged. This brought the number of units to four. In 1999 following the Bush Nurse’s name change to MDHSS, part of the money raised by the MIVA-MIVA project team for the Aged Care Hostel, was spent building a two bedroom disabled unit.

Since 2000, MDHSS appear to have increasingly moved away from residential care for the Aged. This resulted in the organization no longer using the name MIVA-MIVA units, and changing the function of the units away from Aged Care. After Barry Maloney died, the unit that was named after him because he contributed \$11,000 to its construction, was no longer referred to by this name.

The MIVA-MIVA Units. The 2005 MDHSS annual report noted that MDHSS managed five independent living units (MIVA)¹

“..a small number of independent living units. These units are located within MDHSS grounds and consist of four 1-bedroom units and one 2-bedroom unit.” These were for residents 69 years and over. In 2004-5 the units had an occupancy of 60%² “

After 2005, MDHSS Annual reports ceased using the Miva name, referring to them instead as “independent living units”. Miva they said, was the name of the main building, (originally built as the dining hall and Senior Citizens Club rooms) only.

Its 2014-15 report explains MDHSS’ further retreat from the units (at p.31) cutting five units back to three, due to a “lack of demand”³. The report states that, in response to a lack of demand, MDHSS was using two units for storage, one for visiting specialists such as the dentist and counsellor to rent when they visit, and the other, “for case-management meetings, and at other times to let to community groups, such as the friendship sewing group, the lifestyles group, and allied health practitioners “. The use of the fifth unit was not noted.

In its 2014-2015 report, MDHSS board flagged its intention to move away from Independent Units for the Aged, “The Board intends to investigate the long-term future of the accommodation units, including legal restrictions regarding use, as well as maintenance costs.”

Despite the reported lack of demand for permanent rental, the annual 2015-2016 report of MDHSS lists an increase of \$10,000 in rent premiums. A rent premium is usually money paid to a third party for the third party to lease units.

The 2016 Annual Report (P 21/41) describes the Units not as Aged Care Residential Units, but as “Independent Units”, and asserts that “people prefer to remain in their own houses, with support from home care”. And when this is no longer possible, MDHSS helps them leave Murrumbidgee to access Nursing Home care in 10 aged residential care facilities.¹

These residential aged care units require relatives and friends living in Murrumbidgee to make return trips varying from two to twelve hours driving time in order to visit. This isolates the Elders from their families and Murrumbidgee community. There are currently 35 people from Murrumbidgee living in Nursing homes ranging from Eden to Melbourne and Canberra. Many would like to return home.

¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20051228101824/http://www.murrumbidgee.org.au:80/welcome1.htm>

MDHSS’ terms for management were set out at https://web.archive.org/web/20060820192947fw_/http://www.murrumbidgee.org.au/Forms/R-L07%20MIVA%20units%20information%20V1.0.pdf

² (at p. 17)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20090912184740/http://murrumbidgee.org.au/forms/Annual%20Report%20004-2005.pdf>

³ https://web.archive.org/web/20160301234203/http://www.murrumbidgee.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Annual-Report-Wed_2015.pdf

In 2018 MDHSS is not registered with MyagedCare to provide Residential Aged Care. This lack of registration may help explain why MDHSS has moved away from providing accommodation for the Aged in Mallacoota.

ⁱ MDHSS 2015-2016 Annual Report