

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**United Way Glenelg announces Lewis Court Fund Grants supporting Healthy Ageing**

From Portland to Heywood, Casterton to the smaller communities in between, older residents are an important part of what keeps the Glenelg Shire connected and active.

Whether it's through local groups, shared activities or simply staying engaged in community life, these everyday connections play a big role in supporting wellbeing and independence.

Through the Lewis Court Fund, United Way Glenelg continues to back practical, locally driven ideas that create more opportunities for older residents to stay involved, connected and supported.

United Way Glenelg is pleased to announce the successful recipients of the 2026 Lewis Court Fund grants, supporting a range of projects designed to strengthen wellbeing, connection and participation for older residents across the region.

A total of \$40,575.00 has been allocated to initiatives that respond to local needs, with a strong focus on social connection, accessibility and inclusion. We're also proud to support four new community partners who have not previously received funding through the Lewis Court Fund.

The following organisations have been awarded funding:

- Portland Senior Citizens – *Rolling Forward*
- Portland Bay Ladies Probus – *Annual Bus Trip for late 2026*
- Portland U3A – *Trip to Halls Gap*
- Portland Women's Service Club – *Movie Afternoon*
- Harbourside Lodge – *Singing Strong*
- Portland Garden Club – *Garden Lovers Weekend Ararat*
- Heywood Rural Health – *Accessible Chair Yoga*
- Casterton Senior Citizens – *Kitchen Upgrade*
- Portland Senior Citizens – *Sizzle and Socialise*

These initiatives range from social outings and community gatherings through to facility upgrades and accessible programs, all designed to support older residents to remain active, engaged and connected within their communities.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer, Nicole Carr, said the strength of this year's applications reflects both the growing need and the passion of local organisations.

"These projects highlight the importance of connection, accessibility and community in supporting people as they age."

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"Through the Lewis Court Fund, we're able to invest in practical, locally driven initiatives that make a real difference to the everyday lives of older residents across our community."

One of the new community partners being supported this year is the Portland Women's Service Club, whose long-standing movie afternoons offer a simple but meaningful way to bring people together. Held locally and designed with older audiences in mind, these events provide an opportunity to enjoy a film in a familiar, welcoming setting without the need to travel outside the region.

"Following the closure of a local cinema, access to this type of shared experience has become limited, particularly for older residents," said President, Mrs Liz Lindsey.

"The club's movie afternoons help fill that gap, creating a relaxed and accessible outing where people can connect, catch up and enjoy time together. Scheduled during the day and supported by volunteers, the sessions are intentionally designed to be easy to attend and inclusive," she said.

Beyond the screening itself, the afternoons have become a valued social touchpoint within the community. From welcoming guests at the door to sharing conversations over raffles and home baking, the events create a sense of belonging that extends well beyond the film.

Importantly, the impact of the project reaches even further. Funds raised through these events are reinvested back into the community, supporting scholarships for young women to pursue further education, creating a connection across generations and extending the benefit of each event well beyond the day itself.

"The movie afternoons also provide a meaningful way for our volunteers, many of whom are older themselves, to stay active and engaged in community life," Mrs Lindsey said.

"It's more than just going to a movie, it's about getting out, seeing familiar faces and sharing an afternoon together. For many people, it's something to look forward to, and that sense of connection really matters."

The next movie scheduled this year is Song Sung Blue starring Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson to be screened on Sunday July 26 at 2pm at the Portland Arts Centre. Tickets on sale from Intimate Apparell from Tuesday June 2.

Photo: United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr, and President Portland Women's Service Club Liz Lindsey.

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