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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Knitting Business- Fuelling Friendships & Charity

An idea for bringing residents together in a community gathering has snowballed into a beautiful philanthropic project at Infinite Care.

Residents of Infinite Care's homes have established groups of 'KnitWits' to learn new skills and inspire creativity while clicking their knitting needles into action.

From humble beginnings involving knitting enthusiasts at Infinite Care Ashmore, the KnitWits program has grown to a large number of participants across many of Infinite Care's homes across Australia.

Infinite Care's Chief People and Transformation Officer Rebecca Pacey said both experienced knitters and knitting newcomers are pitching in to bond over this age-old craft and create beautiful blankets to donate to charities this winter.

"After distribution to family members and friends, we were still accruing a surplus of blankets," Ms Pacey said.

"This led us to consider worthy causes, and with the temperature dropping there are many feeling the cold who could do with a blanket knitted with love to warm them up."

Infinite have partnered with the Gold Coast North branch of Rosie's who offer friendship and unconditional acceptance to those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or are experiencing social isolation or loneliness.

"As well as offering company, food and a cup of tea, Rosie's will also be able to provide visitors with beautiful blankets and beanies to help them through the chilly winter months," Ms Pacey said.

"We feel that through this partnership Rosie's can keep them warm on the inside, while we help keep them warm on the outside."

"It is also very rewarding that our KnitWits are able to give back to the community in their own special way."

84-year-old Infinite Ashmore resident Betty Stein joined the group this year and reignited her love of knitting.

"I hadn't knitted for many years and when I got started, I couldn't stop – it brought back lots of wonderful memories," Ms Stein said.

"I enjoy the friendships I have made in the group and I always look forward to seeing my friends at our KnitWit catch-ups.

"I am very proud of my blanket as it has a beautiful flower design, which has formed while I was knitting, so it worked out beautifully."

Ms Pacey said the wonderful, knitted creations were just one facet of the positive outcomes of this program, which also delivers social and physical benefits.

“Residents are encouraged to come out of their rooms for the sessions, which really helps with building mental health stimulation,” she said.

“In addition, the KnitWits are using their hand joints for the craft which really helps those who have arthritis.

“We are even getting letters from the family of residents in the groups, praising the program, with one saying her mother ‘is a different’ person thanks to this unique social program.”

Ms Pacey said a key goal for us at Infinite Care is to make the transition into residential aged care less stressful and create a warm and welcoming community environment where residents can feel right at home and connected to each other.

“One of the best aspects of the program was to see how this hobby has really buoyed residents – they have found a new passion project and formed some wonderful friendships through KnitWits,” she said.

“Many of the KnitWits have never knitted before but expressed an interest in learning the skill so they can take part in this fun group activity.

“Knitting together is such a wonderful, inclusive activity with both male and female KnitWit participants, ranging from 70-year-olds to residents in their 90s. There is even a KnitWit group in our Corporate Services Office, with an average age of mid 20-year-olds finding knitting a great way to bond and get off social media scrolling.

“Our KnitWits across the country are growing by the numbers each week.”

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