

MEDIA RELEASE

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Carers Week 2017 shines spotlight on Council aged care success

The chorus of laughter emanating from the aged, smiling faces around the table provides unquantifiable-yet-irrefutable proof of the success Roper Gulf Regional Council is having in providing aged care and disability support services to clients in some of the remotest parts of the Top End.

The source of the chortling are Beswick residents Barry Weston, Norman Lane, Tony Johnson and Tom Kelly, who are regaling Council staff with stories about their formative years, which included working with heavy machinery during the development of the area and as stockmen on Beswick Station.

Two weeks ago, two of the men were living in a derelict building in the community, located 110 kilometres east of Katherine, while the other two were staying with family in overcrowded premises.

The quartet is now renting units in a Council-owned property, and receiving daily meals and assistance through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

The Council provides CHSP services to clients in six communities across the Roper Gulf region on behalf of the Federal Government as part of a larger suite of aged care and disability services.

Mr Weston said the move from the dilapidated single men's quarters to his new unit – which is outside the community's flood zone – represented a life change he struggled to put into words.

"It's a lot better than that other place we were in," he explained during an October 20 barbecue to celebrate Carers Week 2017.

"Down there was not safe and too noisy; this place is quiet for us old fellas."

In addition to improving safety and quality of life, the move has paved the way for the men to undertake regular recreational projects.

"We're looking forward to doing outings and fishing, and we're gonna clean up a space in the yard to put in veggies," Mr Weston said.

"Then, we'll have fresh veggies for us and people who want them."

The Council used Carers Week 2017 to showcase the benefits of its diverse range of aged care and disability services, including providing training and employment opportunities for local people.

Revonna Urban is the Council's Community Services Officer in Beswick and said helping the older generation of residents provided her with a sense of accomplishment.

"Looking after these old people makes me feel good," she said.

"They are all my family, so I'm glad I can work for Council and help make sure they are taken care of."

Community Services Regional Manager Annalisa Bowden travelled to Beswick for the barbecue and said positive outcomes like the relocation of the men were at the core of the Council's strategic direction.

"Council's mission is to work as one towards a better future, and this great result in Beswick is proof of that," she explained.

"That we are able to provide tailored support that lets ageing clients remain in their own home is one thing, but the delivery of our aged care and disability services is also contributing to an increase in upskilling and job opportunities for people living in remote communities within the Roper Gulf Local Government Area."

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