



**GILBRUK**  
(Gil-Brook)

LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

# Community Living with a Difference!

Created by Sandra Slatter CM  
on behalf of Advance Heathcote Inc.



Judy and Tom are aged in their mid 60's and live just outside of Heathcote on a small farm where they run a few sheep, alpacas and have a small orchard and vegetable garden. Whilst living here they have both been involved with the local community, like many other people living in Heathcote.

Although Heathcote is a small community it has over 75 community groups to choose from. It is a very caring community, not many towns can boast they can have a coffee with the local cop, or when they are sick neighbours step in and take the dog for a walk and do the shopping. In their younger days, Tom played a lead role in the local footy and netball club and Judy was very active in the local CWA; now they have aged, Tom tinkers around in the Men's Shed whilst Judy is a

staunch member of the U3A.book club. They are both now at the magic age called retirement. So they had decided to look at some retirement options - one was perhaps selling and moving into town. They had started to look at some display homes and had also been looking around at some small town lots. They finally found their block, decided upon the home they wanted and started negotiations with the builder. However, before plans could be finalised Tom was diagnosed with early onset dementia and this put a stop to their plans very quickly.

After spending time talking with the medical professionals and their family about their future prospects, particularly in relation to memory loss and other aspects of Tom's cognitive decline, they decided they now needed

to adjust their thinking to something more practical to meet both their needs. They had heard about the Living Laboratory (dementia showcase home) which had recently been built and located at Heathcote Health, so they decided this was the place to start.

They were blown away by the amount of assistive technology that was available, personal alarms, passive impaired reminder light, talking photo frames and albums, day clocks, robotics and more.





After further investigation they learnt that was not all that was located in this local Compassionate Care precinct. There were 6 GPs who formed part of the local Primary Health Care including a geriatrician and a range of allied health practitioners; a 'Virtual Research Hub', a place where various university and industry researchers could collaborate on the latest research; the Men's Shed which Tom was already a member; a community garden and also a Green Space Booking service

which provided accreditation to local respite tourism green spaces. It was all there in one location and the cafes and shops within walking distance. Judy was delighted when she learnt how the local businesses throughout Heathcote had undergone a disability and dementia friendly audit by the City of Greater Bendigo and their establishments were now dementia friendly with staff trained in dealing with people living with dementia.



What Judy and Tom really liked about dementia showcase transportable homes was the fact they were manufactured locally, specially designed taking both colour and design into account for those living with dementia. They were also fitted out with assistive technology, which is something Judy found very reassuring. She also liked the fact there was a try before you buy option (offered in the local Respite Village). They decided to take up this option and were both extremely pleased with their experience and decided this was the next step for them.

They began negotiations with the local manufacturer who they found very helpful plus they made some suggestions to ensure Judy and Tom would be comfortable and the



design would meet their lifestyle requirements. The aim was to have a transportable home built and located on their daughter Mandy's farm located just a couple of kms down the road from their farm. Another added advantage was the 'lease or buy back option'.



Tom was able to receive a 'home care' package from Heathcote Health. There are four levels of Home Care Packages to select from to help meet the different needs of his personal circumstance. Whilst it is still early days, Tom will start with level 2. He will receive some help with cleaning and tidying around the house, support with his personal health, such as grooming and also some help with meals, shopping and transport. The package is also designed to give him a little extra support to help stay independent. It can also include three or four visits a week from a care worker.



Support Services quickly put in place a range of services to support Judy in her caring role. She also linked her in with the local Carer's Support Group, where Judy immediately felt at home and supported. At last she had people she could chat to about her fears and anxieties, people that really understood what she was going through.

Judy's needs were also taken into account, after all it is not easy caring for the one you love when they are in decline. The manager from Carer's

Knowing that he was just moving down the road and near his daughter made the transition easier for Tom. It also enabled him and Judy to remain involved in their community, continue with their social activities and age in place, rather than entering residential aged care facility even when the impacts of old age affect their mobility and mental ability

As Tom's health declined the decision was made by the medical professionals and the family for Judy and Tom to move into the Respite Village which is located adjacent Heathcote Health, and close by GILBRUK PLACE. They had already stayed there previously for a couple of months so felt easy about the transition. The manager and staff there are very welcoming.

Tom and Judy's new home at the Respite Village had also been designed to acknowledge cognitive decline AND enabled Tom to remain living with Judy whilst being supported by the therapy and lifestyle programmes offered by the adjacent GILBRUK PLACE. They also experienced continuity of clinical care provided by Heathcote Health.

GILBRUK PLACE and Heathcote Health use tele-monitoring and wearable technology to make clinical monitoring simple and effective, whether Tom is in the community or at home.

As Tom's behaviours & care required more management, he moved into GILBRUK PLACE.

## Concept 1 – Site Plan



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GILBRUK PLACE provides the resident with a variety of landscape experiences. Mandy, their daughter appreciated the built environment and urban design as it enabled her and her family flexible and free access to visit at times best suited to the family enabling the family to maintain contact with Tom. Mandy appreciates that she can take her Dad for a walk, or send her children to collect a treat for him from the shop in a safe secure environment

GILBRUK PLACE offers their residents, families and visitors a number of experiences within GILBRUK, around the township of Heathcote and the

broader rural area. Tom is able to keep his connections and interests with the Men's Shed, as the staff take him to visit the Men's Shed and the local Car Club weekly. He even gets to go for a weekly ride on the local "rickshaw" along the O'Keefe Trail, where he meets his old mates Bill and Jack at their favourite fishing spot. Other adventures include a trip to his favourite local winery where he can sit amongst the vines sipping a glass of red as he takes in the scenery.

GILBRUK PLACE's ecological design, provides creative and aesthetically pleasing ways to ensure a safe and supported environment.



The facility is situated on 17 acres and has 150 dementia specific RAC beds, 10 bed 'small house' models in clusters of 3 houses (30 beds) with 30 one and two bedroom care apartments. Within the complex (including the supermarket, hairdresser, café, library), there are also specially designed green spaces with a farm nursery creating an atmosphere which triggers memory and sensory connection for Tom. Judy could immediately see that the design with its beautiful big lake and surrounding gardens would also enable Tom to remain spiritually connected to the land he loves.

Pam, one of Gilbruk's staff members explained to Mandy how she loved working in this new dementia friendly work environment: "Nothing like the

old days." she said. "Now instead of spending loads of time completing a heap of paperwork, I am able to spend more time with Tom by using mobile computing".

Whilst Tom is living at GILBRUK PLACE Judy remains living in her home at the Respite Village, this allows her to visit Tom, or she can to stay over if she likes. It also provides the opportunity to be involved in the Community Garden and grow some of her favourite vegetables. She also attends Ukulele sessions at the local Community House. Once a week she catches the local bus, where Rick the bus driver meets her with a friendly smile as she heads off to Bendigo with her friends for a bit of retail therapy and catch up with her friends. All for \$5.00 return.



When Tom moved into GILBRUK PLACE, Mini also moved in. Mini, is an assistance dog who had just graduated from the dementia dog program. This program is held on site and coordinated through a research programme at Latrobe University. Mini follows Tom everywhere. She especially loves the local dog park, another place where Tom loves to visit and sit on the park bench chatting to his friends whilst Mini goes off with her friends for a play. Mini and those like her bring a calm to Tom and those to whom he loves.

Joe one of GILBRUK'S 200 specially trained volunteers loves his new role actively helping Tom with personalised support. They sit and chat about old times, enjoy a glass or two of red, and he takes Tom down to the Car

Club where they join the men gushed over the old classics whilst enjoying a sausage. He helps Tom at shower time if needed. Joe is also on hand (as are the other volunteers) to ensure Mini, is fed and walked when Tom is unable to do it. Knowing that Tom is surrounded by caring staff and volunteers is very reassuring for Judy and their daughter Mandy.

It's not only old mates and man's best friend that are thought of, Judy and Tom's grand kids love their visits, Ice-cream anyone? This is not clinical nor encapsulated care. It has a bespoke playground with lots of different activities. Talking about children, one of Tom's favourite activities is when the children from the local Kinder, as part of the intergenerational play sessions, come for their weekly visit.



Tom loves reading to the children, blowing bubbles, singing songs and best of all playing in the specially constructed sandpit.

Childcare is also available on location for staff's children and also children of those visiting a family member should it be needed.

Not long after Tom moved into GILBRUK PLACE, he was offered the opportunity to go on a clinical trial provided through one of our research partner organisations (Bendigo Health.) Fortunately for Tom the Royal Flying Doctor Service was available to transport him to and thro to Bendigo.





Judy understands that when Tom moves from high care his palliative needs will be looked after in the Village in the specially designed palliative care section with support from Heathcote Health's specialist services and clinical support. Pastoral Care is also available to Tom ensuring his end of life is comfortable and he is able to die with dignity.

