



# Age care... child's play

## Innovative development links generations

by SIMON GARNER

PROGRAMS linking young children and residents of nursing homes have become increasingly popular. But a Hobart operator has gone one step further.

OneCare – which operates four nursing homes, a palliative care facility, two retirement villages and a community care program – has constructed a purpose-built childcare centre on the same property as one of its nursing homes.

It has operated for about four months, and OneCare Chief Executive Officer Michael Powell said its success meant the organisation was now looking at incorporating the idea in its other three Tasmanian nursing homes.

“People are asking why it hasn't been done here before,” Mr Powell said. “It's just been fantastic.”

The childcare centre is operated by St Michaels Collegiate.

“The centre co-ordinators have designed joint activities on three days a week,” Mr

Powell said. “The aim is to have them running five days a week.

“Our residents visit the children and help with reading, storytelling and get involved in some of their play activities – and the children come across to the nursing home to do some of their more vibrant activities, like ballet.”

Mr Powell said residents who wanted to could get involved with the children in joint activities. Others simply loved to watch the children play.

In line with legislation, nursing home residents who do have direct contact with children must go through similar security checks to anyone else working with them.

Mr Powell said there were three main factors behind the program's development.

“For some time we've wanted to improve the intergenerational opportunities, not only for residents but for our staff,” he said.

“We also wanted to come up with ways in which we could attract younger nursing staff to our facility – and having child-

care available where they work is a big plus.

“Thirdly, it was apparent from State Government figures that Kingborough, the municipality we're in, was one of the highest needs areas in the State as far as childcare facilities went, so we were able to help meet those needs.”

The childcare centre has places for 55 children. Already, 80 per cent of those places are taken, and next year the centre is booked out.

“It's a wonderful concept, and it's working well,” Mr Powell said. “The children have few inhibitions and respond beautifully to the residents.

“It's really important to encourage the interaction – especially for those children who don't have access to grandparents or other older people.

“One family has enrolled their children here because outside of our facility, the parents are the oldest people with whom the children otherwise regularly interact.”



**OneCare resident Margery Abercrombie checks out some artwork with little Rio as friend Leigh looks on.**  
Photo courtesy Tasmanian Prime Times



# Timeshare sets the pace



**AT PLAY ...** Beach House, Coolangatta, one of the Gold Coast's timeshare resorts.

By PETER BARNES

ONE of the Gold Coast's biggest earners is about to come out of the closet.

The timeshare industry is bigger than the cruise ship industry so beloved of State Government, but remains a well-kept secret.

Laura Younger, the Gold Coast-based general manager of the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council, the industry's peak body, has started working with Gold Coast Tourism to help the industry.

She said tourism bodies could help promote, research and lobby against regulation and barriers to its growth.

"Huge numbers of people

## Industry value put at \$200m

want to come here, but we can't get the accommodation," said Mrs Younger.

She said the Gold Coast had 13 timeshare properties 'including three or four at Coolangatta and Surfers Paradise, but also at Labrador'.

They included companies that owned their own properties and those that purchased management rights to buildings.

Tourism Minister Margaret Keech said cruise ships were worth an estimated \$100 million a year to Queensland.

But Researchers at Griffith

University put the value of the Gold Coast timeshare industry at more than twice that.

"On the Gold Coast, alone the industry provides jobs for 2571 people, pays salaries and wages of \$98.3 million and provides \$147.2 million, or 2 per cent, of the Coast's \$10 billion gross regional product," said Professor Beverley Sparks, chief investigator for a team looking at Australia's \$700 million timeshare business.

Through the Australian Research Council-funded Linkage Project, the three-year study by Griffith Business School will look at consumer satisfaction levels and what constitutes value for Australia's 125,000 timeshare owners.