

Providing that warm feeling of belonging

The Alba by Australian Unity has 'easy living' apartments, aged care suites and a strong sense of community.

Community plays a big part in our wellbeing. Feeling that we belong, that we can have a chat with our neighbours or that the barista knows our name, helps create a sense of home.

For downsizers who choose to move into retirement villages, that sense of community can actually expand and enrich their lives, with research showing that it can extend independent living.

"We know that people are 41 per cent, happier when living in a retirement village," says Australian Unity's general manager retirement communities, Ruth Zammit, citing findings from the Retirement Living Council's *Better Housing for Better Health* report.

"It reduces loneliness, generally residents are more socially active and it does also delay the entry into aged care."

Australian Unity has operated retirement villages across most of Australia for "quite a number of decades" Zammit says, referring to the company's 180-year history.

In more recent years it has evolved its Better Together model "which has really focused on providing a continuum of accommodation and care".

By co-locating retirement living and aged care facilities within the one precinct "people can age within their community", Zammit explains.

Australian Unity has created such a precinct in South Melbourne. The Grace offers



Among The Alba's amenities are the rooftop terrace (left) and the Curtis Stone Events-run restaurant (above).

independent retirement living, and next door is The Alba, with a mix of "easy living" apartments and aged-care suites.

"We've designed a whole community that enables residents to maintain their independence but offers a variety of personalised support packages to meet their changing needs," Zammit says of what "easy living" entails.

By re-purposing its former high-rise head office, which has a prime position opposite Albert Park Lake and the attendant views, Zammit says Australian Unity has been able to ensure that the design of The Alba meets residents' needs as much as the many support services do.

"We made sure that there's a lot of light coming in, because it's essential to well-

being," she says. "We've removed stairs [and] narrow doorways, [and] all of the floor surfaces are level. The apartments are designed so that you can age within them."

The one- and two-bedroom residences have open-plan living, kitchen and dining areas and most have balconies.

Design elements also help residents thrive, which is why there are a number of lifestyle conveniences also on site.

"There's a library, an arts and crafts room, a lovely lounge and a rooftop terrace, which provides a welcoming open-air space for people to maybe read a book or catch up with friends," Zammit says. "There's also an in-house cinema."

The Alba provides areas where you can entertain family and friends. This includes a

restaurant run by Curtis Stone Events, which also manages the ground-floor cafe.

"You can make decisions around what you'd like to eat, whether you'd like to have it delivered in your apartment or eat in the restaurant," Zammit says of the premium menu that helps eliminate chores such as shopping, food prepping and cooking.

Zammit says The Alba epitomises Australian Unity's Better Together philosophy: "We want to help people to continue to live on their terms as they transition through the retirement community experience and age in the same community as their needs change".

People considering retirement community living should seek professional, independent financial and legal advice.



Live, laugh, love the lifestyle

THE ALBA

ALBERT PARK LAKE

If you've always lived life on your own terms, why stop now? At Albert Park Lake, we've designed an easy living community for older people, The Alba Apartments, where you can make your own choices every day. Don't feel like cooking anymore? We'll do it for you. Want to spend more time with your grandkids? Take all the time you like, while we take care of the cleaning and washing. With our flexible in-house services, we support you to live more freely and more joyfully.

Easy living apartments are now available.

Book a tour to find out more.

Call Martine on 0477 775 786 or visit thealba.com.au



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