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into Aged Care Quality  
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**Nursing and the  
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# Aged care and integrated care

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## Chorus is a community care organisation working for older people in Western Australia



A Chorus community in celebration mode—Chinese New Year at our Bull Creek centre in Perth

Like many organisations working for older Australians, Chorus—a new aged and community care organisation in Western Australia—is dealing with a deluge of change.

Our work is all home and community-based, so in the past few years we have been affected by changing:

- customer expectations
- technology
- funding models and programs
- compliance requirements.

In addition, we are the product of a recent three-way merger, simultaneously a symptom and cause of upheaval.

From adversity, however, comes opportunity, and these challenges have given us the fitness and flexibility to bring a fresh approach to community service. While our short-term priorities focus on integration and stability, our longer-term vision is to build what we call Chorus 2.0.

### A business model for the future

The blueprint for Chorus 2.0 is not a magic formula, nor is it something we can order online. Our strategy is more akin to exploration and discovery than analysis and invention.

In broad terms, we are working towards a model which can efficiently deliver quality services under various program umbrellas via local networks or Chorus communities. Our fresh approach will lie in pairing paid staff with local volunteers and community resources to create a whole significantly greater than the sum of its parts.

Our ability to deliver in this way builds on our broad service mix, which includes home care, social groups, employment support and mental health recovery work. We also have 500 active volunteers—one for every staff member—and a wide range of local connections.

As they say, vision without implementation is hallucination. To implement Chorus 2.0 we

need to innovate. Innovation often arises from partnerships. Chorus is presently in exploratory relationships with organisations locally (for example Rise and Ruah, co-founders with Chorus of the Impact Collective); nationally (care network app developer Good Human); and internationally (Buurtzorg). Many readers will be aware of Buurtzorg, which is the Netherlands-based gold standard for autonomous teams and localised service delivery. I visited Buurtzorg in March 2019.

### Enabling people to live the life they choose

For too many years, the aged care sector has operated as an institutional answer to the ‘burden’ of ageing. This is not through lack of compassion or effort, but, as the Productivity Commission told us in its 2011 report, the sector was blighted by poor navigability, limited choice, variable quality and workforce gaps.

At its heart, Chorus exists to enable people to live the lives they choose. To date, the aged care

reforms have created the possibility of choice; unfortunately, in my view, a focus on transactional efficiency and fiscal control significantly undermines that potential.

In my conversations with Chorus people, I’ve come to understand that a life of choice is one characterised by something much bigger than quality and value for money. Humans of all ages strive for purpose, dignity and a sense of belonging.

Ultimately Chorus’s fresh approach—although a work in progress—is to nurture and support communities in which people can live meaningful lives. Regardless of whether you are a customer, volunteer or employee with Chorus, you will be treated with respect and invited to both give and receive in equal measure.

Sure, our business is built on a foundation of delivering quality services at a fair price. But there’s a lot more to life than that. ■