Demolition of the last of the houses of the Flora McDonald hostel was completed in June and then, as we know, the heavens opened up at the end of July and into August.

Early spring provided some reprieve and our builder, Badge, moved quickly with the pouring of the first of four ground floor slabs occurring in the last week of September.

The new wings will provide another 68 rooms, allowing the full transfer of residents from Tappeiner Court. Like the previous two stages, the new houses will have central courtyards and side gardens for the use of residents, and large roofed balconies for the upper level residents. In response to staff feedback, adjustments have been made to the internal plans of the building to ensure the best level of accommodation possible for the completed building.

Stage 3 will also see the completion of the carpark, linking Sir Donald Bradman Drive with Neill Road. This should see an end to the difficult car parking arrangements visitors and staff have endured. The service vehicles will have their own entrance off Neil Road providing a more efficient and safer environment.

The building works are on track for completion in May 2017 with the transition from Tappeiner Court towards the end of June.

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, MacKillop Musings.

It's hoped that the newsletter becomes a source of open communication between the organisation as a whole and a way to keep us all in the loop about the people we serve, the people who make it happen and the good things that happen along the way.

As you read this Stage 3 of our Flora McDonald project continues to move along as planned. What has taken place really is a credit to the commitment, patience and perseverance of Heather Engelhardt and the team at Flora McDonald, who continue to drive the project forward one step at a time. By the end of the year it's hoped that the first floor slab and 'first fix' will be completed.

Having been involved in the aged care industry for many years I am aware of the long-standing history and wonderful work of Mary MacKillop Care in providing support to the aged and marginalised in our community, and I look forward to being part of the organisation and meeting with many of you over the coming months.

Thank you for the wonderful work that you do within our organisation.

Rob Hankins
Chief Executive
Antoinette Paparella - an enduring commitment

Long serving staff member Antoinette Paparella has never been far away from Tappeiner Court.

While records show she officially joined the staff in 1977, Antoinette's involvement began several years earlier while visiting Tappeiner Court as a 13-year-old with her mother and aunty (current staff member Gabriella Donnarumma) who were both working in Hospitality at Tappeiner Court.

Antoinette was educated at St Aloysius College in the city and at the same time began volunteering at Tappeiner, where the Sisters of St Joseph captured her admiration and whose dedication inspired her to consider joining the order herself.

"Their devotion and the commitment of those Irish Josephites to their faith was amazing. They became such an important part of my life," says Antoinette.

"In those days when you'd walk into Tappeiner Court you'd see the Sisters in full Habit and there'd be a choir singing. There was such a sense of peace and tranquility and they were so loving – it was like walking into Heaven!"

"It made me think about joining them and it was really what I intended to do. They offered me some work and I received pocket money for helping in the dining room before school and then after school I'd come and sit with the residents and read or talk to them," she recalls.

Plans to join the Sisters were halted when Antoinette began a university degree after finishing Year 12 and promptly met up with her childhood sweetheart, Joseph, and the two were married.

Together they had a daughter and built up a fruit and veg business, until Joseph was diagnosed with cancer four years later. Antoinette turned to the Sisters who supported her during Joseph's treatment until he lost his battle with cancer and passed away at the age of 30.

She recalls that the Sisters have provided advice throughout the highs and lows of her own personal journey.

"They were the people I went to for answers and they were always able to provide them," she says.

"I don't know what I would have done without them - they've been my family and support.”

Antoinette then studied to become an enrolled nurse but baulked at the idea of becoming a registered nurse because “I love the one-on-one contact and I hate paperwork”.

"My purpose is with people in their last stages of life – it’s such a privilege," she says.

Antoinette has worked at all three Mary MacKillop aged care sites and says that while there have been many changes over the years, the essence of the organisation has been retained.

“The Josephite ethos is still there. The respect for the individual is still there and we are still welcoming and friendly. I have worked with many dedicated staff at Mary MacKillop Care over many years - some who have been great mentors, and continue to be.”

Antoinette acknowledges that after spending most of her working life at Tappeiner Court there are changes in the near future.

“I look forward to and am excited about what lies ahead – the surroundings might change but the heart is still the same.”
While Pattie Coverlid hasn't resided at Flora McDonald for very long she is already renowned for her wit and her wisdom.

“I just love to make people laugh - I guess you could say I'm a bit of a ratbag,” says Pattie who can reel off numerous jokes on request.

Adelaide born and bred, Pattie was one of four children, raised in the western suburbs, living not far from Flora McDonald.

Pattie suffered severe asthma as a child and was told by doctors that she wouldn't live to more than 13 years of age. She's now 89!

Pattie says her asthma was so chronic that she had to visit hospital three times per week for treatment, which had a major impact on her schooling.

But clearly Pattie is proof that it's not always wise to believe the pessimists.

Despite a lack of continuity in formal education, Pattie's resilience and determination saw her progress from her first job working in a fruit shop, to various administration roles, including working at the West Adelaide Football Club: a Confidential Secretary (Executive Secretary) at Noyse Brothers Engineers; Credit Manager at Griff's Furniture Emporium and then later, advancing through the ranks to become Secretary to the General Manager of the SANFL, in the 1970s.

Pattie recalls the adrenalin rush of managing the switchboard in the lead up to SANFL Grand Final Day and a personal highlight as turning a sod of soil in preparation for the installation of lights at what was then known as Football Park.

Married at 24, Pattie met her husband, Leonard, at a roller skating venue and they were together until he passed away four years ago.

"Once he died, I thought, 'I'm on own now so I did a tour of Flora McDonald and decided that I'd like to come here and it made the transition easier'.

"I have great confidence in the staff - they're remarkable," she says.

Pattie now spends her days working on a collection of children's stories she's written over the years and helping the other residents.

"When you're well mentally, you feel better physically," she says.

"I've always had an enquiring mind. Every day I learn something new - that's what keeps me going."
Many of the residents from Ain Karim attend Faith and Light, an Interdenominational social activity, once a month. The September event was a fancy dress night, and residents and staff spent time planning and organising their costumes. The night was full of frivolity and amusing and colourful attire.

Employee Assistance Program

Did you know that as an employee of Mary MacKillop Care you have access to free, confidential counselling?

For more information visit:
www.accessprograms.com.au or for confidential enquiries and appointments call 1300 66 77 00.