

You & Me

It's been about enjoyment and support since these ladies met nine years ago

Interview TONYA TURNER



Blue Care Carramar Retirement Village residents and best friends Margaret Donnelly and Ngaire Lanyon. Picture: David Kelly

Margaret Donnelly, 83, Sunnybank Hills

How did you meet Ngaire?

We met at Blue Care Carramar Retirement Village, where we both live, about nine years ago. We just drifted towards each other one day. She always looked so beautiful and her hair was always perfect, so I asked her who her hairdresser was and now I go to the same one. We have a lot in common and we don't always agree but we can speak our own minds.

How has Ngaire supported you in tough times?

My husband Noel died over two years ago when he was 81, and she was so good to me. One day she said gently, "you know Margaret, you've got to move on". I needed her to tell me that. I'd volunteered for the Red Cross for 30 years and Ngaire asked if I'd like to join National Seniors. Now I go to quite a few activities every month with them. I've managed to find a new bunch of friends and they're lovely people. I've fallen on my feet after a long love affair.

What do you do for fun?

Ngaire and I often get together in the

afternoons and play cards or games and have afternoon tea. We sometimes go up to the club room and play Mahjong, which she taught me. I'm very lucky to have the love I have around me as I also have four children – Richard, 60, Mark, 58, Andrew, 55, and Julie, 53 – plus eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Why did you decide to move to Blue Care?

Noel worked in finance and when he retired we started up an orchard nursery. We did that for 13 years but when he had a little stroke we had to sell. We moved to a smaller house but it was getting hard to look after the gardens and I could see the writing was on the wall. I'd seen these units and fell in love with one. It turned out to be the best thing we ever did.

Ngaire Lanyon, 89, Sunnybank Hills

Why did you and Margaret hit it off?

You don't gravitate to everyone but I felt a real connection with her, as you do sometimes with some people. She's always very reliable and I love that in someone. She's honest, she has a good sense of humour, and she's not one of those people who is always on about themselves. She's

got a lovely big heart and she'll listen to anybody's woes. She's got a bit more patience than me.

Did you know what it was like to lose a partner?

I'd been married for 42 years to my wonderful husband Jack, who died from asbestos when he was 65. When Noel passed away I really felt for Margaret. A friend had been very caring to me a bit like I was to her. When she was grieving I said, "well dear, one door has softly closed but lots of others will open and I want you to have the courage to walk through them."

What do you treasure most about your friendship?

I didn't have a best friend for years until I met Margaret. I had friends and acquaintances, but not friends you share all your joys and upsets with. I have two lovely children, Daryl, 67, and Tracey, 62, and four grandchildren who I love spending time with. Margaret and I can share the happy moments and the sad moments from our lives. And when we play Mahjong, I think people sometimes wonder whether we've got more than tea in our cups.