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After three years of closure due to the pandemic, Think Pink Foundation celebrated the reopening of its Living Centre on July 26, with principal partners, sponsors, donors, and key stakeholders in attendance.

The joyful affair was one of “infectious enthusiasm”, not only serving to commemorate the reopening, but also the reconnection of the many people involved in supporting the facility. With many of its clients being immunocompromised, the Living Centre had to close to the public in 2020 and the team was forced to pivot and redesign all services, activities, and programs to suit online formats. While this allowed the foundation to reach not only clients and families in Melbourne but also in country Victoria and around Australia, the team at the Living Centre was overjoyed to celebrate the reopening and the resumption of services delivered “face-to-face”.

In thanking the 90-plus contributors standing in the room, Think Pink Foundation director, patron, and founder of the Living Centre, Irene Hendel OAM said, “I am proud, honoured, and delighted that we are gathered here today to share this important occasion and milestone.” “Our mission is to enable a better journey through breast cancer for those affected by a diagnosis, and we are extremely fortunate that we have been able to survive the pandemic. This has only been possible through the support of the four pillars on which we stand; our partners, our donors, our volunteers, and our staff,” she said.

Since first opening in 2010 at its original St Kilda Rd site, the Living Centre has received tremendous ongoing support from Mirvac and Freemasons Victoria, each of which have provided more than \$1.1 million in financial support to the centre and foundation. While taking a moment to thank and celebrate both businesses' contributions, Mrs Hendel alongside her husband, the foundation's director David Hendel, also announced a new partnership with family-owned catering business Soul Origin.



It's through the support of the Living Centre's four pillars that Think Pink Foundation has been able to support more than 750 new clients and continue to run its free-of-charge centre, but it still relies heavily on community contributions to thrive. The Yarra's Edge facility exists solely to support patients, their families and carers, who can seek professional and caring holistic support at any stage of their journey with breast cancer.

With the reopening, many new and old services will resume in-person. Among these are free wig fittings, lymphoedema massages, aromatherapy, Zumba and a soon-to-be-established Family Portrait Photography Program whereby a qualified photography student will meet with clients to take high-quality family portrait images.

"Here at the Living Centre our focus is on wellness rather than illness, and our mission is to enable a better journey through breast cancer for those affected by a diagnosis," Mrs Hendel said. The exciting news that the Living Centre has also welcomed two new staff members onboard was also announced at the reopening; breast care nurse consultant Jamie Kelly and Think Pink office manager, Natalie Sova.

Reflecting on the reopening as a "heart-warming occasion" Ms Sova said she, "cannot help but feel immensely privileged to be a part of a team that has made a significant difference in the lives of numerous women and their families during a difficult time." "We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of Think Pink Living Centre, and we invite everyone to join us in our endeavour to create a brighter and more compassionate future for those in need," she added.

As the new on-site breast care nurse consultant for all the clients, Ms Kelly also reflected on the "excellent opportunity" for everyone to reconnect again. "A truly memorable moment for me was meeting the Think Pink clients in person after virtual interactions on Zoom. Witnessing the positive impact we have had on their breast cancer journey reaffirms the very essence of Think Pink's mission, and it reinforces my profound passion for my role within this organisation," she said. "With hearts full of gratitude, we extend our deepest appreciation to everyone that attended. Together, we will continue to foster an environment of celebration and support at The Living Centre, ensuring that Think Pink remains a beacon of hope for those navigating the breast cancer journey."