



Signing the MOU on Tuesday were (l-r) St Joseph's Aged Care Facility manager Veronica Wilson, Ozanam Villa service manager Sue Nunn, St Carthage's Community Care CEO Geoff Costello and UnitingCare Ageing North Coast Region executive manager care services Tom Saide.

MOU changes culture of aged care

Elderly residents of different nationalities who live in or use local aged care facilities will soon be able to have a chat in their own language, enjoy activities from their country of origin and eat traditional foods thanks to an innovative new program.

On Tuesday St Carthage's Community Care signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with three Lismore aged care providers – UnitingCare Ageing North Coast Region, St Joseph's Aged Care Facility and Ozanam Villa – to provide culturally-appropriate care to its CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) residents.

The program, delivered through St Carthage's Community Partners Program, spells a new era of care for elderly residents living in these facilities and according to Jodi Scott from St Carthage's Community Care, the timing of the signing is a good omen.

"It's during Seniors Week, it's during Harmony Week and it's St Patrick's Day – you can't



Celebrating the signing of the MOU with a cake cutting are local seniors (l-r) Bruno Santin from Carroona Jarman, Romana Casagrande from Carroona Marima and Italo Zanardo from St Joseph's with signatories (l-r) Sue Nunn, Geoff Costello, Tom Saide and Veronica Wilson.

get better than that!" she laughed.

Previous programs in NSW have been restricted to one nationality and this is the first time a program encompassing all cultures has been allowed by the Department of Health & Ageing.

"We're the guinea pigs, so to speak," project officer Luciana Trojer said.

Ms Trojer said often the families of CALD

residents resist putting them into care because they fear their loved one won't have any connection to country, which often becomes more important as people age.

"I think when a family is aware this kind of care is available they are not so afraid," Luciana said. "Especially when elderly people get dementia they often revert to their first language so you need to have activities provided in

that language – it makes them feel less isolated. They feel like the facility is a second home rather than feeling lost and like they don't belong.

"We'll continue training staff so these residents will be looked after by people who speak their language and who can organise culturally-appropriate activities such as showing movies in their language, afternoon teas, music, performances or outings."