

**C**OMMUNITY spirit is flourishing at Brookfield Village, in Melbourne's west, even though it has been open only three years.

If residents are not on the bowling green, they're on the dance floor or having a laugh at bingo.

This is the atmosphere the directors of Brookfield Village wanted when they embarked on their project five years ago.

The sceptics told directors James Kelly, Dael Perlov and Bruce Carter that their vision was a pipedream, but they went ahead any way.

And now Brookfield, an over-55s lifestyle village, has reached its third birthday.

Brookfield Village is no regimented retirement village.

Instead, there are avenues of federation cottages, established trees and gardens landscaped with drought-proof plants and river pebbles.

Residents Georgina and Ken Logan say the appeal of the village was a key factor in their decision to move to Brookfield.

"We liked the federation-style homes," Ken says.

"We looked all the way up the east coast of Australia, but most villages were very uniform looking."

Resident John O'Connell feels the same.

"I looked at other villages, but they all gave me the feeling of being back in air force barracks, and Brookfield doesn't," he says. "It looks more like a heritage village."

Pauline Simpson was the first Brookfield resident, moving in when it was mostly still a muddy construction site.

"I have made a lot of friends. The people and the support are just wonderful," she says.



**Family atmosphere:** (from left) Marie McGrath, Margaret Bond, Bernice and Graham Ennis (both standing), Jean and Stuart Stephen, Sylvia Whitehead and Brian Cottrell.

## Community spirit

Pauline says the bowling green, clubhouse, leisure centre and other activities and facilities are a great way to meet people. The monthly morning teas, regular barbecues and happy hours are also well attended.

Last year, Pauline went on an eight-day cruise with Brookfield friends.

"I've always wanted to go on a cruise, but I would never go

alone, and I wouldn't have had the free cash if I had stayed in my previous home," she says.

Brookfield managers Mavis and Kevin Stevens have watched the community bonds grow.

Two residents have even married after meeting at Brookfield.

Mavis says there is great companionship in the village and a real sense of security.

"We all look out for each other — and we have a lot of laughs together," she says.

The village has more than 200 residents and the first five stages have been sold.

To celebrate Brookfield's third birthday, the village will host daily talks by Centrelink staff and others, a free sausage sizzle and tours of the village.

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