

## Duo share home and friendship

YOU could call them the odd couple, but the friendship between Rosanna's Rose and Olympia Alexopoulos is one of a kind.

Eight months ago, the pair didn't know each other.

However, Ms Alexopoulos, 49, needed a place to live after spending 30 years in Greece and 85-year-old Rose's husband died last year.

They are now living together as part of the Homeshare program. The pilot scheme helps keep people out of nursing homes and living independently while easing Melbourne's rental crush.

Applicants undergo security checks before being matched with an elderly person or someone with a disability. They live rent-free in exchange for doing household chores, such as cleaning, cooking and shopping.



**Olympia Alexopoulos and Rose are happy sharing a home.**

Picture: JAY TOWN

The program – funded until 2018 – is being rolled out in the north and the west by non-profit Care Connect and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre.

With health issues affecting her heart and mobility, Rose said she would be in a nursing home if not for Homeshare.

“Olympia is just marvelous and helps me with

so much,” Rose said.

Ms Alexopoulos said she felt secure and happy living with Rose.

“We go lots of places together and it's nice to take care of someone again,” she said.

Care Connect chief executive Paul Ostrowski said the community needed to find new ways to support each other, with Australia's age-

ing population and the number of people living alone on the rise.

“For many of our clients, the biggest bonus is not so much the chores that the homesharer can help with, but the sense of security and safety that comes with having someone else in the house, particularly overnight,” he said.

Details: 9362 8000.