

Opal HealthCare 2021 **Social Impact Report**





Published March 2022.

Opal HealthCare respects and honours the traditional custodians of the land and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the lands where we meet, live and work.

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At Opal, our purpose is *to bring joy to those we care for.*



Compassion

We strive to understand and meet the needs and feelings of those we care for. We act with kindness in everything we do.



Respect

We are honest and transparent. We respect those we care for. We always show respect for each other.



Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions, commitments and the wellbeing of those we care for.



Excellence

We work as a team to provide the highest quality care and the highest standard in everything we do.



The character of a civil society can be judged by how well it cares for its citizens in old age. Too often the needs of the elderly are inadequately addressed.

Older Australians must not be neglected. Our organisation is built on the belief that we can improve the lives of older Australians and in doing so, improve the wellbeing of the wider community.

The greatest impact we can have is in providing high quality, person-centred residential care for people as they age, delivered through our values of Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence. Care that involves our team, residents, their families and social networks, primary and allied health partners. Care that enables older Australians to live with purpose, dignity and meaning. Care that alleviates anxiety for families and pressure on public health systems.

We are proud of what Opal HealthCare has achieved through what has undoubtedly been the most challenging of times for aged care in Australia.

The second year of the pandemic saw immense strain placed on society at large. Ongoing lockdowns and the rapid onset of the Delta strain, followed by Omicron, tested not only clinical health systems but the resilience and resolve of people across our country.

Opal HealthCare moved quickly to support our residents and team to access the Covid vaccination when it became available. In addition to clinics delivered by the Commonwealth for residents, through the course of 2021 we delivered 158 pop-up vaccination clinics at our Care Communities, providing 29,610 vaccinations for team and residents, including 4,643 community members such as teachers, childcare workers, police, firefighters and paramedics.

Behind the scenes, 68 Family Support Volunteers from our Opal HealthCare home office made over 5,875 phone calls to family members during Covid outbreaks to keep them updated as our care team worked onsite around the clock.

Words and numbers alone cannot do justice to what our team have experienced and achieved in 2021. It is a privilege to walk alongside them.

The impact of Covid is a stark reminder of how much our society still has to do to build a sustainable future for our people, place and planet. In 2021 our executive team has endeavoured to better understand where we can make the most meaningful impact through our operations. This Report demonstrates our progress to date. We look forward to sharing our sustainability targets in 2022.

Rachel Argaman

Rachel Argaman OAM
Chief Executive Officer

Peter Shergold

Prof. Peter Shergold AC
Chair

Strong foundations for growing our impact

Our social impact platform is underpinned by our organisational objective to create value for our residents, families and team, communities, sector and society at large. The primary way we do this is by caring for over 7,500 residents in 84 Care Communities across Australia, with over 9,500 Opal HealthCare team members.

Beyond our core business, there are many things we do to realise a more prosperous future for Australians young and old. We support health and wellbeing, skills development, diversity, equity and inclusion, environmental projects, sustainable local employment, ethical supply chains and innovation.

In 2021, while the global pandemic again required enormous effort, resilience and resource in our operations, we continued to make progress in strengthening our foundations for impact.

In April, we published our first annual **Modern Slavery Statement**.

In October, we were shortlisted for the **Future of Ageing Sustainability Award** for our solar panel and LED lighting transformation, which in 2021 delivered 9,298MWh of energy back to the grid, enough to power 1,598 households.

We are delighted that our **Sale Gardens Care Community** in Victoria won the **2021 Prime Super Employer Excellence in Aged Care Award**, in recognition of its commitment to local employment, wellbeing, training and development.

In December, we introduced the inaugural **Opal HealthCare Social Impact Award**, won by **Geraldton Shore Care Community** for its outstanding contribution to the Mid West WA community.

We also proudly launched the **Opal HealthCare Academy**, underpinning our continual investment in the provision of training, development and sustainable careers for our people, as well as helping to build healthy, skilled communities.

We continue to work with our partners and suppliers to explore research and development opportunities, with a focus on health and environment.

Throughout the year, our Board and executive leadership progressed our social impact framework and in 2022 will set targets for areas where we can deliver the most meaningful outcomes.

The benefit of growing our social impact is that Opal HealthCare will continue to deliver high quality residential aged care services for generations, working hand in hand with community, government and across sectors to help improve the lives of everyone who calls Australia home.

What we measure



Caring for people

Helping people to live healthy lives as individuals, supported by their community. It encompasses the freedom and choice to define what health and wellbeing looks like for each individual, encouraging preventative health, creating pathways for healthy mental and social transition into care, nurturing the wellbeing of our team and increasing awareness about healthy ageing in broader society.



Purposeful places

Taking responsibility for our environmental footprint, maintaining environmentally sustainable buildings and creating places for older Australians that are accessible and available to be enjoyed by everyone, including intergenerational access, cultural appropriateness, safety and security.



Caring through Covid

Rapidly adapting our practices and policies to deliver care through a global pandemic, protecting the health and wellbeing of people, enabling families to maintain meaningful connections, accelerating innovation and the use of technology, specialist skills development, team wellbeing and contributing to the national response to the pandemic.



Community building

Creating socially connected communities where people experience belonging, participation, self-worth, acceptance, equity and social justice. Strengthening intergenerational connections, working with local organisations and suppliers, and building stronger communities through local supply chain, employment, skills development and partnerships that deliver social good.



Promoting understanding

Building a culture of respect for older Australians and helping them find and raise their own voice. Challenging stereotypes and evolving narratives by supporting older people to maintain a meaningful status in society.

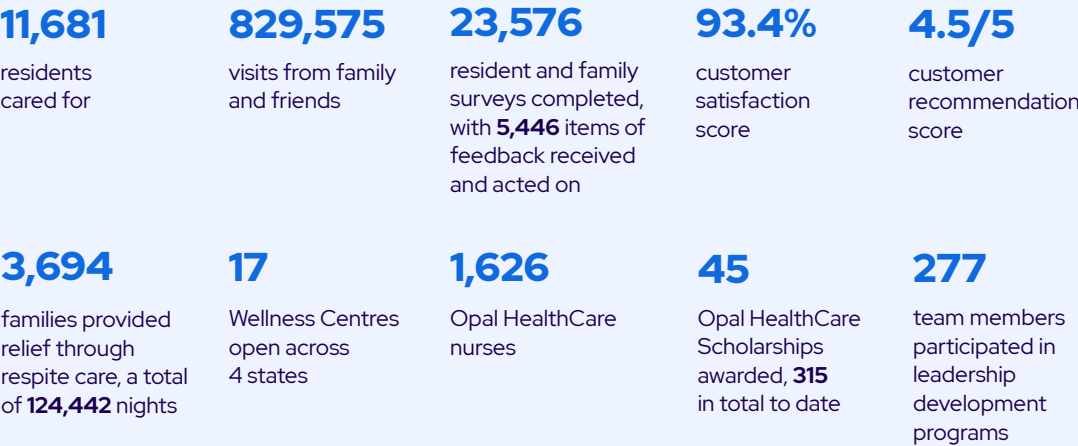


2021 Highlights

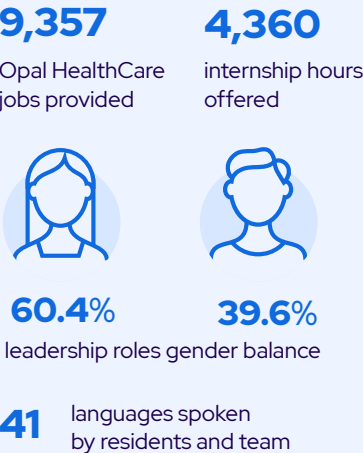
Caring for our residents, community and society.

Caring for people

Residents & team

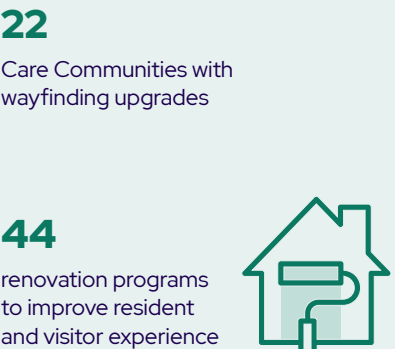


Inclusion & diversity

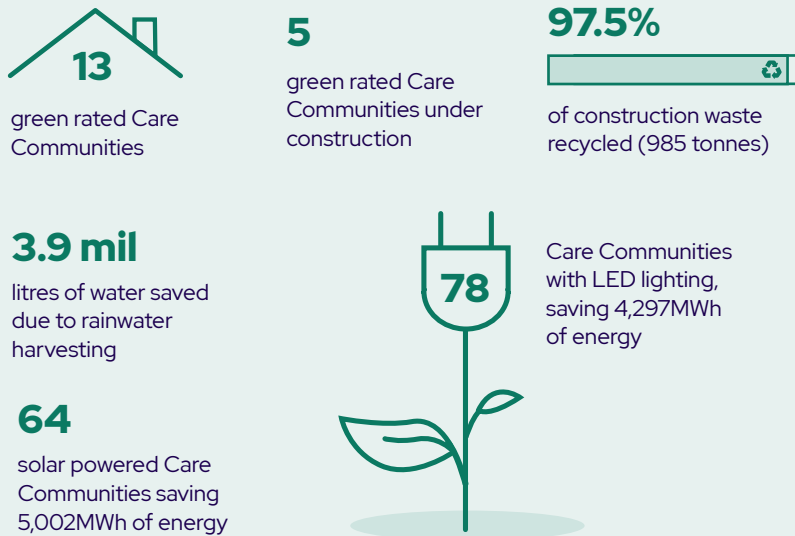


Purposeful places

Design for better living



Protecting our planet



Caring through Covid

Responding to the pandemic

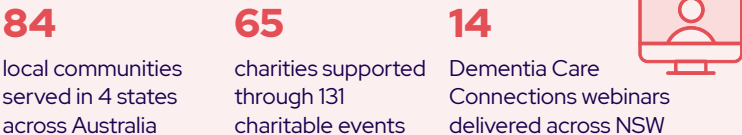


Community building

Local employment and skill building



Community connections



Promoting understanding

Advocacy





Championing end of life care

Providing quality end of life care is one of the most important elements of palliative care and can be a source of reassurance and comfort for loved ones. One of the ways we are improving the end of life experience for residents and their families, is reducing unnecessary hospitalisations.

Palliative care is the care that helps people live the rest of their terminal or life-limiting illness in the most comfortable and optimised way. Quality palliative care extends beyond managing physical symptoms to a holistic perspective of care. At Opal HealthCare, our approach is designed to consider all the needs of our residents – physical, psychological, social and spiritual.

In our experience, for residents who are nearing end of life, the most comfortable place to be is in their Care Community with familiar carers and loved ones by their side. Hospitals and emergency rooms are often not ideal for residents at the end stage of life because:

- Hospitals are unfamiliar places and are not always able to provide the specific care and wishes of a patient at end stage
- Being admitted unexpectedly can be a confusing and traumatic experience for residents and their families

- They are clinical environments without the personal comforts of home that give residents a sense of security

A dedicated approach to palliative care training

Palliative care training is part of our core clinical training at Opal HealthCare. Nurses wishing to further their skills can elect to become a Palliative Care Champion, with specific training and support from our experienced clinical team. Each Care Community aims to have two Palliative Care Champions who are able to build the team’s collective capability in recognising deterioration early. In doing so, we are better able to partner with residents and families to plan care options and support them through decision making.

Our clinical team also conducts a detailed death auditing process, which helps us determine whether a resident’s hospitalisation was appropriate so that we can learn from and minimise unnecessary hospitalisations in the future.

Palliative Care Champions improve end of life care

In 2021, we trained 205 Palliative Care Champions, all of whom are team members familiar to our residents and their families. Building the capability of our team to deliver dedicated palliative and end of life care means we can deliver a resident’s individual needs and wishes, rather than bringing in specialty partners who residents and families do not know. This can reduce stress, and improve the emotional wellbeing of our residents, families and team while a resident is palliating, and particularly at the end stage of life.

Palliative Care Champion training also offers valuable professional development opportunities for our team to build clinical, communication and interpersonal skills, judgment and leadership.

Impact:

- Decreased number of unnecessary hospitalisations for residents at end of life
- Improved experience for residents in palliative or end of life care and their families
- Improved emotional experience for team who are caring for residents to the end of their life
- Increased clinical capability of team and opportunity for professional development
- Reduced reliance on external specialty partners



Samreen,
Palliative
Care Champion

“For residents who are diagnosed with life-limiting illness, comfort care becomes a priority. In order to provide evidence-based, optimum care to residents who choose to spend the rest of their lives comfortably while maintaining quality of life, palliative care and end of life care is vitally important.”

- Samreen, Palliative Care Champion,
Epping Meadows Care Community



“I enjoy engaging with both resident and family and being able to support them in this most crucial and emotional time. Learning to improve my communication skills at this time has taught me a lot and being able to connect with residents at such an important time is a very fulfilling experience.”

- Gina, Palliative Care Champion,
Rutherford Park Care Community

“Palliative Care Champion training is developing my clinical skills so that I can better recognise signs and symptoms for a resident who has a life-limiting illness. It also enhances my inter-personal relationship with residents, families and team.”

- Janine, Palliative Care Champion,
Belmore Place Care Community



Acting on feedback to improve the resident experience

Ageing with dignity means having agency in things that affect us. That’s why at Opal HealthCare, we continually ask our residents and their families how we can improve our care and services and make changes that will be most meaningful to them.

What we measure

We have dedicated systems in place to monitor feedback and complaints, and we use the insights we learn to drive improvements across our organisation. Our Voice of the Customer (VoC) program measures three important indexes that help us understand how our residents and families are feeling about our care, support and services.

- 1. **The Joy Index** is an Opal HealthCare measurement tool we formulated to help gauge how well we are delivering on our purpose to *bring joy to those we care for*. The question asks, “All things considered, how happy are you with your life these days?”, and has been adapted from the OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Wellbeing.
- 2. **Customer Satisfaction** (CSAT) tracks how satisfied customers are with our organisation. It’s measured by the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with...” or

“Overall, how would you rate...”. While many organisations measure CSAT on an ad-hoc basis, our CSAT surveys are ‘always on’. This gives us constant feedback and greater accuracy to understand the full picture and make improvements.

- 3. **Customer Recommendation Score** (CRS) is Opal HealthCare’s version of the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a tool to measure customer loyalty. We calculate CRS by asking, “How likely are you to recommend this Care Community to family and friends?” The metric is especially meaningful because we know that most people will generally only recommend a service when they have been routinely impressed.

Using feedback to effect positive change

In 2021, one of our resident surveys at **Inverloch Coast Care Community** identified a gap in satisfaction scores between male and female residents. Male residents expressed that they were less satisfied with

the recreational activities on offer than our female residents. Our team conducted in-depth consultations with the residents to map out their preferences and interests.

We discovered that male residents valued art, games and building, and that the Care Community was lacking sufficient outlets to express these passions and interests. In response, a series of new projects and activities was introduced, including:

- Dedicated gardening and potting station
- Expanded vegetable garden with raised garden beds and greenhouses
- Increased art supplies for art group
- Pool table
- Electric replica race track of Phillip Island

Although Don was an artist for many years, he had been unable to find the passion or motivation to paint since the passing of his wife. With a bit of encouragement from our

team to try the new art classes, Don said: “I’m delighted and grateful for the opportunity to paint again and I remember the joy I feel from painting”.

In another example, our ‘always on’ resident surveys highlighted an issue with food temperature during tray service. To deliver meals at the correct temperature no matter where a resident was eating, we invested in heated trolleys to keep meals warm and tasty. This is also useful when Care Communities are managing outbreaks of infections such as influenza, when residents are not able to eat in the dining room.

Impact:

- Improved satisfaction and wellbeing of residents
- Improved resident and family experience in Care Communities
- Greater agency for residents and family members in life in our Care Communities
- Improved understanding of resident preferences for our team

23,576

resident and family surveys



4.3

Joy index score (out of 5)

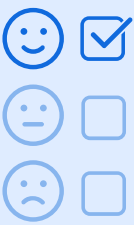


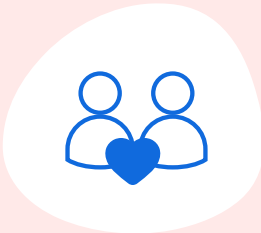
4.5

customer recommendation score (out of 5)

93.4%

customer satisfaction





Memories shared bring joy to future generations

Ageing is an extraordinary process, an important part of which is continual learning, experiencing, loving and growing. Creating memories as we age is an important part of maintaining identity, and sharing those memories can create lasting benefits for family and loved ones.

At **Chiswick Manor Care Community**, our team enjoy working on a truly special project called 'Made for Memories'. Over time, they collate albums for residents filled with photos, arts and crafts from everyday moments and special events in a resident's life in our Care Community. The album is given to the resident to enjoy, and gifted to loved ones when the resident passes away. They have become treasured keepsakes for families, providing comfort and warm memories that can be shared with future generations.

Special moments made for memories

When resident, Grace, turned 97, her meaningful mate and registered nurse, Angel, presented her with an album filled with photos of her birthday celebration and mementos of things she enjoys doing. Having worked as a model for Grace Brothers in her youth, Grace loves wearing make-up, so Angel always ensures her make-up is picture perfect for special occasions.

"The album is absolutely beautiful and when mum saw it, she had tears in her eyes. She said that 'this was made with love' and it certainly was. She kept saying that she couldn't believe how beautiful it was and how kind of someone to make it for her," said Tony, Grace's daughter.

"My heart was filled with joy seeing her face when opening the gift I made for her. I was so pleased that she loved it and continues to talk about it no matter how many times she goes through the album. I got teary when she said that it's something she will forever cherish and always look through while sitting on her recliner chair" said Angel.

After celebrating Helen and Colin's 64th wedding anniversary at **Chiswick Manor**, our team gifted the happy couple their 'Made for Memories' album filled with photos of their celebration. Each page was decorated and personalised by their meaningful mates. Colin and Helen were delighted by the surprise and often page through the album and reminisce about their life together.

Impact:

- Strengthens relationships between team and residents
- Promotes intergenerational relationships
- Builds respect and appreciation for the lives and experiences of older people
- Provides comfort to loved ones after a resident has passed
- Enables important stories and milestones to be shared with future generations



Restorative care improves lives

As we age, our bodies naturally change shape, ability and strength. Although some of these changes are inevitable, for many people, the right kind of physical therapy will help improve and prolong quality of life. Our in-home Wellness Centres provide that support.

Our Wellness Centres, located in 17 Care Communities across Australia, promote reablement and restorative care by empowering participants to improve their mobility and increase their physical independence.

Through our partnerships with HCA and Concentric Rehabilitation, we provide individualised and specialised care that supports long-term physical, mental and emotional health. Our partnering physiotherapists deliver group exercise programs and individual 'staying healthier for longer' programs in our fully equipped gyms. Programs are available to residents and members of the general public.

When Iain moved into **Kawana Waters Care Community** in Queensland two years ago, he was not able to walk. Since then, Iain has been attending physical therapy sessions in our Wellness Centre at least twice a week. He is now able to mobilise on his own, and has regained some independence.

"Iain had a goal of going home for Christmas so we focused on practicing stairs because that is something they have at their home."

– Hannah, HCA Physiotherapist, **Kawana Waters Wellness Centre**

Iain is now able to walk supported up the stairs and is regaining more control of his daily life with every session.

"I used to always fall over, but I'm probably more independent now. That's always been part of my character and always will be."

– Iain, Resident, **Kawana Waters Care Community**

In 2021, we opened eight new Wellness Centres across four states, with a total of 17 Wellness Centres operating across Australia. Seven new Wellness Centres are planned to open in 2022.

*Due to Covid restrictions, our Wellness Centre services were only able to operate during limited periods in 2021.



17 Wellness Centres operating in 2021



Wellness Centres opening in 2022





Supporting a healthcare system during times of crisis

To help reduce the immense strain on the hospital system in Western Sydney during the peak of the Covid Delta variant in the spring of 2021, Opal HealthCare partnered with the Western Sydney Health Department (WSHD) to offer transitional care in our Care Communities for elderly hospital patients.

The objective was to provide appropriate and personalised residential care for elderly patients who no longer needed hospital care but were not yet well enough to return home. In turn, making much-needed hospital beds available for people in the community who required urgent, acute or Covid-related care.

We formed an Opal HealthCare project team who identified 50 available places in our Sydney Care Communities that could be allocated to WSHD from September to December. This translated to 4,500 hospital beds made available for people in need as Delta peaked.

In a truly collaborative partnership with WSHD, our agile and flexible response helped reduce pressure on hospital staff and resources, enabling hospitals to function better during the crisis. And it meant elderly patients could receive dedicated care in a more comfortable and homely environment designed specifically to care for older people.

Where hospitals, by necessity, are clinical environments required to fulfil a number of roles, our Care Communities offer many benefits for older people who are convalescing or need long-term support. We are able to support residents to practice their daily routine as much as possible and participate in a wider range of social, recreational and health activities during their convalescence. Each resident's care is tailored to their particular clinical needs, as well as social and mental wellbeing.

At **Auburn Glen Care Community**, our team welcomed hospital patient, Ruth, with a cake and party to celebrate her birthday. After spending 60 days in respite care with us and experiencing the warmth of our Care Community, Ruth chose to become a permanent resident.

"I'm so happy with how the team look after residents here. The way they look after the resident I share my room with is remarkable. I see how they care for her

with dignity, I've seen what the team do for her and they never ever complain. It gives me hope. I know that if I were to deteriorate, I would be taken care of just like she is. The food here is also amazing. It's like living at home, but only with more benefits."

- Ruth, Resident,
Auburn Glen Care Community

Transitional care programs enable elderly people and their families to experience life in residential care, which often helps to dispel fear or anxiety about moving into long-term care in the future. Experiencing our tailored and holistic approach to care helps individuals and families normalise conversations about future care needs and feel more confident in decision making.



"Auburn Glen is friendly and not like an institution, and residents are not all stuck in one room fastened to the chair staring at a TV. The team couldn't be better. They are so loving. You could go all over the Earth and couldn't find better team, from the chef, to admin, to nurses. It's just like home, but better than home. Love the food, freedom of choice with team asking us for our preferences. Lots of tender loving care is involved. I've done tours with so many nursing homes, and they don't even come close to here."

- Leonie, niece of resident Ruth

66

The partnership between WSLHD and Opal HealthCare was a critical component of the Covid response during 2021. Not only did this free up much needed hospital bed capacity, it also reduced the risk of exposure of inpatients to the increasing number of Covid admissions coming into our hospitals. It was a time of much stress and panic for the Local Health District and the team at Opal HealthCare were extremely patient and supportive of us while we worked through the processes required to safely transfer patients to Opal's Care Communities. We had a very positive experience and, most importantly, the quality of care provided to our patients was exceptionally high. Families and patients were very happy with the care and service they were provided."

- Jacqueline Dominish , District Director,
Western Sydney Local Health Department

Impact:

- 4,500 hospital beds made available to urgent care patients in Western Sydney
- Reduced pressure on hospital resources for five hospitals in NSW
- Improved experience for elderly patients requiring care
- Increased understanding of the aged care environment in the local community
- Improved efficiencies in the Western Sydney health system benefitting the local community



4,500
hospital beds
made available
for people in need

5

hospitals
supported



Pop-up vaccination clinics

The Covid pandemic intensified across Australia in 2021 as the deadly Delta variant swept through NSW and Victoria, followed by the new Omicron strain. The most important thing each of us at Opal HealthCare could do to help protect all of those we care for, was to have the Covid vaccination and make it available to as many others as possible.

To do so, we put in place a fast, flexible and effective vaccination program running pop-up clinics in every Care Community, in partnership with a primary healthcare provider and supported by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

On-site clinics enabled our team to access the vaccine in time to meet the requirements imposed by federal and state governments for aged care workers to be vaccinated. They were also open to our residents to make it as simple as possible for them to access the vaccine. And we offered any excess doses to families and members of the local community, many of whom were struggling to get access to the vaccine elsewhere due to high demand and low supply in many regions.

In 2021, we successfully administered 29,610 vaccinations across our Care Communities in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

A rigorous roll out of the vaccine

Each clinic was carried out in accordance with the Commonwealth Department of Health guidelines and Opal HealthCare’s rigorous processes and procedures. The vaccination clinic roll out was a significant undertaking, managed in-house and running between August and December.

Prior to vaccination:

- Opal HealthCare ran a campaign for team members to inform and support their decision to be vaccinated
- Our team communicated with residents and families to advise of clinics and obtain written consent for each person being vaccinated. Each person had a consultation and a medical history review with an onsite doctor and immunisation nurses.
- Our team took vital observations for every resident being vaccinated over 24 hours

Post-vaccination our team:

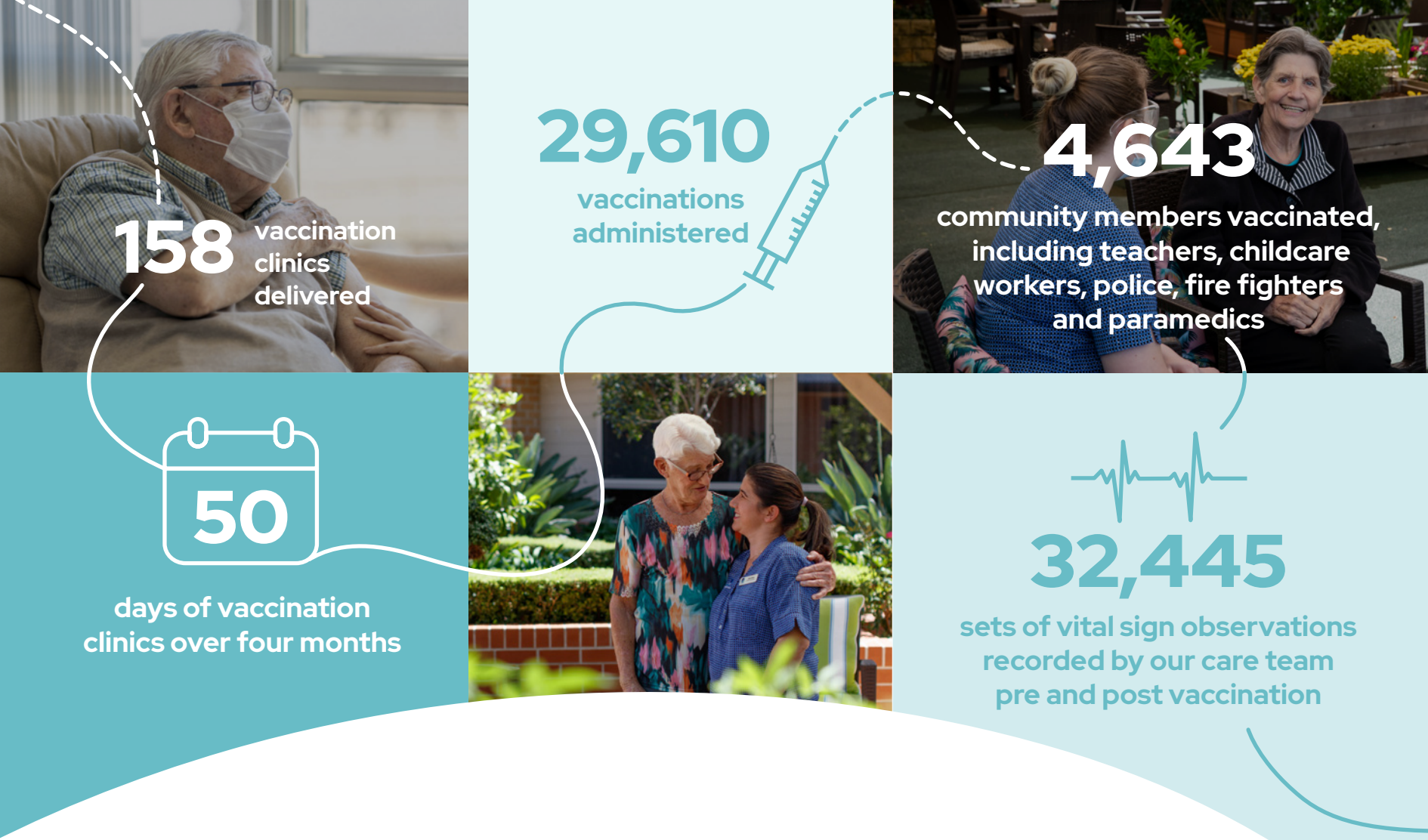
- Took four further sets of vital observations per person over 48 hours to record and manage any effects of the vaccine
- Observations recorded blood pressure, blood tests, temperature and other vital information to actively monitor clinical health and grow our knowledge of the virus

Clinics often operated for up to 10 hours a day, vaccinating up to 150 residents, team and community members per clinic over six months.

Extending vaccinations to local community members

Offering vaccination at our Care Communities increased accessibility to the vaccine for residents, team and people in the wider community who may not otherwise been able to access it as quickly or easily.

The Central West NSW community of Bathurst was particularly grateful for our pop-up clinic at **Bathurst Riverview Care Community**.



Our team offered excess doses of the vaccine to local teachers, which enabled them to have the vaccine in time to return to work in the classroom and alleviate the pressures of remote learning on local families.

"We are so touched and appreciative of you thinking of us for the vaccine, it's so lovely. We have a number of staff who were very worried about being vaccinated in time for the November 8 deadline, and this just took the pressure off so many."

– Darren Denmead, Principal,
Bathurst West Public School

Meaningful partnership and progression

We continue to work with our primary healthcare partner to deliver clinics as and when needed. It is a Covid vaccination administration services provider to the Commonwealth and continues to work collaboratively with us. Booster clinics commenced in December across 10 Care Communities and will continue in 2022. As the booster dose strengthens and lengthens the benefits of the vaccine, our vaccination clinics are vital to our continuing efforts to protect our residents, families, team and community from Covid.

Impact:

- Improved access to Covid vaccine for people in the communities we serve
- Greater protection for vulnerable people against Covid
- Greater awareness of the benefits of vaccination in the communities we serve
- Reducing the severity of infection and transmission if Covid is contracted post-vaccine
- Supports local, state and federal health authorities with learnings, insights and knowledge sharing to inform Covid response



Sustainable buildings for a better future

Improving the environment is important to our residents and team, so to us, caring for people also means trying hard to reduce our environmental footprint and protect our planet for future generations. One of the high impact ways we can do that is through the design and construction of new Care Communities.

Mindful construction

We aim to build and renovate Care Communities using smart building design to incorporate environmentally friendly building materials, renewable energy, recycling, water saving initiatives and new technologies.

Right from concept stage, we plan our builds to consider the kinds of materials and tools we use and whether they are recyclable or reusable. This year we built and/or redeveloped five new Care Communities, four in NSW and one in WA, and have 12 more in development.

Our new Care Communities include:

- Energy efficient LED lighting fittings throughout the building
- Design for natural lighting wherever possible

- Appropriate levels of insulation in the walls and roof/ceiling, with low-e glazing to help control summer heat gains and winter heat losses
- Energy smart appliances such as washers, dryers, air-conditioners, dishwashers and refrigerators
- Minimum 4-star dual flush toilets and taps
- Conduits installed for possible future electric vehicles
- Rainwater re-use for irrigation and internal toilet flushing
- Solar power panels

Currently, 64 Care Communities feature solar panels that help us significantly reduce carbon emissions and our reliance on fossil fuels.

Combined with increased LED lighting fittings, this lowers our energy usage by 9,298 MWh.

We also work with our construction partners to recycle our construction waste. In 2021, 97.5% of our total construction waste (985 tonnes) was recycled.

Impact:

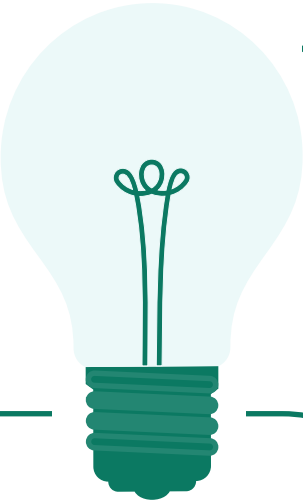
- Reduced waste to landfill
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved water conservation
- Improved resident experience
- Ability to accommodate new technology e.g. electric vehicles



64 + 98%
solar powered Care Communities of Care Communities feature LED lighting

= 9,298MWh
reduction from power grid

that's enough to power
1,598
local households



or, equivalent to making
500.5 million
cups of tea



97.5%
of our total construction waste was recycled (985 tonnes)



3.9
million litres of water saved due to rainwater harvesting



13
green-rated Care Communities



30%
reduced environmental footprint due to solar power



Going green for good

Our residents and team are passionate about the environment and believe that making any contribution, big or small, has a meaningful impact in our communities and the wider environment. Our Care Communities are dedicated to minimising our contribution to landfill and continually look for opportunities to recycle, repurpose and reuse resources.

Inspired by David Attenborough’s “A life on our Planet” documentary series that looks at humanity’s impact on nature, residents at **Springwood Greens Care Community** wanted to do something positive in response to the detrimental impacts of consumerism and loss of native habitats demonstrated in the program. They began discussions on how they could improve their environmental impact and help restore nature’s beauty.

Residents brainstormed potential environmental initiatives for the Care Community and discovered that only some paper products were routinely being recycled. Newspapers were not

being recycled, packaging was not always being sorted correctly and glass items were discarded in the general garbage.

They saw this as an opportunity to implement a rigorous recycling program to help redirect waste away from landfill. Our residents and team worked together to put in a new recycling system. Recyclable materials are now sorted into a number of hired skips and a number of new, smaller recycling bins are now in place inside the building. Now, instead of unnecessarily contributing to landfill, a significant amount of plastics, tin, glass and clothing are being diverted to recycling and re-use, and food scraps from the kitchen go into composting bins for use in gardening.

Impact:

On residents

- Increased sense of agency in daily life
- Provides meaning and a sense of connectedness for our residents
- Environmental achievements are recognised and valued

On the community

- Supports local community environmental goals and behaviours
- Increased awareness on how individual and community actions impact the environment
- Builds a shared sense of purpose and pride in community

On the environment

- Decreased amount of waste going to landfill and incinerators
- Helps conserve natural resources such as water, timber and food
- Improves energy efficiency
- Helps protect the environment



Our gardens play a major role in reducing waste. By growing more of our own food, we are able to rely less on outsourced food that often comes in unrecyclable packaging. At **Winston Hillside Care Community**, residents plant and harvest fresh fruit and vegetables, which go straight into meals freshly cooked by our Chef. Our team separates plant-based food scraps for composting or our chickens.



Rather than buying greeting cards for occasions every year, residents at **Canterbury Place Care Community** save their hand-made artworks and rework them into various holiday and greeting cards to be sent to loved ones. In 2021, their artwork featured on Opal HealthCare’s Christmas cards.



Our residents at **Meadowbank Grove Care Community** participate in an upcycling project that gives new life and purpose to old furniture with simple repairs and a good coat of paint.



Tingira Hills Care Community residents and team raise funds for Cardiff Survivors R Us by selling unused or unclaimed clothing and collect resources in the Care Community that can be repurposed for art or spare parts.





Wayfinding solutions for better living

Wayfinding refers to the practice of using spatial information to help people navigate a physical space. This is particularly important in aged care settings. Making it easy for residents to find their way around helps them to settle in more easily and feel secure in their surroundings, contributing to a better quality of life.

At Opal HealthCare we incorporate accessible design and functionality into the design and build of new Care Communities, and a program of work updating older Care Communities is underway to enhance the resident experience.

Wayfinding problems can cause anxiety, distress, and decreased interaction among people living with dementia. Visual cues are an effective intervention to help ageing people find their way more easily.

Importance of accessibility for safety and inclusion

As we age, we become more likely to develop conditions that may impact our independence and the way we participate in society. For Opal HealthCare, creating accessible places means more than just complying with minimum building standards or legal requirements. It means continually challenging ourselves to optimise our physical environments to meet the individual needs of residents and improve quality of life.

Disabling factors that can make navigating through spaces challenging for people include:

- Diminishing sight (colour and clarity)
- Forgetfulness or confusion
- Physical impairment
- Cognitive decline

The impact of the physical environment on quality of life

Improving accessibility enables higher quality care delivery and a better experience living in care. It enables residents to be more independent and autonomous, feel safer in their surroundings and more confident in the activities of daily life. All of these factors contribute to living with dignity and respect.

We incorporate numerous factors into wayfinding design, including the use of colour, furniture design and placement, lighting, and the way signage and lettering

is presented. All are intended to create a more comfortable living experience and a better quality of life in care.

We are progressively updating internal signage across our Care Communities to optimise the resident experience.

Impact:

- A safe environment for residents, families and team, particularly those with vision and cognitive impairments
- Improves belonging and self-confidence
- Greater social inclusion
- Increases autonomy and independence
- Decreased reports of intrusions into bedrooms by other residents
- Greater satisfaction for residents and families



22

Care Communities have wayfinding upgrades completed or underway



Colour

Colours that create contrast between the floor, walls, ceiling, furniture and doorways are chosen to help residents with vision impairment differentiate space. Residents with cognitive impairment are more able to recognise and identify different areas and navigate their way around.



Furniture

We recognise that one size doesn't fit all, so we work with physiotherapists to choose furniture that accommodates diverse physical requirements and incorporates contrasting colours between the seat base and surroundings. When a resident can easily identify a chair in a room full of different visual elements, it helps them to more confidently and autonomously navigate to the chair and use it.



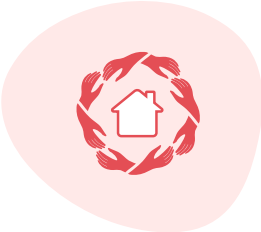
Lighting

Lighting is installed at a distance and strength that minimises glare and darker spots in a space, to create the best visual conditions for residents with vision impairments. In shared and bedroom spaces, warm tone lighting is used to create a relaxing mood and can soften the appearance of skin blemishes, so that residents feel comfortable and at ease. In bathrooms and clinical spaces, white lighting is used to maximise visual clarity which helps our team identify health conditions and provide appropriate care in privacy.



Signage and lettering

Fonts and symbols are chosen for accessibility. Simple fonts with contrasting background and symbols are effective in helping residents with cognitive and vision impairment read more clearly, identity, remember and differentiate spaces.



Teens inspired by work experience of a lifetime

Attracting young people to a career in residential aged care is vital to ensure the needs of our ageing population and demand for future workforce can be met. One of the ways we are addressing this challenge is through student work experience programs in our Care Communities.

Work experience is a practical, hands-on way to introduce young people to career pathways in aged care. It helps us to grow talent from within, build strong connections between education providers and our sector and challenge common misconceptions about aged care.

In 2021, Opal HealthCare provided work experience opportunities for over 50 academic institutions ranging from high school students in year 8 to university students in their final year.

With all the options life has to offer, high school can be a confusing time for students who are thinking about a career after graduating. Participating in our work experience program helps students build self-confidence and make informed career decisions as they enter the workforce. Soren, a year 10 student at Aspley State High School in Brisbane, chose to complete his work experience at **Carseldine Greens Care Community** where he shadowed

our hospitality team. Soren provided support by setting and tidying the dining room, assisting residents with their meals and serving morning tea. He also worked with our lifestyle team, assisting with daily activities and forming friendships with our residents. Soren found his time in our Care Community so fulfilling that on completing his program he continued to visit Carseldine Greens, bringing his younger sister along so she too could make friends with our residents.

University and TAFE students benefit from doing work experience in our Care Communities as it enables a practical application of their academic knowledge and builds their professional networks. Practical experience prepares nursing students to learn to identify risks, offer emotional support and deal with death in ways that textbooks cannot. **Wallarrah Point Care Community** accepts nursing students from Charles Sturt University every

semester. During their 2-4 week placement, student nurses practice and develop core nursing skills such as hygiene care, mobility, assisting with eating, nutritional assessments and use of medical equipment, under the guidance and supervision of our team.

In turn, our residents benefit from building intergenerational relationships and being connected with the local community. For Opal HealthCare, students bring their own diverse and unique perspectives and experiences to our residents and team, which helps us to be a more inclusive organisation and provide a higher standard of service.



Impact:

For students and the wider community

- Helps to challenge and change common misconceptions of aged care
- Helps to build confidence and make informed career decisions
- Enables practical application of educational studies
- Learning sector-relevant and transferrable skills
- Early exposure to diverse and fulfilling work environments
- Opportunity to build networks
- Improves employability
- Supports local communities with pathways to employment

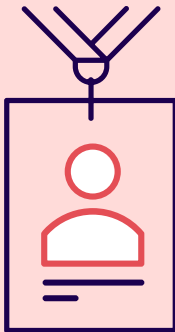
For our residents

- Enables intergenerational friendships
- Strengthens community connections
- Creates a more inclusive living environment

“

Mum made such an impression on Soren that he continues to visit her after his work experience ended. Being almost 100, mum is a little hard of hearing and is impressed by his eagerness to connect and communicate better with her by typing out questions and increasing font sizes on his mobile phone.

- John, son of Daphne



“

As a teenager, going into an aged care residence can be scary at first because it makes you think eventually I'll be in that position, but with every cell of my body, I got to understand how full these residents' lives have been. I learned that it's your responsibility to make life worth something. Some experiences in life you cannot replicate - I enjoyed each day and would recommend this work experience to anyone.

- Soren, student, Apsley State High School





The gift of giving

As we age, the way we engage in society may change, but for most people our desire to make a meaningful contribution remains strong. Why? Because living with purpose gives meaning to our lives.

A multitude of physical and mental benefits come from the act of giving which ultimately improves the livelihood of individuals, society and the environment.

At the most basic level, the act of giving makes us feel good. Participating in giving enhances happiness, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing by raising the brain's level of dopamine and oxytocin. As a result, giving can help reduce blood pressure, combat loneliness, minimise stress and live longer. It also promotes cooperation and social connection.

Our Care Communities support a range of charities chosen by residents and team. There are myriad ways residents participate in community giving including; planting trees, baking homemade goods, hosting events to raise awareness about different causes, and donating clothing and other goods. Our team supports residents with these initiatives by helping out with materials, logistics, assistance and lots of encouragement.

Since 2014, residents at **Quakers Hillside Care Community** have turned knitting hobbies into a passion project that supports local hospitals, fire stations and police services. Each year, residents knit and donate over 100 knitted items including; scarves, beanies, booties and teddy bears. They also hold morning tea events for local emergency services to thank them for their hard work.

Our residents at **Melville Parkside Care Community** are also involved in knitting for charity. Their most recent knitting project supports the Miracle Babies Foundation by downloading patterns from their website to produce a variety of knitted goods.

Older Australians contribute to more than half of donations to charity in Australia, and it is vital to recognise the significant role of our elders as an integral, active and valuable part of society.

Impact:

The act of giving enriches people physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Ultimately, giving is just as important to the donor as it is to the recipient.

For the community

- Provides valuable social support through charities and community organisations
- Contributes to healthier and more connected communities

For our residents

- Improved happiness
- Reduced feelings of stress, loneliness and depression
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased socialisation and participation in wider society



Thank a Cop Day

Continuing to contribute to the wider community, regardless of age, is vital to wellbeing. And there are few places with community connections stronger than in regional Australia.

Our residents at **Dubbo Homestead Care Community**, in Central West NSW, are very proud of the police force. Each year they recognise 'Thank a Cop Day' to show their appreciation of the efforts and service of their local police. This year they went to extra special effort, wanting to acknowledge the effort of the police in keeping Dubbo safe during a significant Covid outbreak in the region.

Residents Margaret and Mary spent two days cooking up an array of sweet treats and making dozens of fresh sandwiches. They worked together with our team to prepare individual 'Covid-safe' platters, one for every police officer to enjoy. Assistant Sergeant Dan Monley did the honours on the day, visiting Margaret and Mary to receive their thanks and take delivery of the delicious fare.



Planting with purpose at Quakers Hillside

Residents at **Quakers Hillside Care Community** have been raising funds for Drought and Rural Support since 2018 by growing and selling succulents, herbs and spices. It's a cause close to their hearts as many residents' families have been affected by drought over the years.

As much time is spent preparing the individually designed pots for growing as it is to raising and nourishing the plants. Residents and team work hard together to paint each pot before seeding the plants and tending to their growth until they are ready to sell.

Each year the Quakers Hillside plant market is a sell out, giving residents a great sense of satisfaction and the opportunity to set themselves higher targets each year.



Community service up in lights

At Opal HealthCare our strongest currency is trust. It’s what our relationships, our care and our reputation are built on. In 2021 we established the Opal HealthCare Social Impact Award to recognise positive impact created by our team that enriches the wellbeing of the wider community.

The inaugural winner of the Opal HealthCare Social Impact Award is **Geraldton Shore Care Community** in Western Australia.

An integral part of the local community for over 30 years, Geraldton Shore has an excellent reputation founded on deep, long-standing relationships in the region. It is known as a quality, reliable community provider, partner, friend and neighbour.

Supporting others through a cyclone

In April, Severe Tropical Cyclone Seroja devastated areas of Indonesia and East Timor before making landfall in Australia, just north of Geraldton. When an evacuation order was issued, the only option for our Care Community was to shelter in place. Our local team worked around the clock to protect our residents and one another

as the cyclone tore past, providing comfort and safe shelter for our residents, as well as team members and their families and pets whose own homes were at risk of destruction.

“We were extremely appreciative and grateful for the Geraldton Shore team. Their help meant we could continue to serve our community when they needed us most.”

- Jo, owner, Terry White Chemist, Geraldton

Working together to support Indigenous employment

Since 2019, Geraldton Shore has partnered with the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) to support regional economic development and prosperity. This year they joined the MCCI Working Together program which aims to connect local Indigenous people with local jobs. With 30% of Geraldton Shore residents identifying as Indigenous, our team has a goal to increase Indigenous participation in our Care Community for the benefit of all.

As a program partner, Geraldton Shore Care Community offers sustainable and diverse career pathways from entry level to leadership roles. And with a number of applicants in December, we are on track to deliver successful outcomes in 2022.

Bringing light to the community

After another year impacted by Covid, residents and team worked together to create a unique community light show to bring cheer to the locals. Featuring two handmade ‘leaning trees’ iconic to the area, and three Christmas soldier nutcrackers, the Care Community was a joy to behold. Being proudly included in the Geraldton Mid-West Christmas Lights Route meant thousands of people were able to enjoy the light show, including a local choir so enthralled they chose to sing carols under the nutcrackers. One regular admirer was a local GP, who said: *“I changed my route to work so I could drive past the lights every morning and night. Your Christmas soldiers make me smile every time.”*



Career pathways for skilled refugees

Australia is one of the most multicultural nations in the world. At Opal HealthCare, we recognise that people who come from different walks of life bring their own unique experiences that enrich our collective culture. We aim to support refugees and asylum seekers to find stability and safety in Australia.

For three years we have partnered with Career Seekers, an organisation which supports Australia’s humanitarian entrants who are studying at university or looking to restart their professional career here. And in 2021 we formed partnerships with the Asylum Seekers Centre in NSW, the Romero Centre in QLD and the Coalition for Asylum Seekers Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) in WA.

Our partner organisations provide support for refugees and asylum seekers by helping them find accommodation, healthcare, education, food and services. We support this important work by offering employment opportunities across diverse roles in residential aged care. To date we have welcomed 13 team members across NSW, QLD and WA and will continue to build these important partnerships to support the health, wellbeing and prosperity of refugees in Australia.





Helping hands make happy hearts

Residents benefit from engaging in meaningful work in our Care Communities. That's because being useful to others makes us feel good. Being valued for our skills and contribution is motivating. Being able to contribute to our home and family gives meaning to our lives.

Put simply - life is better when we're busy doing things that give us purpose, no matter what our age or circumstance.

At Opal HealthCare we believe ageing is living. We strive to create thriving 'Care Communities' where residents can embrace their identity, continue to practice their skills, share life experience and wisdom, and be valued by others. Our Helping Hands program is designed to provide diverse opportunities for residents to participate in meaningful work of their choice in their Care Community.

The benefits of meaningful activity later in life are well documented. Studies show that being occupied doing things that are enjoyable and fulfilling contributes to physical and mental health. Helping Hands enables residents to choose jobs they're interested in, exercise their skills and learn new ones, share their knowledge, work collaboratively or in individual roles, and contribute to the lives of others in their Care Community.

At **Springwood Terrace Care Community** residents perform music with our team at events and on special occasions for residents, families and the community.

"Music is my life. Being able to still play and entertain the residents at Springwood Terrace makes me feel good," says June, who lives at Springwood Terrace.

Fellow resident, Winston, agrees. *"I love playing music and singing, because it's what I do, and have done for 35 years of my life,"* says Winston.

Quakers Hillside Care Community has a resident-led social committee that works together to plan, coordinate and make decorations for events, and plan excursions throughout the year.

At **Warrnambool Place Care Community** residents who enjoy gardening manage the herb and veggie gardens, while others enjoy helping our Chef and kitchen team take their home grown produce from paddock to plate.

Residents at **Raymond Terrace Gardens Care Community** have roles caring for birds, feeding chickens and collecting eggs.

Our resident-led OGA store at **Alfred Cove Care Community** stocks an assortment of food, drinks and occasion cards that are requested by residents. Items made in the craft group such as flower arrangements, household items, handmade soaps and art pieces are also available at the store.

"I've enjoy working in the shop because there are so many people in the home I know now that I didn't know before. It's something nice to do with my day and everyone likes coming in for their chocolates," says Janet, who lives at Alfred Cove.

"It's wonderful. I get to look out for the people that come in and help them choose the best stuff," says Frank.

Impact:

Our team, residents and families observe consistent positive outcomes in residents who participate in Helping Hands.

- Improves a range of health factors, e.g. mobility, cardio and muscular fitness, bone and functional health, cognition, general wellbeing
- Improves confidence, satisfaction and mood
- Promotes belonging
- Can reduce risk of depression, isolation and cognitive decline
- Improves interpersonal relationships and expands social networks
- Promotes and maintains ability in self-care
- Promotes inclusion
- Enables continual learning and cognitive stimulation
- Challenges attitudes around ageism



There's something for everyone in our Care Communities.



Animals and outdoors

- Maintaining aviaries
- Feeding chickens and collecting eggs
- Caring for fish
- Cockatoo attendant
- Growing fruit, vegetables and flowers
- Maintaining gardens and courtyards
- Handyman and painting tasks



Business administration

- Administration assistance
- Newspaper and mail delivery
- Running the general store
- Activities assistance
- Orientation for new residents
- Reception support
- Librarian



Hobbies and entertainment

- Performing live music
- Running art classes
- Running knitting classes
- Teaching floral arrangement
- Event decoration
- Leading scripture
- Leading exercise classes
- Games coordinator (e.g. bingo, trivia)
- Teaching language classes



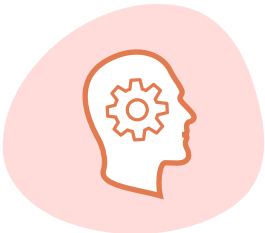
Hospitality

- Tea trolley rounds
- Cooking with chef
- Dining room set up
- Brewing coffee
- Folding napkins and tablecloths
- Folding laundry



Resident-led committees

- Social Committee
- Recruitment Committee
- Men's Club
- Gardening Committee
- Art Club



Dementia Care Connections – Supporting families to navigate dementia



It is estimated that 472,000 Australians are living with dementia and this number is expected to rise over time. We believe early detection and community education is key to improving quality of life for people living with dementia.

We recognise that finding the right information to better understand and support loved ones with dementia can be challenging. To help, we developed our Dementia Care Connections program, which is open to all and offers social support to the community through education sessions and forums.

In October 2021, we piloted a webinar information series about dementia, attended by families and friends of our Care Communities. Webinars were delivered across 14 Care Communities in Sydney and regional NSW, sharing expert knowledge with families on dementia care, identifying signs of dementia, the impact of dementia on daily experiences, and how to support someone who is living with the condition. Participants were surveyed after the event and 100% of respondents reported positive feedback about the sessions.

Face-to-face sessions were delivered in Perth in 2021. In 2022 this will be extended to New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, offering families and carers the opportunity to connect with others who may be going through similar challenges, while learning from subject matter experts and sharing their own unique experiences.

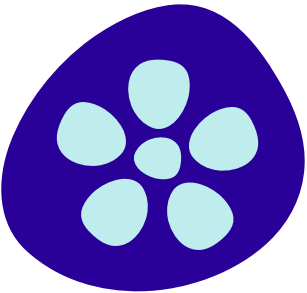
The more we can normalise conversations about dementia while providing the right kind of guidance and support, the better equipped people in our society will be to support those who are living with dementia.

Feedback from participants showed how valuable Dementia Care Connections is to families:

“Last night’s presentation was very well done. It was informative and practical. We’re very grateful that dad is in such a caring environment at Meadowbank Grove.”

“Loved the presentation. Looking forward to seeing the presentation a few more times from the recording. So much to remember. Brilliant presentation.”

“I wish I had learnt a lot of that stuff a year ago. It will be so helpful when visiting my dad now.”



Our Dementia Care Connections program offers social support to the community.

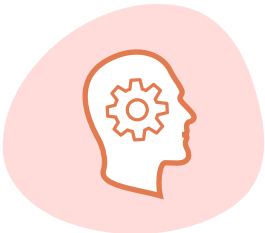


In 2021, an estimated **472,000** Australians were living with dementia

Over **66%** of aged care residents in Australia have moderate to severe cognitive decline



There are **28,300** people in Australia with younger onset dementia



Caring for carers through respite services

It takes a special kind of person to be a carer. We understand the level of commitment, dedication and selflessness that caring for someone full time requires. Often, carers can forget to focus on their own care needs, or feel guilty about taking a break from their responsibilities. But taking regular breaks is vital to one’s physical and mental health.

We offer respite care services to support people in the community who need a break. Respite care is short-term care provided by our dedicated aged care team to give carers time to rest and restore, with the confidence of knowing their loved one is in safe and capable hands.

Our respite care includes day, short-term, long-term and emergency respite, meaning support is available to fit in with carers’ needs.

For many families, the relief of respite care not only enhances their own wellbeing, but gives them the comfort of knowing that if their loved one requires full time care we can provide a safe and suitable option.

*“I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to **Murdoch Gardens Care Community**. My mother, Glenice, comes in for respite every 3 months, which gives me the chance to take a break from my caring responsibilities. Being a full time carer can be very taxing emotionally and physically.*

But knowing that mum always looks forward to coming to Murdoch Gardens because she is well taken care of by the respite team, gives me the confidence to leave her in their care so I can rest.

– Steven, son of respite resident, Glenice

Benefits of respite care:

For carers and families

- Gives time back to tend to personal needs and appointments
- Relieves pressure on resources and time
- Gives confidence and reassurance that a loved one can be well-cared for during breaks, emergencies or unexpected events

For residents

- Enables residents to receive individual, quality care in a homely environment
- Offers socialisation and participation in new activities

- Opportunity to experience life in residential aged care before committing full time
- Access to reablement services
- Supports rehabilitation and recuperation from illness in an appropriate setting

For society

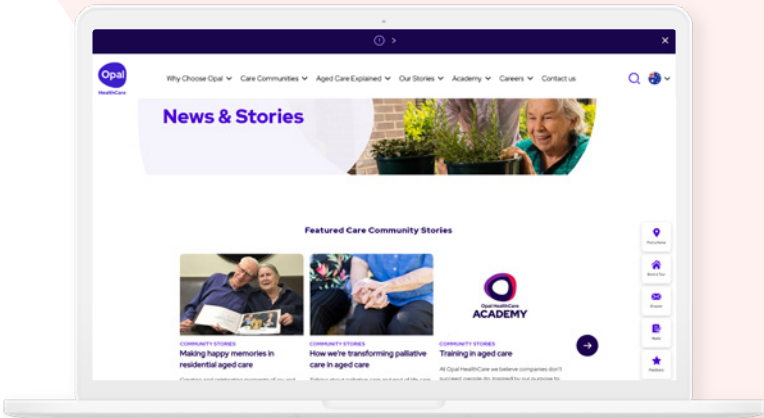
- Supports the wellbeing of carers in the community
- Reduces anxiety for residents who may feel guilty about the burden of care on loved ones
- Eases pressure on other primary and allied health services
- Supports healthy and well communities

A website for all

The internet is a powerful tool that helps remove barriers to communication with others. And in the global and digital age, it’s important that websites can be easily read, are user-friendly and accessible.

For Opal HealthCare our site is more than an information portal. It’s an inclusive place designed to help people make the right decisions for them when they need it.

Australia is home to a vibrant melting pot of cultures, ethnicities and languages that we at Opal HealthCare celebrate and embrace. We are continuously improving our website to make it as accessible and inclusive as we can. It complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and in 2021 we converted nine key information pages from English to an additional four languages – Chinese, Arabic, Greek and Spanish. Our multilingual website helps us better connect with more people who are looking into aged care. It is also optimised for people living with vision, hearing or cognitive disabilities.



Our Opal HealthCare website:



Is compatible with various text-to-speech programs



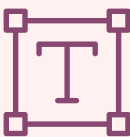
Includes text to describe images



Uses contrasting text colour and background colours



Simplifies navigation to enable the customer to make choices and find the best options for them with our improved search tool



Features accessible font and resizable text



Features content written in simple terms

“

The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect.

– Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director and inventor of the World Wide Web



Words and numbers alone cannot
do justice to what our team has
experienced and achieved in 2021. It
is a privilege to walk alongside them.

Peter Shergold AC
Chair, Opal HealthCare

We're here to help older Australians and their families every step of the way.

Call 1300 362 481 or visit opalhealthcare.com.au

Ageing is living