

# Opal Moments

Welcome to  
Opal Aged Care

**Opal Moments is our quarterly magazine that keeps you up to date on what's happening.**



specialist aged care

**In this issue:**

Investing in communities across the country	03
Opal Thrive across our business	07
Rolling out national menus in our Homes	11
Opal's Open Days – connecting with our communities	13
Meet the team: Sheridan Woodcroft	19



Photo: Herman Del Rio, Resident

Thank you to our Residents, families and staff for allowing us to use their photos in our publications.

## Highlights



Investing in communities across the country.

03



Rolling out national menus in our Homes.

11



Opal's Open Days – connecting with our communities.

13

# Contents

## Features

- 03 Investing in communities across the country
- 07 Opal Thrive across our business
- 11 Rolling out national menus in our Homes
- 13 Opal's Open Days – connecting with our communities
- 19 Meet the team: Sheridan Woodcroft

## Regulars

- 01 Welcome from Gary
- 23 From our Homes
- 31 Hear from our families
- 32 Our Homes around the country





Professor Shergold’s appointment comes at an important time for the business as we continue to grow to meet the demand for high quality residential aged care.

# Welcome to the second edition of Opal Moments

I am very pleased to announce that Professor Peter Shergold AC has been appointed Chairman of the Opal Aged Care Board.

Professor Shergold’s distinguished career spans the academic, business and public service sectors across more than four decades. He is currently Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Western Sydney and serves on a range of private sector, government and not-for-profit boards including AMP Limited, Veda Group, and Australian law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

In March this year, Professor Shergold was appointed Chair of the Commonwealth Government’s Aged Care Sector Committee, tasked with building the foundation for a constructive and lasting partnership between the Australian Government and the aged care sector. We will be profiling Professor Shergold in the next edition of Opal Moments.

Professor Shergold’s appointment comes at an important time for the business as we continue to grow to meet the demand for high quality residential aged care. This growth will be delivered through the building of new Homes, refurbishments and through acquisitions such as the recent purchase of Stockland’s Aged Care business.

On page three we profile some of our most significant projects including the turning of the first sod by the Mayor of Maitland in November for our new 144 bed Home, Opal Rutherford, which is scheduled to be opened in 2016.

On page seven we update you on the progress of Opal Thrive, our employee wellbeing program.

**Opal Thrive – we are committed to the wellbeing of our staff. We know that by looking after them, this will enhance the care we can deliver to our Residents.**

We are committed to the wellbeing of our staff. We know that by looking after them, this will enhance the care we can deliver to our Residents. In this feature, we meet one of the Champions in our Homes and see the great work being done to help our staff improve their wellbeing.

Finally, I’d like to wish everyone a safe and happy festive season. This is an important time of year for our Homes where we host Christmas Festivities, and give our Residents and their families the opportunity to spend this special time together.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Opal Moments.

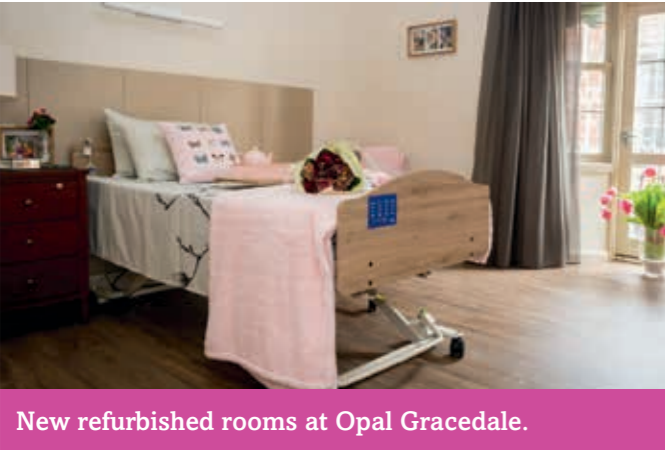
Best wishes,

Gary

Gary Barnier  
Managing Director



Gary Barnier, Managing Director with Mayor Peter Blackmore turn the first sod for Opal Rutherford.



As a priority for building a stronger, higher quality Australian residential aged care sector, we are focused on building new homes in our communities and adding beds to our current portfolio.

# Investing in communities across the country

In our last edition of Opal Moments, we shared the exciting news that we had purchased Stockland’s aged care business, Aevum. This comprises two Homes in New South Wales - Opal Cardinal Freeman and Opal Lourdes - and two Homes in Victoria - Opal Gillin Park and Opal Salford Park - bringing our total number of Homes across the country to 60. This acquisition further cements our commitment to meeting the needs of Australia’s ageing population.

At Opal Aged Care we support the government’s strategy for Australians to live in their homes

**Our growth strategy is driven by the opportunity to build better quality residential aged care in the communities we serve.**

for as long as possible - as outlined in the Living Longer, Living Better Reforms (April, 2012). However, an essential part of this reform is the provision of another 74,000 residential aged care beds by 2022 to cope with the anticipated growth in demand. We are committed to being the provider of choice for older Australians needing residential aged care. This requires us to grow to meet the demand in the communities where we operate. We are focused on building new homes in these communities and adding beds to our current portfolio in the pursuit of a stronger, higher quality Australian residential aged care sector. Acquisitions will occur along the way, as part of our growth strategy to build better quality residential aged care in the communities we serve.

Here are some of our key growth projects.

## Opal Gracedale

In October, we opened the refurbished Ellersley wing at our Opal Gracedale Home in Victoria. The 37 affordable single rooms are a vital addition to the Ringwood area in Melbourne’s North East. The refurbishment takes the total number of beds to 107.

This wing allows Gracedale to provide beds for government supported Residents for the first time. Judging by early demand for the new beds, the wing is a welcome addition for the local community.

## Opal Rutherford

The building of our new Home, Opal Rutherford, in NSW’s Hunter region has now commenced.

The new Home will provide accommodation for 144 Residents and will consist of single and companion rooms as well as two 16 bed dementia specific wings to



Opal Rutherford: artist’s impression; turning of the sod.



provide specialist dementia care for Residents.

The first sod (soil) was turned in November, by Maitland City Council’s Mayor, Peter Blackmore. Cr Blackmore highlighted the significance of the Home for the area, not just in terms of responding to increasing demand for residential aged care, but in the provision of jobs both during the construction phase and beyond.

“I am so pleased Opal Aged Care has identified this region as a growth area. As our population continues to age, it is more important than ever to equip the region with quality services to ensure support is there when needed. Aged care in itself is a growing industry and presents fantastic career opportunities. This new Home will create more than 150 local jobs, which is good news for the region,” Cr Blackmore said.

The building of the Home signifies an investment of \$30 million into the area.

The new Home will be in addition to our existing 80 bed home, Opal Maitland. More than 12 per cent of Maitland City’s population is over the age of 65 and the demand for quality aged care in the region is continuing to increase. Our new Home in Rutherford will provide much needed care for local residents.

Opal Fernleigh

Another exciting redevelopment for Opal Aged Care is at our Sydney Home, Opal Fernleigh. Located in West Ryde, Opal Fernleigh currently provides high quality care for 72 Residents.



Artist’s impression of Opal Fernleigh.

While our staff do an amazing job, the existing physical environment of the Home is beginning to fall short of current community expectations. The entire Home will be upgraded so that it is able to provide specialised services to our Residents in a more aesthetically pleasing environment.

We are looking to increase the number of places available at Fernleigh to 140 beds, which will help to meet demand for aged care facilities in the local area. We will also offer more respite care places and a specialised dementia unit, as well as improving outdoor areas for Residents and their families.

The brand new Opal Fernleigh will set the benchmark for aged care in the region with more spacious rooms, modern ensuite bathrooms and better designed internal common areas. We will also be

upgrading and rejuvenating the outdoor areas - including gardens, green space, terraces, courtyards and balconies and providing ample parking for staff and visitors. The large, spacious common and outdoor areas for our Residents has been well received at our Quakers Hill Nursing Home which was opened in February.

**The brand new Opal Fernleigh will set the benchmark for aged care in the region with more spacious rooms, modern ensuite bathrooms and better designed internal common areas.**

Opal Cherrywood Grove

NSW’s Central West is a growing region, with Orange one of its major provincial centres. Like many areas in Australia, it is experiencing growth in its population of people aged 70 and over.

In response to this demand, our Home in Orange, Opal Cherrywood

Grove, will provide an additional 67 beds in 63 rooms by the middle of 2015, as well as refurbishing existing accommodation.

The new accommodation will comprise 59 single ensuite rooms and four premium suites. Companion ensuite rooms and separate living and kitchenette areas will provide for those wanting a little extra room or

wishing to live with a partner. The additional beds will include 17 ground floor places for those living with dementia, providing vital access to dedicated outdoor areas. Additionally, all existing rooms will be refurbished, with companion rooms available. The new accommodation at Opal Cherrywood Grove is due to open in September 2015.



Artist’s impression of Opal Cherrywood Grove.

# Opal Thrive

## Employee Wellbeing Program

### Opal Thrive across our business

We introduced Opal Thrive, our employee wellbeing program, in our first edition of Opal Moments. Launched alongside the new brand in June this year, the decision to invest in an employee wellbeing program was one the business felt was key to ensuring our staff were as well looked after as they can be, and able to deliver the best care to our Residents. The program is designed to look at all aspects of wellbeing, including physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

#### Lucky Draw Prize Winner – Kakala Moala, Opal Raffin Place

We ran a lucky door prize to encourage our staff to start their Opal Thrive journey by completing their online Wellness Assessment, which can be completed via our Intranet, the Village. Congratulations to Kakala Moala, from Opal Raffin Place, who was our winner. Kakala received a voucher for a treatment at spa retreat, Golden Door. The Assessments are the first step for our staff to get feedback on their



Darlene Anderson, Opal Raffin Place Facility Manager presents Kakala with her spa voucher.

overall wellbeing in order to know the areas they can improve on.

#### Congratulations to Opal Burpengary Gardens – for the most Wellness Assessments completed

Staff at Opal Burpengary Gardens are the stars in the Opal family. They have kicked off their Opal Thrive journey with enthusiasm –

with the completion of the most Wellness Assessments of any Home across our business. With Libby Cadogan as their Champion, there are lots of wellbeing activities to get involved in at the Home, and staff are ready for change. They will be receiving an Opal Thrive prize of their choice as a whole team to keep them motivated on their journey.

### Meet our wellbeing Champion



Libby Cadogan,  
Endorsed Enrolled Nurse,  
Opal Burpengary Gardens,  
QLD

Having Champions in our Homes is key to motivating and inspiring our staff in getting involved with the Opal Thrive program. We have a growing team of Champions emerging who are launching their own programs, as well as utilising the materials available.

#### What made you decide to get involved in Opal Thrive?

I had started thinking about improving my fitness and changing my diet to a healthier one. If I then lost weight as a result, that would be a bonus. Opal Thrive came along just at the right time to motivate me to take action.

#### What activities have you been doing in the Homes as part of Opal Thrive?

I signed up to my first ever run – a 5km fun run called the Color Run which took place in November. In fact this was the first public exercise I'd ever done. It's a great event, with people raising money for charity, and is based on the Holi Indian Festival where powdered paint is thrown. You'll see by the photo, I made it through all the color stations!

#### Who in your Home is involved in the activities?

Most of our staff are involved in some way. We had a team for the Color Run, and we have a recipe swap going on between the staff. I cooked up a healthy stir fry recipe and brought this in for people.

#### What have you been doing to promote Opal Thrive and the activities?

There's lots going on in our Home. There are various flyers, and Opal Thrive is mentioned at every staff meeting to increase awareness. I've even had staff come to me personally asking questions about Opal Thrive - how I've lost weight, look happier and where I've got the spring in my step from.

We've cleared the staff notice board, with one part now dedicated to Opal Thrive. Things are always changing or being added onto this, which gives staff a weekly look at what they can get involved in.

#### Why do you think Opal Thrive is important to Opal Aged Care and our staff?

I think a wellness program is a great thing in any workplace.



Libby and a visitor to the Home.

We often are so busy taking care of other people that we neglect to look after ourselves. It promotes a better lifestyle and lowers stress levels. A Resident has also told me recently it's nice to see staff looking after themselves and each other, which I tend to agree with.

#### How do you think the program has helped you specifically?

Eating better and regular exercise has given me so many benefits. I am now sleeping a lot better, not feeling so fatigued, and of course losing a few extra pounds has been great for my self-esteem.

#### What are you excited about moving forwards?

Personally I'm really excited to see how Opal Thrive grows. I'm thinking next year of getting a bit of friendly competition going between our Homes with a 'Cook Off Challenge' and maybe even a sports day!



Libby after the Color Run.

Corporate office update

Cook’s Corner

Nutrition is a core area for our staff to improve their health. Our online portal offers lots of ideas and hints on healthier eating. With our plans to promote these resources within our Homes, an Opal Thrive noticeboard has been rolled out with recipe cards our staff can take and test out with their families at home. Staff at our corporate office have embraced Cook’s Corner, with our People and Culture team swapping their

weekly team lasagnes for healthier pasta and salad options. See below for Nat’s special lower sodium Larb Gai recipe.

Stepping up and out

Staff are often sitting for eight hours or more a day. To get people up and out of their seats, staff have started a Walking Club two days a week. It gives people a break from their work, allows them to get some fresh air and helps them work towards their recommended 10,000 steps a day.

JP Morgan Challenge

A team entered the JP Morgan Challenge in November. Congratulations to all for completing the 5.6km race around Centennial Park, with over 8,000 people taking part this year. A number of our team beat personal bests and showcased our new Opal singlets.

For more information on our Opal Thrive program, contact Helen Spoor, Opal Thrive Coordinator at [opalthrive@opalagedcare.com.au](mailto:opalthrive@opalagedcare.com.au)

Nat’s Chicken Larb Gai – Lower Sodium Version (Thai Chicken Salad)

Serves 4



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of lime juice plus extra lime wedge to serve
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of cracked pepper
- 1 tablespoon of low-sodium fish sauce, molasses or remove completely for low-sodium option
- 1 long red chilli, seeds removed, cut into matchsticks
- Baby Cos lettuce, leaves separated
- 2 cups of coriander, chopped
- 2 cups of mint, chopped
- 1 cup of chives, chopped
- 1 spanish onion, chopped finely
- 500 grams chicken mince

Method

1. Cook the chicken, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, for 5 minutes or until the meat has browned and cooked through.
2. Add the chilli and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes, and then transfer the mixture to a large bowl.
3. Add the lime juice and lemon juice, coriander, mint, chives, spanish onion, fish sauce and pepper to the warm mince mixture, then gently fold through, allowing the herbs to wilt.
4. Arrange the lettuce leaves on 4 serving plates. Use a spoon to pile the larb gai over the top. Serve with the lime wedges.

Photo source: [www.taste.com.au](http://www.taste.com.au). Thanks to Natalie Saliba in the corporate office for giving us her recipe.



Members of the JP Morgan team; the Walking Club.





Herb-crusted barramundi with salad.

With the focus on variety and cooking from scratch, Residents are starting to enjoy the new menus and improvements to food and table presentation.

# Rolling out national menus across our Homes

In our last edition of Opal Moments we previewed the menu and service changes our Head of Hospitality, Justin Wilshaw, has introduced across our Homes.

Here we talk to Opal Gracedale’s Hospitality Manager, Diogo Rocha, about Opal Gracedale’s implementation of these menu and service changes. This includes profiling one of our recipes, herb-crusted barramundi, and how the changes are being received by Residents and staff.



There has always been a focus on home style meals in our Homes, but now Residents are starting to enjoy the new menus and improvements to food and table presentation. The focus of the change is about ensuring variety for Residents, with no dish served more than twice on the four week menu rotation, cooking from scratch, using food from local sources as much as possible and upgrading our dining rooms with new linen and tableware.

To ensure variety, Opal has developed close to 500 dishes for our Chefs to choose from, ensuring a varied diet for Residents. Every four months the four week menu is changed to allow for seasonal variations and availability of fresh produce.

I want to hear the crack of eggs and see flour being weighed. This is the way we should all be cooking.

With an emphasis on local sourcing, Chefs and kitchen staff have the freedom to source their own fruit, vegetables and meat, which means they can use the butcher shop up the road or a local farmer. For other foods there are guidelines in place to make sure the best product, and in some cases, the most sustainable product is sourced. As mentioned in our last edition of Opal Moments, all fish is now from the Southern Atlantic or Pacific Oceans and all vegetables are Australian grown.

With the freshest ingredients in place, the Chefs and kitchen staff are turning their attention to cooking from scratch.

Diogo is an advocate. “I can’t stress how important it is for our Residents to have fresh food. It’s unnecessary to include much in the way of processed foods, which are often high in sodium and preservatives. Our Residents may already have compromised health and what they need is the freshest food possible.”



Opal Gracedale’s Hospitality Manager, Diogo Rocha.



Diogo Rocha with food from the new menu.

Residents at Opal Gracedale are particularly enjoying their new morning tea menu. They can now choose from sweet options such as zucchini and date cake, homemade ginger nuts, and raspberry and coconut slices. As Diogo said, “I want to hear the crack of eggs and see flour being weighed. This is the way we should all be cooking.”

The taste and look of the meals is of course important too. All Opal kitchens are required to use fresh herbs, not only for presentation, but to provide more flavour and texture. It’s well known that as we age our taste buds diminish, so it is important to give Residents something with plenty of flavour. “Just steaming vegetables is not going to be particularly appetising to an elderly Resident, but adding a little salt, some butter and a

sprinkling of herbs makes all the difference,” Diogo added.

So how are staff faring with the changes in menus and the way in which food is now served to Residents? “Well”, says Diogo “Of course it does mean we are expecting things to be done a little differently but good Chefs organise their time, know what they have to cook and plan ahead at all times – it’s all about becoming more efficient in the kitchen and planning menus that can fit in a shift.”

Diogo regularly takes the time to speak to Residents about how they are finding the new menu at Opal Gracedale. “We recently introduced a new dish, braised lamb chops, and Residents loved it. The tenderness of the meat was a hit and some of the men commented on how much they enjoyed being able to

pick up the chops in their fingers and chew on the bone, with many requests for seconds.”

Feedback from families has also been very positive with many letters, emails and telephone calls thanking the hospitality team for the dining improvements. One family recently wrote to thank Facility Manager, Wendy Crichton at Opal South Valley. “Dad was telling us how the food had changed and that he now really looks forward to dinner.”

According to Justin Wilshaw, the changes are significant in both the menu offerings and the dining experience. “It’s got to be about delivering home style, nutritious, comfort food in an environment that’s enjoyable and relaxing for our Residents. That’s the goal that all our Opal Hospitality staff members are working on today.”



Opal Gracedale Resident, David, enjoying the new food and table presentation.





August is the start of our Open Day season, when we host weekend community events across our Homes.

# Opal's Open Days – connecting with our communities

At Opal Aged Care, being connected to our Homes' local communities is core to who we are. We employ staff from the local area, source local produce to cook in our kitchens and engage with businesses providing lifestyle and volunteer activities for our Residents. Being involved in the community also means that Residents can retain their local connections, and it helps those that have had to move away from their own home to be closer to where their family live.

August is the start of our Open Day season, when we host weekend community events across our Homes. Open Days give our Residents, their families and staff the chance to connect with the local community and have a celebration. It's also a good opportunity for people thinking about residential aged care for themselves or a family

member to come and look at our Homes in a relaxed atmosphere. The Open Days provide tours to give visitors a chance to see the Home's facilities and meet Residents and staff.

Since August, we've hosted 10 Open Days across Australia, from Queensland to Western Australia, with another four planned before the end of the year. Each has its own theme for the day. This year we've organised garden parties, wine and cheese afternoons, as well as our broader community and family fun days.

Entertainment is provided by the Home's community, with live music ranging from jazz bands to string quartets to local schools performing.

Residents' families come for the day with the kids enjoying jumping castles, face painting and animal farms. Many of our staff are active volunteers in their local communities, which means our Homes often get support on the day from the Salvation Army, Red Cross, Scout Groups, Rotary and Lions Clubs, the local Fire Brigade, and sporting clubs.

## Opal Mudgee Community Day

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 10am - 2pm

**FREE**

- Live music
- Sausage sizzle
- Devonshire tea
- Children's face painting
- Tours of the home

Opal Mudgee 207-213 Denison Street, Mudgee | 02 6372 3977 | [www.opalagedcare.com.au](http://www.opalagedcare.com.au)



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## Updates from this season's Open Days

### Opal Mudgee, NSW

Staff at Opal Mudgee took advantage of the cooler weather and laid on a great event in August. Highlights included live music from Bob Campbell and his band, circus entertainment from Gulgong Public School, and a newly formed Girl Guides Group selling cookies, as well as stalls from Residents selling their own knitted hats and scarves.

Acting Facility Manager, Gwen Cleeve of Opal Mudgee thanked the local community for their support. "The day was a great success with nearly 100 people coming through the gates. It was lovely to see our Residents and their families enjoying the entertainment and food on offer. This wouldn't have been possible without the support of our local community who made it such a special day."



Resident Grace, a former Girl Guide with a member of Mudgee's Girl Guides.



Bunnings Wawn Ponds Gardening Group lends a hand for the day.

### Opal South Valley, Victoria

Residents at Opal South Valley are particularly passionate about their gardens and were delighted when the Bunnings Wawn Ponds Gardening Group offered to come along and help them create

a raised garden bed on their Open Day. This builds on the great work already being done by volunteer Andrew Beet who joins the Residents regularly to help work on the Home's Garden. Families also joined in, with kids enjoying the impressive range of animal inspired face painting.



Members of the Tugun Bowls Club help visitors brush up on their bowling skills.

Opal Kirra Beach, Queensland

Opal Kirra Beach hosted a fantastic community day in September. With over 100 people attending, the afternoon was filled with entertainment including singer Alison Ahern entertaining crowds. Meanwhile the Tugun Bowls Club, which Opal Aged Care sponsors, helped visitors brush up on their bowling skills. Visitors were also able to enter a “lucky door prize” to be in with a chance to win an iPad, which one lucky family member took home.

Opal Ashmore, Queensland

In true Queensland style, the day started out overcast, with the sun coming through in time for a brilliant afternoon at Opal Ashmore. 120 visitors came through the gates, including the local community and Residents’ family members, to enjoy a family day of music, face painting, a classic Aussie sausage sizzle and even an animal farm. A local financial advisor was also on hand to help visitors with the questions that can often arise when looking at residential aged care.



Cooking up a classic Aussie sausage sizzle for visitors, with an estimated 200 sausages enjoyed on the day.



Visit [www.opalagedcare.com.au/news](http://www.opalagedcare.com.au/news) for information on our upcoming Open Days in 2015.



A young visitor enjoys the face painting at Opal South Valley.



A selection of photos from our Open Days this year: Residents enjoy the day, requesting to join in the face painting, while enjoying live music, Devonshire teas and visits from the animal farm.



This edition we meet Sheridan Woodcroft, Executive Assistant to Managing Director Gary Barnier.

# Meet Sheridan Woodcroft

Welcome to Meet the Team. In each edition of Opal Moments you will get to meet a member of the Opal team, find out what it's like working in their role, gain insights into their daily lives and what they do in their spare time.

**Q. How long have you worked here and how did you come to find out about the job?**

**A.** I have been with the company for four and a half years. When I first started back in our old office we only had a small number of people in the Sydney office as we were bringing the operations from the Gold Coast to Sydney.

I applied for the job on Seek. At first I thought aged care wouldn't be very exciting. It has certainly proved the opposite! There is never a dull moment in aged care.

**Q. What's a typical day like for you, Sheridan?**

**A.** I support Gary and the Executive team on day to day business. I organise Gary's schedule, lots of travel to our

Homes, calendar management, collate Board papers, organise road trips, telephone calls and whatever else raises its head during the day.

**Q. Do you get out to the Homes much?**

**A.** Not as much as I would like to. I love visiting the Homes. The people in our care have some amazing stories to tell. I think people some times forget that our Residents have

all been young once and lived some remarkable lives.

**Q. Tell us one of your favourite things about your job and working at Opal Aged Care?**

**A.** I love the people I work with. We have a really good crew here. I love the fact that Gary and the team are working on making Opal the best aged care company in Australia. I see the improvements every day.



Sheridan with MD, Gary Barnier, and Opal Bossley Park Resident, Rosa, at the annual Italian tomato sauce making competition.



Sheridan with other members of the team at the CEO Sleep out last year. Sheridan at Wayside Chapel, Kings Cross.

**Q. What's an example of something you've worked on that you're most proud of?**

**A.** I really enjoy organising the Annual Conference for our staff in leadership positions across the business and Homes, and making it a success. It's great to get all our Home staff together to meet and get to know each other and have a few laughs as well.

**Q. What's the most challenging aspect of your job?**

**A.** I deal directly with feedback and messages from staff and families. I take this aspect of my role very seriously. As a growing and developing business we don't always get things right the first time, but we respond as quickly as possible to find a solution.

**Q. What do you think about the new brand?**

**A.** It was certainly time for us to have a new brand that really means something in the marketplace and I

just love it – who wouldn't? The office looks fabulous, all the marketing material is wonderful, and the signage out the front of all our Homes clearly tells people they're coming into an Opal Aged Care Home.

I really believe it has given everyone a whole new level of enthusiasm, and I know staff are extremely proud of their new uniforms. I feel like we're all in it together.

**Q. Tell us a little about what you do in your spare time?**

**A.** My main hobby is travelling – I'm mad keen. I'm off to Finland in February so I can see the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). I volunteer at Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross in Sydney every fortnight, which I've been doing for about three years. Wayside is a great organisation which helps marginalised people. Apart from hopefully making a bit of a difference, it certainly makes me realise how very fortunate I am to have a lovely family and friends.

I also like to keep very active and take part in sporting events such as the City2Surf and Mother's Day Classic run. With the launch of Opal Thrive, our wellbeing program, I'm trying to get our staff in the Corporate office, together with Helen Spoor our Opal Thrive Coordinator, to do a bit extra to look after themselves. I was the team captain for the annual JP Morgan Corporate Challenge, which is a 5.6 km run around Centennial Park in Sydney. This is really fun and a good way for the team to bond.

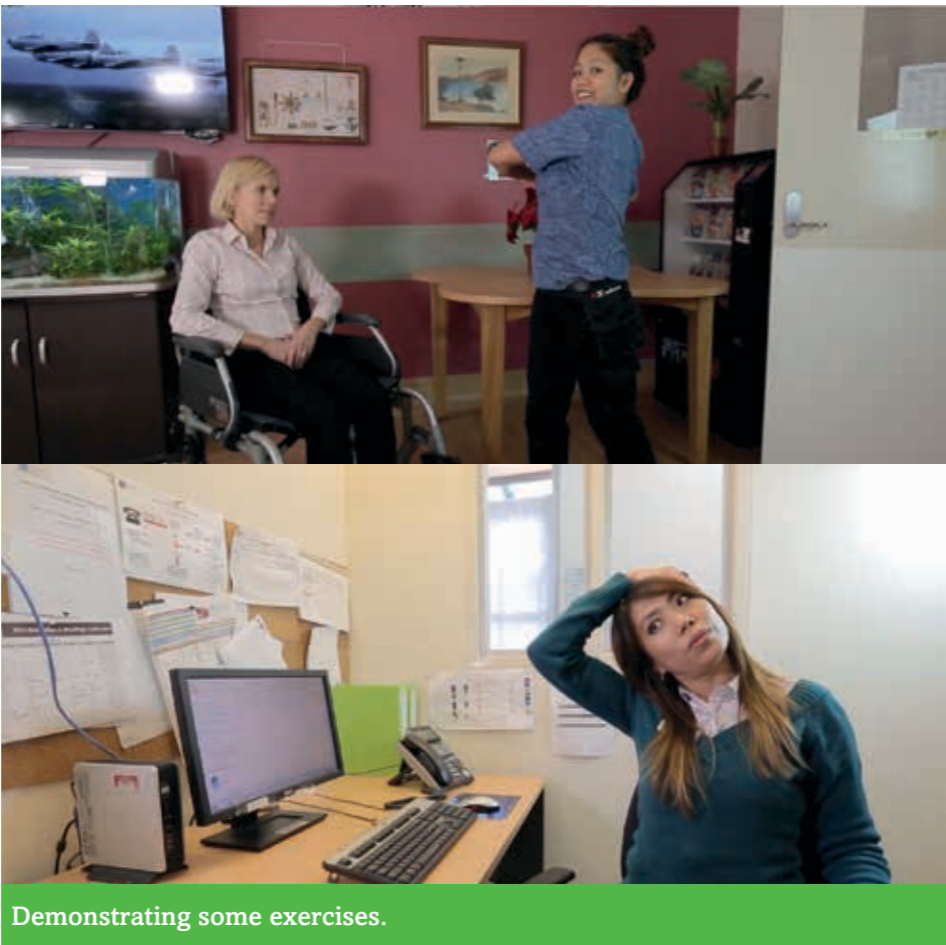
I have a reputation for being "Miss Sydney". I love to do things in and around Sydney – theatre, special events, nice restaurants. There's so much to do!

**Q. What are your hopes for the future at Opal Aged Care?**

**A.** I'm really excited that the company is growing and improving every day. I look forward to seeing Opal become the best aged care organisation in Australia!

Postural Program

Posture is not just important to how we look, but it can impact on how well we function too. As part of our postural program, our Work Health and Safety team have developed a series of 12 short videos for all staff to use in their daily work life. The short videos demonstrate a set of exercises staff can do throughout their shift to reduce common injuries that can occur with repetitive tasks. Staff at Opal Stanmore (NSW) became the stars for the day as they provided the talent for the video, with AINs Amelia, Praveena, Mylene and Heather, as well as Govind the cleaner, and Juan the maintenance officer taking part. The program will be launched to staff in the New Year.



Demonstrating some exercises.

Needles and Pins at Opal Coffs Harbour

Resident sewing group, 'Needles & Pins', is a weekly get together for Residents at Opal Coffs Harbour (NSW). The aim is to create items for the local community, with a recent project producing a number of 'stress hearts' for cardiac patients at Coffs Harbour Hospital. The heart shaped cushions were made to help patients after coronary artery bypass surgery to support their chest wounds during their physio sessions. The group also made smaller stress hearts to give out to families. The group is run by the Home's Activities Officer, Chris, with the help of Helen who volunteers regularly at the Home. "The Residents love their sewing projects and are already underway

with their next one, which is a number of dolls for the children's unit." They are so proud of their work and I'm so proud of what they can achieve," said Lifestyle Officer, Maria Darcy.



Residents with their work in progress.

Opal Gillin Park giving back to the community

Don't be surprised if you visit Opal Gillin Park (VIC) in Warrnambool and see a group of ladies cutting up old blankets and busily sewing. They are making "Trauma Toys" out of old blankets to be donated to the local emergency services - who in turn will give them to young children they are providing emergency care to. Groups such as the ambulance service and police have benefited from the many hours of work that go into making these toys, and the ladies have every reason to be proud of what they do.

The toys consist of a variety of animals, and there is a very special connection to Warrnambool and one of the sewing group members, Shirley Goldstraw. Shirley's father was a tailor in Warrnambool and closed his business in 1915 to go and fight for his country. He did not reopen on his return. Many years later, Shirley found a box of metal buttons from her father's business stamped W McDonald, Warrnambool. These are now used for the eyes on the little dogs that the group make.



Joan Gould, Shirley Goldstraw, Dorothy Harlock.



The Hon Alan Tudge MP and Brian Fitzpatrick.

Aston Community Awards recognise hard work of Opal Salford Park volunteer

Staff and Residents at Opal Salford Park (VIC) were delighted to see volunteer, Brian Fitzpatrick, receive an award at the Aston Community Awards in September. Presented by local member, the Hon Alan Tudge, Brian humbly but proudly received his award for his ongoing volunteer work at the Home.

Brian is a well known face around Opal Salford Park where he has volunteered now for eight years. He visits the Home three days a week, helping the Lifestyle team with a number of their activities, such as assisting Residents to the Doctor and specialist appointments, taking Residents for walks, assisting Residents with morning and afternoon teas and helping out with activities such as concerts, bus trips, newspaper readings, and themed activities. He also runs a weekly sing-a-long, karaoke and comedy afternoon.

The awards were held at Rowville and a number of the staff from Opal Salford Park attended to congratulate Brian and his wife Tulip. It was a great night and according to the Facility Manager of the Home, Sue van Buuren, the sense of purpose and achievement amongst the finalists was evident. "Being a part of something bigger than yourself is not only vital to healthy communities, but is vital to our own health." With more than 400 people in attendance, the awards night was a showcase for this. Everyone was there because of their involvement in their local communities.

"We were very proud to see Brian on stage. He's a great man and a wonderful asset to our Home. We are so grateful for the time he so generously gives us without ever asking for anything in return," she said.



Ron enjoying a selection of the desserts – his smile says it all!

Day out a winner for Opal Annandale Residents

A group of Residents from Opal Annandale (NSW) took a trip out to Sydney’s South Western Suburbs for a buffet lunch at Bankstown RSL, followed by a tour of the Sydney Olympic Parklands.

Residents and staff enjoyed a diversity of food, including Chinese duck and pork, sushi, a rotisserie, pasta, seafood and of course, the dessert counter.

After lunch at the RSL, the group visited the Olympic Parklands at Homebush where they were treated to a tour by one of the Parklands’ staff. Residents learnt about the history of the Olympic Park and were amazed at its transformation from wasteland to beautifully landscaped parklands. One Resident remembered it well as an industrial dumping ground and was amazed to see the legacy left by the Games in 2000. “It’s a testament to those who created this vision for Sydney, giving us a facility that can be enjoyed by so many in so many different ways.”

Local Kindergarten joins Opal Annandale for Halloween fun

Opal Annandale (NSW) had a bit of Halloween fun with Stanmore Kindergarten on the 22nd of October when they joined the Residents and staff for a special morning tea. The children came dressed as witches, zombies, ghosts and fairies and chatted to Residents about their characters and what Halloween is all about for them. Together, the Residents and children created some Halloween themed craft and afterwards enjoyed a morning tea of Halloween themed cupcakes and red cordial.



A Resident and children make Halloween decorations.

65th anniversary for Jean and Doug Bain

It was love at first sight for Jean when she first danced with Doug.

“I had danced at Petersham Town Hall since I was 16 and had never seen Doug. One night there he was asking me to dance. He was tall and thin and wore big horn rimmed glasses that hid the most beautiful blue eyes I had ever seen. I fell in love that first dance. It was a jazz waltz and we floated over the floor in perfect unison.”

Doug is now a Resident at Opal Coffs Harbour (NSW). Jean and Doug celebrated their 65th anniversary recently at the Home.



Quakers Hill Residents get connected

The Lifestyle team at Quakers Hill Nursing Home (NSW) have been hard at work engaging with organisations in the wider community to help get Residents more connected.

With volunteer support from the local community and TAD NSW (Technical Aid for the Disabled), Residents from around the Home are now able to access laptops and technical support. The program is still in the early stages but many of the Residents are excited by the prospect of writing an email, seeing where they grew up on Google Street View, and Skyping with family and friends abroad.

Since the donation of the laptops, the Lifestyle team have been developing a computer skills class run fortnightly by one of the Residents, Richard and a volunteer from TAD NSW.

Richard, a former volunteer at TAD and current Resident at Quakers Hill, is really enthusiastic about the program. “The classes will be a real bonus for the Home. I have been using a computer since I retired and I love learning something new every day. I hope other Residents will too!” said Richard.

Lifestyle Coordinator at the Home, Stewart Alford, is already seeing the benefits. “It’s so great to see Residents getting excited by Skyping a family member or finding something on Google. Particularly for our less mobile Residents it opens up a whole new world to them and we are very grateful to TAD NSW for helping to facilitate this at Quakers Hill.”



Richard is often seen Skyping with his friends & family including one of his sons who lives in the US.



Gary meets volunteer Elsie.

Staff and volunteer BBQ with special tribute to Elsie Payne

Opal Aged Care’s Managing Director, Gary Barnier and Victorian General Manager, Meigan Lefebure, joined staff and volunteers at a ‘Welcome BBQ’ in August to welcome the Salford Park team into the Opal Aged Care family. Gary particularly commended all volunteers on their contribution to the Home but one volunteer, Elsie Payne, got a special accolade.

Elsie has lived at the Salford Park Units for 26 years and started volunteering in High Care in 1992. Since then, Elsie’s contribution has been invaluable, volunteering in a variety of areas including assisting Residents with lunch and tea time and providing daily social and support visits to a number of Residents.

“Elsie celebrates her 100th birthday on 27th February 2015 and is an inspiration to us all. We are fortunate to have Elsie’s special assistance within our volunteering program and continue to appreciate her special contributions,” said Meigan Lefebure.

Opal’s Got Talent at Paynesville

Opal Paynesville (VIC) hosted a talent competition recently and unearthed some talent across the East Gippsland area. The ‘Paynesville’s Got Talent’ competition attracted Residents, staff and friends of the Home, as well as guests from nearby Homes. The audience enjoyed a range of talents including stand-up comedians, dance performances and jazz musicians. Residents from the memory support unit did a special number and there was even an Indian dance performance.

The standard was high and the judges’ decision difficult, but the ultimate winner was Deanna, the daughter of Opal Paynesville’s Personal Care Assistant, Mellissa Boehme. She wowed the



Winner Deanna and an Opal Paynesville Resident.

judges and audience alike with her ballet performance. Such was the success of the evening that

Residents and staff are already making plans for next year’s event.

Feathered Friends pay a trip to Opal Stanmore

Opal Stanmore (NSW) Residents had some unexpected visitors last month in the shape of Kris’s Feathered Friends, a menagerie of birds and animals that Kris Stanley takes to aged care homes. Kris has

become famous for her travelling menagerie – a group of exotic and coloured birds that have been regulars on television shows including Bondi Vet, Changing Rooms, Beauty and the Beast and many more. Opal Stanmore had

a whole host of Kris’s Friends visit who sat obediently on Residents and staff shoulders. Kris says the animals provide so much comfort and pleasure to the Residents who interact with them.



Drago Serenic with one of the ‘Feathered Friends’

Kris Stanley, Feathered Friends founder.

Opal South Valley Residents take pride in keeping their Home gardens beautiful

Three keen gardeners at Opal South Valley (VIC), Marcia, Shirley and Anna are devotees to the cause of keeping the gardens looking pristine. The gardening trio are out pottering most days but on Thursdays are lucky to have the support of local volunteer, Andrew Beet, who joins them to do some of the tasks they are unable to do.

Andrew originally came to the Home for a work placement while doing his Certificate in Aged Care and still has a little spare time during the week to help out. “We enjoy our gardening sessions together. Not only do we have a good catch up but we do get the more serious stuff done such as planning what we are going to do next and who is going to do which tasks. I know the Residents value my input and I thoroughly enjoy being able to help out as well.”

Recent projects have included creating a kitchen garden of herbs and vegetables that are used by the kitchen team, new rose plantings and regular trimming and de-heading of flowers. Right now their greatest achievement, a large, raised planter, is showing a stunning display of purple and yellow pansies.

“Gardening is a great benefit to Residents, many of whom had their own gardens when still living at home. Gardening increases Resident mobility which in turn leads to better balance and coordination, meaning a better quality of life and less risk of falling or injury,” said Wendy Crichton, Facility Manager.



Shirley and Marcia at the Pansy Garden.

Opal team welcomes Opal Lourdes

A BBQ was held for Opal Lourdes (NSW) staff to welcome them to the Opal Aged Care family. Managing Director Gary Barnier, and members of the corporate team were there to lend a hand in cooking up a classic Aussie style BBQ with sausages and home made rissoles. Staff were able to meet members of the corporate team and ask any questions, as well as receiving their Opal Thrive packs to get started on their wellbeing journey.



MD Gary Barnier and the team cook up a classic Aussie BBQ.



An Opal Hillside Resident enjoys high tea.

### High tea high on the agenda for Opal Hillside Residents

Everyone loves a high tea and the Residents of Opal Hillside (NSW) are no exception. In September, staff laid on a special tea for Residents where they enjoyed tiered layers of cakes and delicacies, along with their afternoon cup of tea. Such was the enthusiasm that Residents have voted for it to be a monthly event to celebrate Residents’ birthdays.

### Ruth Warne – from farm girl to reflexologist



Ruth Warne and her daughter.

### Supporting graduates: Meet Jess Mancuso, Physiotherapist at Opal Armadale

I’ve been working at Opal Armadale Nursing Home for nearly three months now as a Physiotherapist, having recently graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Fremantle. Throughout my course I had the opportunity to experience many different areas of Physiotherapy. Aged care was the area I became most passionate about as I love caring for people and improving their quality of life. Opal Armadale has a real family vibe and everyone is very friendly and always willing to help, which is a great environment to work in.

I come from a close-knit family myself – I am the youngest of four children with two brothers and a sister. I recently became an Aunty to my nephew Benjamin (four months old) and niece Chloe (one month old). We are a very close family, and with

an Italian background, we love getting together for a dinner full of pasta and pizza at Nonna’s!

In my spare time I enjoy spending time with friends and family, going to the beach and baking and knitting (which comes in handy working in aged care!). Over the coming year, I’m looking forward to getting to know all the Residents better and seeing everyone joining in at the physio exercise group.



Jess Mancuso and her nephew.

Born in 1927, Ruth, Opal Armadale (WA) Resident, was the eldest of three girls in a pioneering farming family in south WA. Ruth and her two sisters spent much of their childhood helping on the farm where Ruth has fond memories of driving the truck with her father. However, with a good head for numbers, Ruth decided to pursue a clerical career before marrying her first husband, John, who owned an orchard in the Darling Ranges east of Perth. But a settled life Ruth’s was not to be. After the loss of

her first husband to illness, Ruth married twice more but also sadly lost each husband to illness.

Armadale has been Ruth’s home for the last fourteen years where she has been actively involved in the community through the church and her network of friends. She developed a keen interest in health, completing a course in Reflexology, which she practiced part-time for a few years. Ruth loves visits from her family and still enjoys the occasional outing and keeping her mind active.



Opal Raffin Residents enjoy their day out.



Pirate Day at Opal Roxburgh.



Halloween at Opal Hobsons Bay.

Each month we receive thank you letters from families and friends expressing their gratitude for our wonderful staff. Here are a selection.

Opal Hobsons Bay (VIC)

Marilyn, Alan and Alex James would like to thank all the staff at Opal Hobsons Bay for the wonderful care and attention Gladys received while she was with you.

Words cannot express our heartfelt gratitude.

Opal Paynesville (VIC)

Thanks to the chef Joy and the kitchen team at Opal Paynesville for making my Dad’s 88th day special.

He loved the homemade party food!

Warm regards,

Chrissy Ford  
Daughter of Paynesville Resident



Opal Hillside (NSW)

Dear Staff at Opal Hillside,

My father Bill Hetherington was only a Resident of Hillside Aged Care for a short time before he passed away.

I would like to commend all the staff that were involved in his care. I cannot speak highly enough of them.

It helps to know that in his last days he was treated with dignity and compassion by these wonderful people.

Many, many thanks,

Gail Caldwell

Opal Kirra Beach (QLD)

Hello Lucy,

Following a period of respite recently at Opal Kirra Beach I conducted a review with the family carers of Robbie who reported some wonderful feedback that I felt should be shared with you and your staff:

- The carer advised that the nurses were ‘outstanding’, and Robbie really felt extremely comfortable with them;
- The Residents also really took him under their wing. The carer stated that everyone fell in love with Robbie and enjoyed his company.

- Robbie thoroughly enjoyed the activities, particularly the artwork and the ‘happy hour’ singing and dancing.
- The Home, the staff and activities could not be faulted – it was excellent;
- Robbie had a wonderful time and said he would love to go back.

Both Pamela and Ralph, Robbie’s family carers, are now converted to residential respite, and ultimately, when the time comes, will be considering placing Robbie permanently at Opal Kirra Beach without concern.

As a Carer Support Officer having placed complete confidence in the chosen facility or Home it is always heart-warming to conduct a review and gain feedback of this magnitude, so I want to express my own appreciation for the extra mile that your staff went to in making Robbie’s stay extra special - especially considering it was his first time and the trepidation his family carers were feeling in placing him for respite.

You have definitely set the bar high and converted him and his family to the value of such a wonderful facility.

Kind regards,

Michelle  
Carer Support Officer

Our Homes around the country

Queensland

Opal Abbey Gardens	07 5495 9000
Opal Ashmore	07 5510 1800
Opal Burpengary Gardens	07 3888 5000
Opal Caloundra	07 5491 5155
Opal Greenfern	07 3809 1400
Opal Kirra Beach	07 5536 2766
Opal Nambour	07 5444 9700
Opal Raffin Place	07 3723 0400
Opal Raynbird Place	07 3500 9300
Opal Varsity Rise	07 5554 8100

Northern NSW, Hunter & Central Coast

Opal Berkeley Village	02 4388 5388
Opal Coffs Harbour	02 6659 4800
Opal Florence Tower	07 5590 2800
Opal Glenmere	02 4393 1888
Opal Hillside	02 4904 0100
Opal Hillside ALA	02 4904 0100
Opal Killarney Vale	02 4345 2700
Opal Killarney Vale ALA	02 4345 2700
Opal Macquarie Place	02 4944 1300
Opal Maitland	02 4932 6688
Opal Murwillumbah	02 6670 9700
Opal Norah Head	02 4396 5511
Opal Raymond Terrace	02 4987 2170
Opal Tweed Heads	07 5599 6900

Southern/Western/Country NSW

Opal Bathurst	02 6331 7599
Opal Cherrywood Grove	02 6361 9228
Opal Dubbo	02 6884 4277
Opal Edgewood Park	02 4472 8155
Opal Endeavour	02 4751 1000
Opal Endeavour ALA	02 4754 6080
Opal Mudgee	02 6372 3977
Opal Narrandera	02 6959 2466
Opal Shoalhaven	02 4421 5911

General Enquiries 1300 362 481

Metro NSW

Opal Annandale	02 9569 6591
Opal Bossley Park	02 9610 6200
Opal Canterbury	02 9784 3823
Opal Cardinal Freeman	02 8799 6900
Opal Fernleigh	02 9809 3217
Opal Lourdes	02 8467 4550
Quakers Hill Nursing Home	02 8818 6500
Opal Seaside	02 9910 7600
Opal Stanmore	02 9519 3926
Opal Windward Manor	02 9370 0600

Central Victoria

Opal By The Bay	03 5976 5700
Opal Gillin Park	03 5559 0600
Opal Gracedale	03 9879 9300
Opal Hobsons Bay	03 9318 9155
Opal Meadowglen	03 9408 4591
Opal Roxburgh	03 9308 7355
Opal Salford Park	03 9847 2500
Opal South Valley	03 5244 4106
Opal Warrnambool	03 5562 3343

Gippsland Victoria

Opal Bairnsdale	03 5152 3744
Opal Lakeview	03 5155 3995
Opal Paynesville	03 5156 7634
Opal Sale	03 5143 1433
Opal Seahaven	03 5674 1700

Western Australia

Opal Applecross	08 9364 7722
Opal Armadale	08 9399 3132
Opal Bunbury Gardens	08 9721 5333
Opal Geraldton	08 9921 5010
Opal Murray River	08 9535 7466
Opal Narrogin	08 9881 2244

Feedback 1800 767 074

