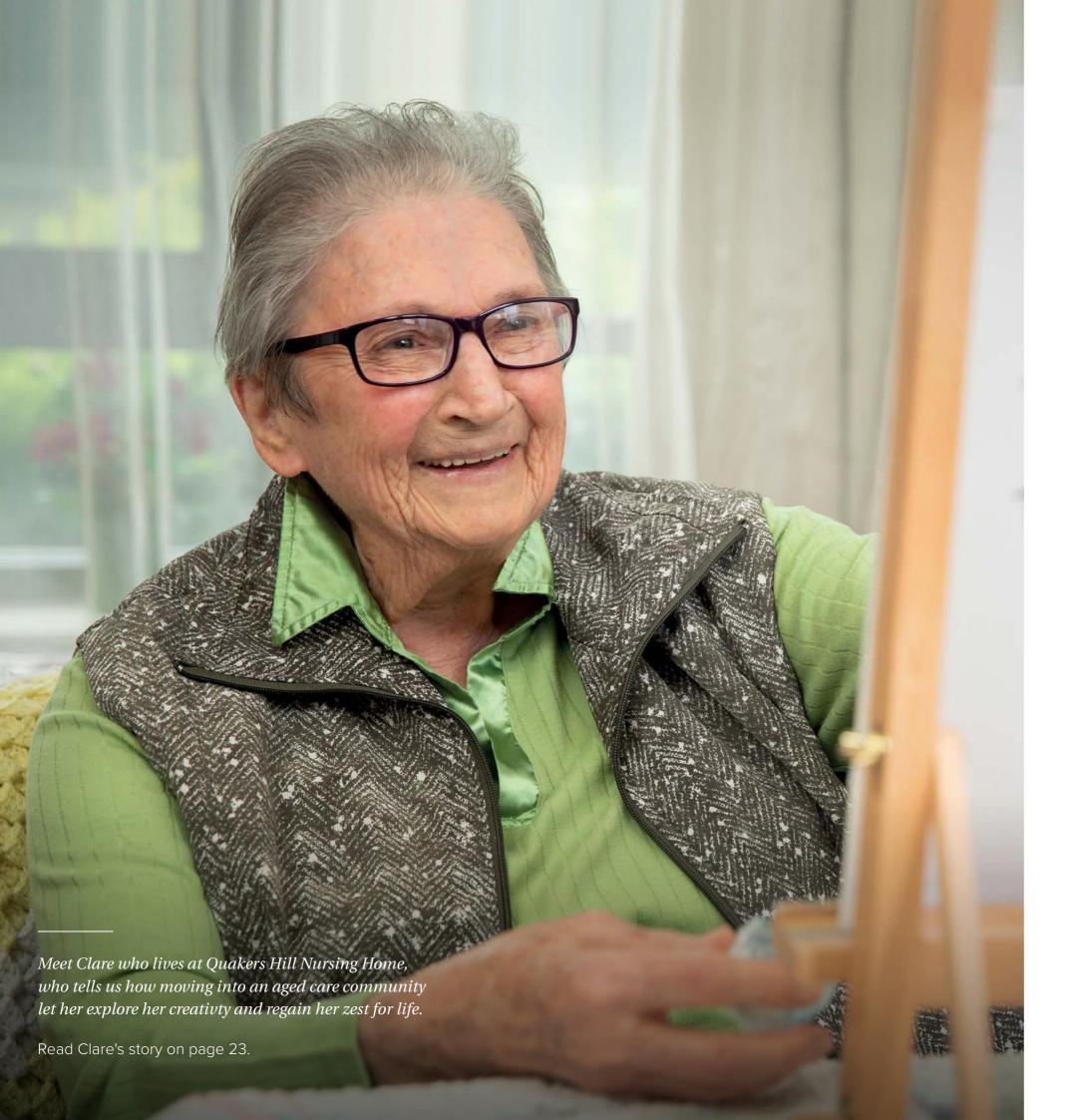
# OPAL EDITION 8 2019 FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITY CONNECTION See how a shared love of animals brings our care communities together. Meet Ken and Rex, building a friendship around shared interests. Find out how virtual reality is broadening horizons for our residents.



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WELCOME TO OPAL MOMENTS **OPAL MOMENTS EDITION 8** 

# Welcome to our eighth edition of Opal Moments

Welcome to the eighth edition of Opal Moments. I have had the opportunity, since commencing some four months ago, to visit many of our homes and have been fortunate to experience first-hand some of the wonderful stories shared in this edition. I love the events and stories we are sharing here!

At Opal our purpose is to bring joy to those we care for and these stories reflect the purpose in the lives of so many of our residents. I particularly loved reading Clare's story of how she has been able to return to painting now that she has time again for this much loved pastime. I have met Clare and seen her work at Quakers Hill Nursing Home. She reminds me of our shared human truth, and she inspires me.

So often we, as human beings, focus on our limitations and not on living. Since joining I have met or spoken to people living in our residences who since moving in have written books, rediscovered art or music, or who have shared reflections and great insights with me. I feel very privileged to be part of the Opal community.

Many of the stories in this edition show the many ways in which our residents lead a purposeful life by engaging in activities that bring joy to both heart and mind. On page 3, we share the ways in which engaging in gardening in a community environment can be a powerful way to build wellbeing and happiness. We explore the joy that companion animals bring on page 19, and learn about the surprising range of animals that also call Opal home.

The quality of food in aged care has been in the news recently. At Opal we are committed to striving for excellence in food service with consistently high-quality, tasty and nutritious food. On page 7, we look at changes in the way we are serving breakfast with hotel-style buffets which provide both choice and variety together with specialist masterclass training for our chefs.

On the technology front, we have been exploring innovative ways in which we can utilise new tools to share amazing experiences and to connect with friends and family.

After piloting virtual reality goggles to enable those we care for to experience trips to different lands, and revisit or have new experiences, we have ordered sets of virtual reality goggles for all our homes, which will be arriving mid-December. Find out more on page 15.

We also learn about the impressive career of Edwina Caesar, Regional General Manager of Queensland, and find out why she's so passionate about her career in healthcare.

During 2018 we celebrated some significant milestones including the 100th birthday of 30 of our residents.





Stephen Bali, Opal Chairman – Prof. Peter Shergold AC, Opal Aged Care CEO - Rachel Argaman, Member for Chifley - Hon. Ed Husic MP, Opal Blacktown residents Roy Pieme and Bert Owen.

The combined wisdom of these amazing individuals is something we treasure every day. One such piece of advice shared was something I keep remembering, "If you want to live longer, spend less time on your bum!"

There have also been many celebrations amongst our Opal team with numerous long-standing anniversaries. The first alumni of the Graduate Certificate in Aged

Care Management are to be warmly congratulated. This major achievement was made possible through an innovative collaboration between Opal Aged Care and Western Sydney University.

I hope you enjoy as much as I did, reading the news from across our homes commencing at page 33. I really encourage you to try Janet's carrot cake recipe drawn from Opal Endeavour's recipe book, Pinches and Handfuls - it's delicious!

And finally, we'd love to hear your thoughts about the magazine and the stories it contains. Get in touch at communications@opalagedcare.com.au

Warm regards,

Rachel Argaman Rachel Argaman

CEO



GROWING A SENSE OF JOY AND CONNECTION OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 



Opal residents find that gardening alongside friends within their community is a powerful way to build wellbeing and happiness.

As we age, we depend more on others; and this can have a negative impact on our emotions and mental health. Tending to plants, watching them grow, and reaping the rewards of flowers and fruit all contribute to a profound sense of empowerment and wellbeing.

"Being able to garden in the home makes you feel like you have your own little piece of Australia – and nothing tastes sweeter than a tomato you've grown yourself!" Gardening is enjoyed throughout the Opal family. Whether that means getting dirty, digging in the garden, or simply enjoying the natural setting through large sun-filled windows, everyone has an opportunity to be involved and experience the benefits in their own way.

Many Opal homes have community gardens where residents and Opal team members enjoy working together, tending their plots. As well as ornamental plants, all sorts of vegetables and herbs are grown, harvested and put to great use by our chefs in their delicious daily menus.

One of our keen gardeners, Rex at Quakers Hill Nursing Home, gets great enjoyment from the simple act of growing produce in his own patch of the garden. Rex enthuses, "Being able to garden in the home makes you feel like you have your own little piece of Australia – and nothing tastes sweeter than a tomato you've grown yourself!"

Opal Hillside is another home embracing the concept of community gardening. Raised garden beds were designed and built under the guidance of Lifestyle Coordinator, Ashleigh Yager and Maintenance Officer, Stephan Moore. The raised beds allow all residents to enjoy gardening, regardless of their physical ability.

Ashleigh explained, "At the start,

everyone was provided with step-bystep instructions on how to use the area. Now we find that our residents are organising and undertaking projects themselves and getting a great deal of satisfaction as a result.

"Our residents recently used vegetables and herbs from the garden to make their own pizzas in our inhouse kitchen. It was such a wonderful feeling for everyone to see their hard work result in a delicious meal they could enjoy together".

"It was such a wonderful feeling for everyone to see their hard work result in a delicious meal they could enjoy together."

By gardening together, residents forge deep personal connections—contributing to an individual sense of joy and fulfilment, as well as creating a stronger community. Across our family of homes, there are many similar examples of friendships formed through shared interests.

Having met on regular bus trips to the local Men's Shed, Ken and Rex uncovered a shared love of gardening and contributing to the community, which led to a great idea... The team at Quakers Hill Nursing Home provided all the seedlings and materials for the green thumbs to get to work. The result was not only countless potted plants to sell for charity, but also a deep and enduring friendship. With a glint in his eye, Ken says, "It's great to have someone else to get up to mischief with!"



The Opal Hillside gardening group working together to prepare beds for a bumper vegetable crop.



IT'S ALL A MATTER OF TASTE



Much more than just fuel for our bodies, food is essential to our wellbeing and happiness.

For aged care residents, food is arguably even more important. As we age, we have different nutritional requirements. With this in mind, all Opal menus are nutritionist-accredited to ensure our residents' dietary requirements are met. Whilst this is very important, it's only part of the picture. Moving into aged care is a big adjustment, and continuing to enjoy much-loved foods can make the transition easier. That's why providing residents with a choice of food is just as important as providing healthy, nutritious and tasty meals.

## Striving for excellence in food service

Opal's residents come from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds,

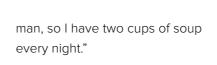
all with unique cuisines and signature dishes. Chefs hold 'food focus' meetings in the homes to find out which dishes residents love, and what they'd like to see more of. As a result, the Opal Recipe Book is constantly expanding to provide more delicious options.

Nathan Griffiths, Opal's Hospitality
Development Manager, explains,
"We're always striving to improve the
food, deliver consistent high quality,
and broaden the range. The recipe
book gives our chefs the flexibility
to tailor the menu to residents'
preferences. For example, in homes
with lots of residents of Asian heritage,
we feature more noodles and rice on
the menu, as well as offering yum cha
on a Friday instead of canapés. We've
also just added five or six Assyrian

dishes to the recipe book, because we've got several homes with lots of residents from the region."

"We expect our chefs to prepare restaurant-quality dishes, so we hold regular masterclasses where they get face-to-face, hands-on training. The next masterclass will be on cakes and desserts. That's definitely something I'm looking forward to."

Opal North Lakes resident, Bob, travelled the world during his international banking career, eating in many of the world's best restaurants and even dining with royalty. Bob says, "The food here suits me. There's good variety on offer. It's really nice to have a choice. At breakfast you have a choice of all the cereals, eggs, bacon – whatever you like. I'm a soup



Jeff Taylor, the head chef at Opal North Lakes forged a career in fine dining before entering the aged care sector three years ago. He's enthusiastic about the changes he's seeing, "It's an exciting time in the industry — Opal is embracing qualified chefs, bringing that restaurant experience into homes. Here, we prepare every single meal fresh and Opal invests in the equipment you'd see in top restaurants. We also get to take part in cooking masterclasses which are excellent."

Across all Opal's homes, chefs are encouraged to get feedback from residents. Jeff explains, "We make a point of tailoring the food to individual needs and preferences as much as we can. I get out into the dining room and ask residents directly about their likes and dislikes."

"We make a point of tailoring the food to individual needs and preferences as much as we can. I get out into the dining room and ask residents directly about their likes and dislikes."

Another Opal North Lakes resident, Florette, appreciates the personal approach, "I can't eat citrus fruit and the chefs have adapted the recipes for me, no problem. I love my hollandaise sauce, so I persuaded them to add it to the grilled salmon recipe. My husband died four years ago and after that I didn't really enjoy cooking for just me. I definitely eat a much more varied diet here."

Summing it all up, Nathan says, "Having built a career in fine dining, I never imagined myself working in aged care. I definitely had pre-conceptions about how it would be — everything cooked to within an inch of its life, no seasoning or flavour. But when I joined Opal, I was pleasantly surprised. We're providing fresh, nutritious, healthy food and we're working all the time to improve and expand on that. I tell the chefs to imagine they're cooking for their grandparents or family — everyone can relate to that."



Masterclasses bring Opal chefs together, inspiring creativity and refining skills.



Opal Lourdes residents Joan and Janet enjoy catching up over lunch.

### Hotel-style breakfast buffets are a winner

Nathan Griffiths, Opal's Hospitality Development Manager talks about innovations in breakfast service, "For most of our adult lives we choose what we want to eat. At Opal, we don't think that should change when you move into one of our homes. One way we're offering more choice is through the roll-out of our new hotel-style breakfast buffet, where residents can come and choose whatever they want to eat and come back as many times as they like. It's been incredibly popular. The knock-on effect has been increased involvement in social and lifestyle activities due to greater interaction between residents as they enjoy a leisurely breakfast together."

"Some residents prefer to eat in their rooms, and they've noticed an improvement too. In the past, all the breakfasts were prepared at the same time and then delivered to rooms on trays. Now, residents order breakfast whenever they're ready to eat. A team member prepares the order at the breakfast buffet, fresh and piping hot; and delivers it straight to the resident's room – no more cold toast!"

Residents at Opal Hobsons Bay have been enjoying their breakfast buffet since August this year.

General Manager, Michelle Bingham is enthusiastic about the positive changes she's seen in that time.

Michelle says, "On the first day we offered the breakfast buffet we only had a few residents participate but by the second day we had to arrange more tables and chairs – word had really got around and everyone wanted to be part of it!"

"It's had the effect of really bringing everyone together from around the home to share a meal together whereas previously they might have stayed in their room or in smaller groups. We always knew that providing choice and variety was going to be a great benefit, but what we didn't foresee was the close friendships that are being formed between people whose paths hadn't previously crossed. It really has had quite an amazing effect on building our community environment and in developing personal connections."

Opal Hobsons Bay residents Shirley and Marilyn hadn't had an opportunity to spend much time together prior to the breakfast buffet being introduced. They've now formed a firm friendship and don't miss a day sharing their breakfast together. Shirley shares, "I love to start the day with hot tea and toast and really look forward to a catch up with Marilyn. There's so much to choose from including poached eggs, bacon, sausages and mushrooms on toast. It's like being at a hotel and it's so nice to be able to take our time and chat".



We recently visited Opal Lourdes to chat with chef, Jason Cook and his food service team. Jason has had a stellar career, working in many top restaurants in Australia and overseas. Keen to explore other areas of food service, he joined Opal Lourdes just over a year ago and hasn't looked back.

Jason is clearly passionate about providing fresh, appetising and nutritious food for his residents and changing the perception of food in aged care. It's often said that, "we eat with our eyes" so we took the opportunity to capture a day in food at Opal Lourdes in pictures.

Feast your eyes on the dishes below. Enjoy!



**Breakfast:** English breakfast, a hearty start to the day.



**Afternoon tea:** Apple and cinnamon muffins, fresh from the oven.



**Morning tea:** Sliced fresh seasonal fruit.



Lunch: Thai chicken curry, a tasty favourite!



**Dinner:** Melt-in-the-mouth slow cooked lamb shanks.



**Dessert:** Crème brulèe, the perfect finish.



Each home has been carefully designed to provide the very best clinical care, in comfortable and inviting surroundings. With attractive living and dining areas, landscaped gardens and terraces, the homes also include hairdressing salons and on-site cafés open to the community.

Residents will choose from a range of room configurations, including singles, doubles and companion rooms, with ensuite bathrooms.

Each home also offers a specialist memory wing; a purpose-built space for residents with dementia, including sensory gardens that can be safely explored and enjoyed.

#### **Opal Alfred Cove**

Opal Alfred Cove is located in South West Perth, just 13 kilometres southwest of Perth CBD. With an undersupply of aged care beds in the area, the new home meets a very real community need. It also builds on Opal's existing commitment to

the community, with Opal Melville, Applecross and Murdoch located nearby. The population in this area is set to double by 2036, increasing the need for specialist aged care.

#### **Opal Bathurst**

Located minutes from the CBD and Bathurst Hospital, Opal's outstanding new home will replace the existing Kelso home, which has operated for 38 years. With cutting-edge new facilities and an additional 72 aged care beds, the new home will be a welcome addition for a community very much in need of additional high quality aged care services. While the facilities have been updated, the home will continue to deliver the same excellent standard of care the community expects from Opal.

#### **Opal Winston Hills**

This beautiful new home is co-located with Stockland's Willows Retirement Village in Winston Hills, Western Sydney. By providing a state-of-the-art aged

care home alongside the retirement village, Opal aims to give people access to the right level of care at the right time, without moving out of the community they know and love. Western Sydney has one of Australia's fastest-growing populations, and Winston Hills is one of a number of new homes Opal is providing in the area by 2020.

#### **Opal Springwood**

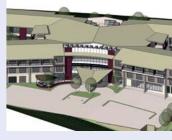
Located around 20 kilometres south of Brisbane, Springwood is part of the Logan City region in South East Queensland. The population aged over 70 is growing faster than the national average, creating a need for more residential aged care services in the area. This stunning new home will have a Wellness Centre, where residents and the local community can access specialist physiotherapy, after a stroke and other health or mobility problems.

#### New Opal homes opening across Australia in 2019









#### **Opal Alfred Cove**

- Alfred Cove, WA
- Complete March 2019
- 120 beds
- \$36m investment

#### **Opal Bathurst**

- Bathurst, NSW
- Complete April 2019
- 164 beds
- \$37.5m investment

#### **Opal Winston Hills**

- Winston Hills, NSW
- Complete May 2019
- 95 beds
- \$33.2m investment

#### **Opal Springwood**

- Springwood, QLD

Complete August 2019

- 140 beds
- \$35.7m investment





Opal residents are embracing exciting new technology and sharing experiences they never thought possible

Using VR headsets, residents are transported to places they've only dreamt of visiting; and to experience activities they've always loved or wanted to try. Snorkelling in New Caledonia and floating over the English countryside in a hot air balloon are among the breathtakingly realistic experiences on offer.

At Opal we are always looking for ways to make life more fulfilling and joyful for residents in our homes. We're very conscious that, as people age, they become more dependent on others and their horizons narrow, which can have an impact on wellbeing. VR technology gives our residents the chance to experience activities and destinations they may not otherwise be able to. We've been able to create a library of amazing experiences, which everyone can enjoy from the comfort of an armchair, as part of our daily lifestyle program.

The VR technology was originally trialled at Opal Bankstown. Doris was one of the first to enjoy the experience, saying, "For the last 15 years I've always wanted to go back home to Sri Lanka. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the crystal coastline; it felt like I was really there."

"Everyone is thrilled with the VR technology, and it's great to see them smiling and laughing together as they describe their experiences."

Peter Pargovski, Opal Bankstown's Lifestyle Coordinator said, "Everyone is thrilled with the VR technology, and it's great to see them smiling and laughing together as they describe their experiences. We're really sparking conversations and connections for our residents." Opal Bankstown resident, Ann, agrees, "My favourite part is when we share what we just experienced with the headsets, it's a real conversation starter."

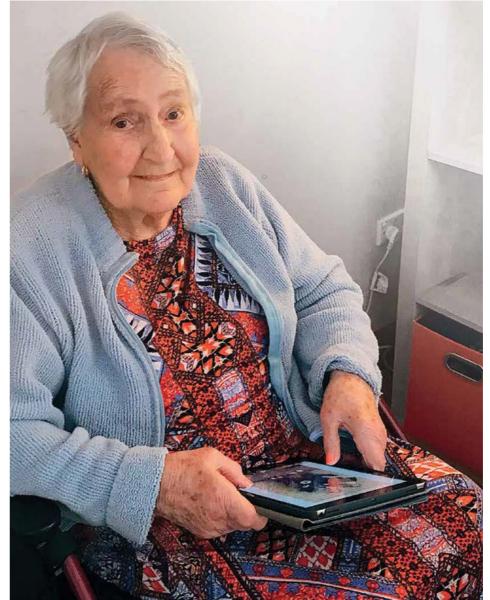
The VR headset is lightweight, portable and simple to operate. Peter says, "It takes five minutes to set up a group of six people, and we can monitor what they're seeing on the screens, which helps us talk about the experience with them. One of the biggest benefits is that everyone can use the VR headsets, regardless of their mobility. That inclusivity is an important aspect of any great lifestyle program."

The VR program is part of Opal's mission to redefine the aged care experience. Providing lifestyle activities that are fun, engaging, and tailored to individual preferences fosters a sense of wellbeing and community engagement. Peter explains, "Technology like VR can be completely personalised and has the potential to bring real moments of joy into the lives of those we care for... that's what we hope to achieve with all the lifestyle

activities we offer."

STRENGTHENING FAMILY CONNECTIONS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 





Opal Murray River resident, Winifred enjoys looking at family photos on the iPad.

"We utilise the iPads for traditional functions like memory games and playing scrabble... What is more surprising is the way we've been able to help residents connect with their families even when they're not around."

Around six months ago, Lifestyle Coordinator, Maddison Best started exploring different ways in which the home's iPads might be used to support everyday activities that the residents enjoy.

Maddison explains, "We utilise the iPads for traditional functions like memory games and playing scrabble and we also make use of the musical capabilities in group activities. What is more surprising is the way we've been able to help residents connect with their families even when they're not

around." She goes on to say, "We have one lovely resident with dementia who becomes concerned about her family when they are not with her. We recorded a short video in which her family let her know that they are well and looking after themselves.

Being able to play the video whenever she is worried really helps to allay her fears. We've now started to do this with other families and we've found it's a wonderful way to support our residents and ensure that we are caring for both body and mind."





You don't need to be a scientist to appreciate the positive impact that animals can have on people. Anyone who's experienced the tiny paws of a puppy, the comforting cluck of a chicken or the tickly whiskers of a rabbit will recognise the feeling of joy animals can bring.

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL





Science does, however, help us understand why this positive effect occurs. Just a few minutes of interaction with an animal triggers an amazing reaction in the human body which lowers the stress hormone, cortisol; and increases the feel-good hormone, serotonin. It turns out, there really is science behind that warm and fuzzy feeling.

Australians certainly love their pets. A remarkable 83 per cent have owned a pet at some stage in their lives. Having to leave a treasured pet when moving into a care home can result in feelings

of loss and loneliness. With this in mind, many Opal homes regularly welcome pets, accompanied by family members, to spend quality time with their owners and other residents.

These visits provide a positive mutual topic for conversation and can stimulate memory and reminiscence.

For those living with dementia, studies have shown that interaction with animals can produce a measured decrease in agitated behaviours.

The positive effects can also extend to a reduction in tension, fatigue and

confusion. With their friendly and non-threatening manner, animals can help people with dementia to be more interactive in social settings.

"Just a few minutes of interaction with an animal triggers an amazing reaction in the human body which lowers the stress hormone, cortisol; and increases the feel-good hormone, serotonin." ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL
OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 









The variety of animals that live in and visit our homes is remarkable. From the smallest day-old chick, to the largest gentle giant, Great Dane; every day there are countless, heart-warming interactions between people and animals across the family of Opal homes.

It's not unusual to walk into an Opal home and find a faithful dog flopped at the feet of a resident or a cat curled up in another resident's lap, but one regular visitor to Opal Murdoch might come as a bigger surprise. Black
Jack the Clydesdale horse is a gentle
giant who has caused quite a stir.
Suffering a rare medical condition
Black Jack was lovingly hand-raised
by his devoted owner. His precarious
start to life meant he has required
a lot of human interaction over the
years and it's clearly something that
he's comfortable with. Whilst he has a
lovely life on five acres with his other
horsey mates, Black Jack's owner felt
his delightful nature should be shared

with others. From here his work as a therapy horse has developed.

Black Jack visits Opal Murdoch to spend time with residents. The most surprising thing is that he even ventures inside the home. It's no impediment if residents aren't mobile – he simply goes to them, visiting them at their bedside.

Smaller, but no less impactful are the dogs that visit Opal homes together with volunteers from the Delta Society

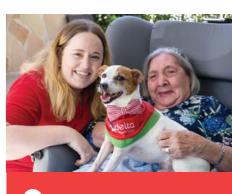
program. These amazing human and canine teams come each week to offer a chat, a floppy ear to listen or a paw to shake; everyone looks forward to their visits.

Opal Windward Manor receives a weekly visit from Elle and her charming little Jack Russell, Henry, who has become something of a celebrity around the home. One of Henry's favourite people to visit is Pat.

A former dance teacher, Pat now has limited mobility – but that doesn't

stop her making the most of Henry's weekly visits. She is always the last stop on Henry's rounds so that he can spend a little extra time with her. Pat has a picture of him in her room, and everyone in the home knows that the two have a special bond.

For more on the joy that companion animals bring to Opal homes, watch the heart-warming story about Henry by The Telegraph journalist Gillian McNally.



Watch Henry's visit to Opal Windward
Manor: opalagedcare.com.au/news/
pat-and-henrys-special-bond



Moving into Quakers Hill Nursing Home has given Clare the opportunity to revive her love of painting.

Clare Renneberg's room at Quakers
Hill Nursing Home is bathed in light
and filled with countless canvases, an
easel and all the trappings of an artist
at work. It's not hard to guess that
Clare's passion is painting, but despite
her artistic flair, Clare had not wielded
a brush for many years before moving
into the home. Sadly, the demands of
daily life had left her without the time
or energy for her beloved pastime.

"I feel revived since I've moved here. I'm so well looked after that my health has improved and now, I have time to do the things I enjoy."

Clare told us, "I feel revived since I've moved here. I'm so well looked after that my health has improved and now,

I have time to do the things I enjoy."

She adds, "People think you have to give up the things you love when you move into an aged care home, but I've found that's simply not true. I've been able to return to painting when I previously thought it might have been all over for me."

Clare says the team at Quakers
Hill Nursing Home encourage her
creative pursuits, "Often a team
member will come to me with a
photograph of something that's
important to them and it inspires
me to create something special."

Many of Clare's works are sold to raise money for a cancer research charity that the home supports. Clare says, "It feels good to have a way that I can give back and make a contribution".

Encouraged by the Opal team, Clare began sharing her skills with other

residents, developing some close friendships. Clare explains, "I've met people from all walks of life and been able to share my love of art with them. The residents around me feel like my neighbours – there's a real community spirit."





A CAREER IN CARING

Edwina Caesar, Regional General Manager Queensland, talks about her time at Opal and what she loves about working in aged care.



Edwina Caesar is Opal's regional general manager in Queensland, where she is responsible for 16 homes, with a 17th to be built in the coming year.

Edwina migrated to Australia 25 years ago, having completed her nursing training in Fiji. Arriving in Australia, she completed bridging qualifications and began practising nursing, "Coming from a developing country to a developed country was one of the most daunting things I've ever done. I didn't know the machinery or the systems, there was so much to learn. It was really a matter of sink or swim."

Edwina decided to swim. Within three years of arriving in Australia she became one of the youngest clinical nurse consultants in palliative care.

After having her first child, she moved into part-time work, taking her first steps into management as

after-hours supervisor in a small hospital. Relocating to Queensland from New South Wales, she took on the role of state palliative care coordinator with a community based organisation and then patient flow manager for Ramsay Health Care.

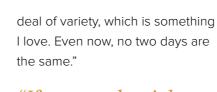
A chance meeting at an industry function saw Edwina head-hunted to join Brisbane's Mater Private Hospital and run the largest rehabilitation unit in Queensland. She subsequently stepped into the role of nursing director at the hospital. During her tenure, Edwina was responsible for redesigning work flows and finding efficiencies that enabled the hospital to retain its people following the Global Financial Crisis.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) soon came knocking and Edwina joined the company to work with Queensland Health on patient flow, Lean methodology and driving

efficiency. As part of this role, Edwina researched new markets for PwC and was struck by the huge potential of the growing aged care sector, "It was clear aged care was going to experience explosive growth... I began to feel it was where I had to be".

Edwina took voluntary redundancy from PwC to pursue her goal of entering the aged care sector. Her first aged care role was with The Salvation Army, managing one of their biggest facilities and successfully taking on accreditation a mere six weeks after starting. Edwina was subsequently asked to join RSL Care where she undertook a number of roles before becoming regional manager and then acting chief operating officer.

Edwina joined Opal Aged Care in December 2016, as regional general manager in Queensland. Asked what she loves about aged care, Edwina explains, "Aged care offers a great



"If you set the right expectations for your team and provide great customer service then you'll have happy residents and families."

She adds, "If you set the right expectations for your team and provide great customer service then you'll have happy residents and families. People who come into aged care have lived full and fruitful lives, and coming into aged care hasn't changed who they are. It's our job to ensure we recognise and respect that. That's what makes it the most rewarding job I've ever done."

Edwina explains the qualities that are important in a regional general

manager role, "You need to be able to think of 10 things at once and know the status of everything that's on the go. At the same time, it's important to be patient and calm. You also need to be very financially astute and customer focused because people entering aged care today have understandably high standards and expect to receive value."

Success for Edwina is all about developing her team's capabilities, "I want my managers to be self-reliant and sure of their abilities. I want them to be confident in sharing their strengths with their peers. We've done a lot of work on culture and peer support to create an environment where people help each other to improve their leadership capabilities."

Edwina sums up what's different about working in aged care, "There's no comparison really between aged care and acute care or private health.

In aged care there's greater breadth of roles, together with much faster advancement if you're of a high calibre and prepared to put in the effort. Opal is one of the biggest providers in the aged care space, which means you could move to multiple cities, or live somewhere rural if that's your preference.

There's so much opportunity.

"I would urge anyone considering a career in aged care to come and see us. The perception people have of aged care today is not the reality. It's an exciting place to be, with innovations happening all the time. The connection you can have with your residents is phenomenal – I would never go back to acute care after this."



Opal Kawana Waters on Queensland's beautiful Sunshine Coast.

OPAL PROUDLY CONGRATULATES OUR GRADUATES

OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 

# Opal proudly congratulates our graduates

Supporting the professional development of leaders across our homes is part of our commitment to excellence in aged care.

In a unique and innovative initiative, Opal has partnered with Western Sydney University (WSU) to offer clinical managers and general managers the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and expertise through further study. Supporting the professional development of leaders across our homes is part of our commitment to excellence in aged care.

We've collaborated with WSU to design the Graduate Certificate in Aged Care Management specifically for Opal team members. The course concentrates on honing the skills and knowledge our people need to provide the highest quality of care for our residents.

Once they complete the Graduate Certificate, participants can elect to obtain further qualifications, including a Graduate Diploma and ultimately a Masters Degree.

The graduation ceremony was held at WSU's
Parramatta campus, and was especially memorable
for the graduates, as they proudly received their testamurs
from Chancellor of WSU and Opal Chairman, Professor
Peter Shergold AC.





Left to right: Naomy Mulwa, Professor Peter Shergold AC – Chancellor, WSU and Opal Chairman, Hayley Crespi, Tara Anglo and Hamoun Mohammadi graduated in absentia.

#### About our graduates

#### Hamoun Mohammadi – Care Manager, Opal North Lakes

Hamoun started his career with Opal as care manager at Opal Abbey Gardens in 2015. Subsequently, Hamoun used his extensive experience to successfully commission teams for two new homes — Opal Kawana Waters and Opal North Lakes.

Hamoun offers some advice for anyone thinking of an aged care career with Opal, "The Opal team comprises like-minded, supportive and competent professionals collectively aimed at providing the best quality care for our residents. There are a lot of opportunities for personal and professional growth and you always feel valued as a team member. I always feel good going to work and that is really important to me."

#### Naomy Mulwa - Care Manager, Opal Denhams Beach

Naomy started with Opal in 2016 as a registered nurse. Keen to advance her career in aged care, Naomy concentrated on increasing her skills and experience. She was promoted to clinical nurse consultant and ultimately her current role of care manager.

Originally interested in acute care, Naomy soon realised that aged care was her true calling. She has advice for other young nurses planning their career, "I want to let student nurses know that in aged care you'll really get

to expand your skills beyond purely clinical. You're really going to build on your communication and management skills. You'll manage a team, you'll support residents and their families, and you'll be responsible for making those relationships work".

#### Hayley Crespi – Commissioning General Manager, Opal Carine

Hayley started at Opal Armadale as a registered nurse before becoming care manager and ultimately general manager. She is currently in the role of commissioning general manager for Opal's state-of-the-art new home in WA; Opal Carine. Hayley has had her hands full managing study, a busy role and a young son. Hayley says that success in her role means creating a wonderful home with a great culture. On a personal level, she'd like to be a strong leader, delivering high quality care and driving a successful business. "My study has given me the tools to support these goals".

#### Tara Anglo - Care Manager, Opal Murray River

Tara commenced her career with Opal in 2011, as a registered nurse at Opal Murray River. She was promoted to care manager early this year. Sharing her thoughts on working in aged care, Tara says, "Ensuring our residents have the quality of life they deserve is what I really love." She found the course challenging, but said it provided valuable insights which she has been able to apply to her daily care of residents. Tara says, "Opal is a company that really supports its team members, their passions and their development goals."

# THANK YOU for your service!

Each year we celebrate milestone service awards with our team members. It's just a small way that we can say thank you for the difference our team makes to the lives of those we care for every day.

This year over 650 team members across the country celebrated milestone service awards. Each received a certificate and hand-crafted commemorative badge that they can wear with pride. Those achieving awards for 25 years or more were presented with a badge set with a striking Australian Opal. Throughout the year we recognised 16 team members for 25 years and 9 for 30 years. Notably, Lorrae Sullivan (Opal Dubbo) and Janice King (Opal Maitland) achieved 35 years, while Hazel Samuels (Opal Armadale) celebrated an extraordinary 40 years of service.

Thank you to the whole Opal team who continually work to make a difference in every interaction, every act of kindness, every friendly smile to ensure that we fulfill our purpose of bringing joy to those we care for.



















**CELEBRATING A CENTURY OPAL MOMENTS EDITION 8** 



# Celebrating a century

During 2018 we have been thrilled to share in the celebration of the extraordinary milestone of 100th birthdays with 30 of our residents. The combined experience and wisdom of this special group of people is something that we cherish each and every day.

Our centenarians have witnessed immense change in their lifetimes. In 1918, the year of their birth, the final battles of World War I were being waged on the western front. Our monarch was King George V and Billy Hughes was

Notably Australia saw its very first electric train service begin between Newmarket and Flemington in Melbourne and two memorable Australian children's literary classics were published – Snugglepot & Cuddlepie and The Magic Pudding.

In sport, South Sydney Rabbitohs were champions of the NSW Rugby League season and South Melbourne Swans defeated Collingwood to become VFL premiers while Night Watch won the Melbourne Cup.





Madame Wong, Opal Ashmore





Joyce Coyne, Opal Greenfern Place



Win Froude, Opal Melville







plepor & Gdalepie

**OPAL MOMENTS EDITION 8** 

# From our hames

Our care homes are vibrant communities, full of life and laughter. We've captured some of the special moments shared between our residents and team on the following pages.









The residents at Opal Abbey Gardens have been busy creating their own low-maintenance pets.

Inspired to recycle everyday objects from around the home, residents have enjoyed creating a menagerie of metallic pets in all shapes and sizes. The new and improved sausage dogs have proven particularly popular. There is no feeding, medical bills or little surprises to pick up – just lots of hugs and smiles.

The team of little dachshunds now brighten up various places around the home and have proven to be fun alternatives to gnomes in the garden.



Opal By the Bay, was honoured to receive the Mornington Peninsula Best Bites Food Award 2018 in the aged care category. The food awards program assesses local food businesses on measures they are taking to provide safe and healthy food; use environmentally sustainable business practices and provide safe and accessible food premises.

The home was judged runner up last year, so it's a real achievement to be awarded first place this year. The award is testament to the care and attention the food service team at Opal By the Bay place on sourcing fresh, nutritious raw ingredients which are used to make meals from scratch every day.



Pim Witte accepts the award

FROM OUR HOMES
OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 



#### Opal Blacktown

The resident music group at Opal Blacktown has a growing reputation. Their repertoire of songs is increasing weekly, including many original pieces. They recently received a great boost with the addition of a grand piano which will be used to accompany the other instruments. Roy, who is a founding member of the group is pictured here tickling the ivories and filling the Opal Blacktown lounge with wonderfully soothing melodies. We're looking forward to seeing what creativity this new addition unleashes in the group!









The team at Opal Carine recently commenced a wonderful program with the international cycling initiative, Cycling Without Age. Operating with a mission to connect elderly people with the community and the outdoors, volunteers take participants out on specially built trishaw bikes, enabling them to experience a wonderful sense of freedom.

Cycling Without Age operates in 37 countries, with 1,500 trishaws and over 50,000 people enjoying rides each year. Barbara Leal, Lifestyle Coordinator was enthusiastic about the first outing, "We could not have asked for a more perfect day with regards to weather and wind, the ladies can't stop talking about it and how they can't wait to go again. This is a really great program and we're looking forward to getting Opal more involved with their organisation."

Another trip is already planned and Barbara has been speaking with other Opal homes in the area who are equally excited about the possibilities that the experience may provide for their residents.



Opal Caloundra celebrates Dementia Awareness Month in style



#### Opal Caloundra

Dementia Awareness Month is Dementia
Australia's national awareness campaign
held in September every year. The aim of the
campaign is to encourage Australians to gain
a better understanding of dementia and learn
how they can assist those living with dementia
in our communities. The theme for 2018 was
'Small actions, Big difference'.

Many of our homes plan events throughout September and this year Opal Caloundra did it in style with residents, family, friends and team members joining in a morning tea. Everyone dressed in purple and shared food that brought back special memories from their past. Stories were shared from childhood and growing up as well as discussing ways that everyone may be able to support both those living with dementia and their carers.



#### Opal Endeavour

The team at Opal Endeavour again got behind a very important initiative supporting mental health. R U OK?'s mission is to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life. It's something that resonates strongly with the Opal team and is applicable to everyone, regardless of age. Find out more at <a href="https://www.ruok.org.au">www.ruok.org.au</a>



FROM OUR HOMES OPAL MOMENTS **EDITION 8** 



#### Opal Hillside

Residents at Opal Hillside have some very special friends that visit them regularly and the visits are eagerly anticipated by both the young, and the young at heart. Lifestyle Coordinator, Ashleigh Yager explains, "The program has been established for our residents living with dementia to maintain a community connection and promote a sense of purpose. Our Opal Hillside residents effortlessly respond to their role of adult and nurturer as the preschool children enter their home. The smiles are infectious and the ambiance is joyous." There are a range of activities available at each session. These include colouring, doll play, floor games, music and reading. Residents assist the lifestyle team to set up and run each session which contributes to a sense of purpose and engagement. Adults and children are free to connect over activities that interest them.



## Opal Macquarie Place

Recently, a group of creative residents at Opal Macquarie Place decided to write a poem together. There was a lot of laughter as they collaborated and put together the sweet and quirky prose. We think there are some rather talented poets in our midst!

#### I Love You Because

I love you because your eyes are so twinkly bright and blue

That I can't stop thinking about you...

I love you because your hair is so soft, so shiny and pretty

That reminds me of a cuddly little kitty.

I love you because your skin is so smooth, so velvety and milky

That when I touch you it feels so silky.

I love you because your lips are delicious, so sensual and kissable

That when I kiss you I feel so rejuvenated

That I will almost need to be sedated.

I love you because you are fun, happy, loving and understanding.

You are loyal, caring and kind

That's why I can't get you out of my mind.

There are so many reasons why I love you but the main reason is because of who you are.





#### Opal Mudgee

During October, which is Breast Cancer awareness month, the team and residents at Opal Mudgee really got behind the McGrath Foundation, Pink Up Your Town initiative for the third year running. Mudgee had the honour of being the first town in Australia to embrace the concept and each year the displays of pink have exceeded the last.

The fundraising event aims to get entire towns involved. As an important part of the local community, the Opal Mudgee residents and team have been keen contributors right from the start. This year, team members and families supplied a range of pink delicacies for the afternoon tea which was enjoyed by numerous guests including local business owners, a local breast cancer nurse, residents, families and friends. Together they raised almost \$500 for this very worthy cause.

Visit the following link if you would like to find out how your town could get in the pink next year:

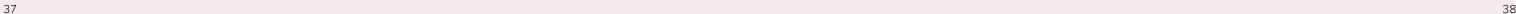
www.mcgrathfoundation.com.au/get-involved/pinkup-your-town/

#### Opal Melville

The team at Opal Melville put on a wonderful lunch in celebration of Father's Day. Residents and their families dined on a sumptuous meal prepared by chef, Gerry and his team. The guests enjoyed Gerry's signature Atlantic salmon with prawns or braised scotch fillet followed by cream-filled profiteroles with chocolate sauce. Entertainment included a live band and dancing to finish off a really memorable afternoon.







FROM OUR HOMES **OPAL MOMENTS EDITION 8** 

#### Opal North Lakes



The residents at Opal North Lakes regularly enjoy getting involved in cooking and especially enjoy sampling the fruits of their labours afterwards. Desserts are their speciality and they have developed an extensive repertoire so far.

Katie Fagan, Lifestyle Coordinator shares, "Everyone gets involved any way they can. Some people read out the recipe, others measure ingredients and mix and others cook. The entire group decide on the upcoming menus. The group gets a great deal of enjoyment out of preparing something that can be shared with everyone in the home." So far some of the favourites include: trifle, impossible pie and apple crumble. The group are currently planning their Christmas menu with mince pies sure to feature.



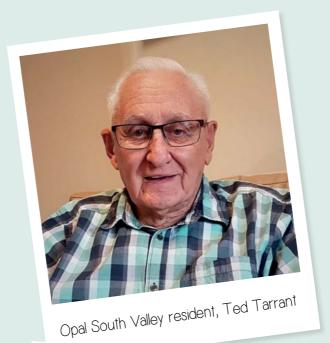


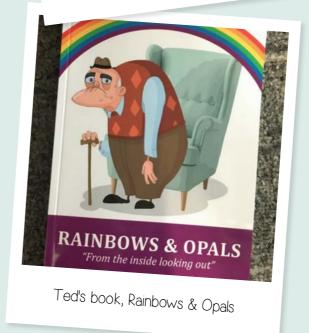
#### Opal Sale

Opal Sale recently celebrated a milestone of providing 25 years of care to the local community. A celebratory dinner was enjoyed by numerous local community members, residents and their families together with the Opal team. The event was attended by Councillor Carmel Ripper with memorable and heart-felt speeches delivered by the original owner and builder of Opal Sale, Graeme Croft; together with Richard Ellis and Dr lain Nicolson who were all honoured to join in the celebrations.

Opal Sale's chef together with Executive Chef for Opal in Victoria, Diogo Rocha, sourced local fresh produce to create and cook on-site, a delicious three course dinner. Celebrations continued with service awards for three team members who have worked at Opal Sale for 25 years. Marian McKenzie, Gail McKenzie and Kerry Griffiths were the first care providers at Opal Sale in 1993 and remain team members today. They were recognised for their outstanding service and commitment to the residents in their care with a special presentation.







#### Opal South Valley



Opal South Valley resident, Ted Tarrant recently published a thought-provoking essay on life in his Opal home. Dedicated to the memory of his dear wife Edna, the essay provides an extraordinary insight into every aspect of life in the place Ted calls home. The piece clearly reflects his keen sense of humour and positive outlook on life and is both witty and moving. We are delighted that Ted has agreed to share his thoughts with us for Opal Moments. Here he reflects on happiness; on living with purpose, and on his Opal family.

#### Truth is stranger than fiction

By Ted Tarrant, Opal South Valley

Looking back over my life, what seemed fiction was truth. If I told my story to Darryl Kerrigan (Michael Caton - The Castle), he would comment, "Ya' gotta be dreamin".

Maybe I am.

Teaching scholarships, attending universities, lecturing, College Principal appointments, world travel, a wonderful marriage, children and good health came all too easily. My achievements and successes far outnumbered my failures. What else could I want?

Well, my life is not yet finished.

I am happily retired at Opal. Life has not been as generous to every resident. I realised that as age creeps upon them, their friends fade away, their relatives are busy pursuing their own vocations, indisposition and immobility hold them in its lonely grasp. Nevertheless, they are happy and contented in their own unassuming ways.

But, I was taking and not giving. I still had something to give.

I needed to engage, to befriend them all, to smile with me, talk with me, walk with me, share their memories and laugh with me. The joy on their faces and their willingness to give me a smile and a "high five" as I pass by is reward enough. I have found another sense of purpose. I am family.

Harry Callahan (Clint Eastwood) would say, "Make my day".



# Janet's carrot cake

#### Ingredients

#### Cake

2 cups self-raising flour

ANET'S CARROT CAKE RECIPE

- 2 cups sugar
- l teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- l tablespoon cinnamon
- 3 cups grated carrots
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups oil
- l cup walnuts

#### Icing

1/2 cup butter or margarine

250g cream cheese (softened)

- 4 1/2 cups icing sugar
- l teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Method

- 1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
- 2. Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl and set aside.
- 3. Using a blender, blend one cup of carrots with an egg and 1/2 cup oil. Repeat twice, then add nuts and final egg.
- 4. Combine with dry ingredients, mix well.
- 5. Pour into a greased 25cm tube pan (loaf tin).
- 6. Bake at 180°C for one hour.
- 7. To make frosting, cream butter and cream cheese together.
  Add icing sugar and vanilla extract until smooth.
- 8. Spread icing on cool cake.

## WORDSEARCHPUZZLE

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ANNUALS GERMINATE
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DAY GROW
FLOWERS HARVEST
FRUIT HOE

NIGHT RAIN SEEDS SHRUBS

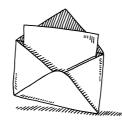
SOIL

SUMMER
SUNSHINE
TROWEL
VEGETABLES
WATER

WORDS OF THANKS

# Words of thanks

Our homes often receive thank you letters from families and friends expressing their gratitude for our wonderful team. Here is a selection.



#### Opal Wallgrove (NSW)

I just want to take a minute to praise your staff at Opal Wallgrove in Lakemba. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation for the kindness and excellent care of my mother during her respite care. The staff members have created such a caring environment with an impeccably high standard of care, delivered with such warmth.

Before my mother came to Opal Wallgrove, I was very nervous and daunted by past experiences in previous nursing homes. The staff were all so kind and reassuring when she arrived, which took away a lot of my apprehension. I was impressed by the bedside manner and compassion shown, something you rarely find these days. Not one of my questions or concerns went unanswered. The staff demonstrated total commitment to caring for my mother on a daily basis throughout her stay.

We know that sometimes we may not show our appreciation as effectively as we might. However, I would like to offer special appreciation and thanks to General Manager, Sandeep and Clinical Manager, Dean, for their exceptional dedication, outstanding professional performance and for going above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks to the RN's and nursing staff for their dedication and compassion, as well as their understanding. They kept my mother well cared for and comfortable, with a kind word and a smile. A big thank you to the housekeeping staff who kept my mother's room immaculate and tidy. I'd also like to thank the chef and kitchen staff, who all played such an important part in my mother's comfort, care and well-being. All your efforts are appreciated.

On a closing note, thank you for employing the right "A" team of people to Opal Wallgrove. It makes the world of difference when one has a place to call home away from home.

#### Opal Melville (WA)

Thank you so much for creating such a warm and loving home for our dear Mum. Opal Melville is truly unique in aged care – not only for the beautiful facilities and surrounds but also the exceptional team of carers, ENs and RNs you bring together. A special empathy and optimism permeates your beautiful home. We feel so fortunate that we found you for our Mum. Thank you deeply.

#### Opal Caloundra (QLD)

I would like to take this opportunity to say how much we appreciated, both the wonderful clinical care and loving support given to my intellectually handicapped younger brother by ALL the staff, during his years as a very happy resident in the pleasant and well-appointed home at Opal Caloundra.

Whenever we visited we were always impressed by the staff to resident ratio which meant that his sometimes difficult needs were very well catered for, and he was never alone.

Words are really inadequate to convey our deep respect and gratitude, and we recommend Opal Aged Care – Caloundra, to the world! Thank you!

#### Opal by the Bay (VIC)

I am a resident of Opal by the Bay. I am writing to say I am very happy here. I have been here 7 or 8 weeks and just love it. The meals are lovely and the people who give me a shower, make my bed, come to take me down to breakfast, lunch and dinner are very good. I have no complaints and cannot think of anything that would be an improvement!! I love all the ladies here, even the odd gentleman too!

# Our care homes

**General enquiries** 1300 362 481 **Feedback** 1800 767 074

Metro NSW	
Opal Anita Villa	02 4780 0600
Opal Annandale	02 8585 1900
Opal Austral House	02 8925 6400
Opal Bankstown	02 9708 9400
Opal Blacktown	02 9852 9600
Opal Bossley Park	02 9426 1500
Opal Canterbury	02 9784 2111
Opal Cardinal Freeman	02 8799 7000
Opal Glen Lynn	02 9643 3200
Opal Lourdes	02 8467 3200
Opal Netherby	02 9372 3800
Opal Oceanview	02 9910 7100
Opal Palm Grove	02 8978 3100
Quakers Hill Nursing Home	02 8818 6500
Opal Seaside	02 9910 7600
Opal Stanmore	02 8594 6900
Opal Wallgrove	02 9784 3100
Opal Windward Manor	02 9370 0600
Opal Winston Hills	02 9865 1800
Northern NSW, Hunter and Centra	al Coast

Northern NSW, Hunter and Central Coast	
Opal Berkeley Village	02 4337 0000
Opal Coffs Harbour	02 6659 4800
Opal Florence Tower	07 5590 2800
Opal Glenmere	02 4356 2900
Opal Hillside / Hillside Assisted Living	02 4904 0100
Opal Killarney Vale / Killarney Vale Assisted Living	02 4345 2700
Opal Macquarie Place	02 4944 1300
Opal Maitland	02 4015 3000
Opal Murwillumbah	02 6670 9700
Opal Norah Head	02 4352 8900
Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens	02 4980 0000
Opal Rutherford	02 4015 3800
Opal Tweed Heads	07 5599 6900

Southern, Western and Country NSW	
Opal Bathurst	02 6334 7000
Opal Cherrywood Grove	02 6363 4300
Opal Dubbo	02 5852 1600
Opal Denhams Beach	02 4412 3400
Opal Endeavour / Endeavour Assisted Living	02 4754 6000
Opal Mudgee	02 6370 6200
Opal Narrandera	02 6959 5300
Opal Shoalhaven	02 4429 1200

Queensland	
Opal Abbey Gardens	07 5495 9000
Opal Ashmore	07 5510 1800
Opal Burpengary Gardens	07 3481 6100
Opal Caloundra	07 5390 0200
Opal Greenfern Place	07 3809 1400
Opal Kawana Waters	07 5390 5100
Opal Kirra Beach	07 5587 5500
Opal Leamington	07 5557 7700
Opal Nambour	07 5444 9700
Opal North Lakes	07 3384 2700
Opal Raffin Place	07 3723 0400
Opal Raynbird Place	07 3500 9300
Opal Springwood	07 3722 9400
Opal Varsity Rise	07 5554 8100

ochta viotoria	
Opal by the Bay	03 5958 6600
Opal Gillin Park	03 5559 0600
Opal Gracedale	03 9844 8000
Opal Hobsons Bay	03 8325 7600
Opal Meadowglen	03 8405 5200
Opal Roxburgh	03 9303 6800
Opal Salford Park	03 9847 2500
Opal Somerville	03 5977 9922
Opal South Valley	03 5223 0900
Opal Warrnambool	03 5563 0600

Central Victoria

Gippsiand Victoria	
Opal Bairnsdale	03 5153 7200
Opal Lakeview	03 5179 5500
Opal Paynesville	03 5153 8400
Opal Seahaven	03 5671 6000
Opal Sale	03 5142 1600

08 6330 0400
08 9234 3300
08 9726 6300
08 9378 5500
08 9921 5010
08 9424 0500
08 6332 6200
08 9550 2500