

Opal Moments

Welcome to
Opal Aged Care

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

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specialist aged care

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Photo: Mary Samartzis,
Opal Roxburgh resident.

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

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Our mission to deliver outstanding aged care to Australians would not be possible without our wonderful staff. We wanted to officially recognise their continued dedication and commitment to our residents and families, with some much-deserved awards.

Welcome to our fourth edition of Opal Moments

It's been an exciting time here at Opal since our last edition – including our first anniversary as Opal Aged Care. In this edition we'll be bringing you up to speed on the celebrations, with parties taking place across our homes. There was even a birthday cake competition – ‘The Great Opal Bake Off’ – you can find the winner (and the recipe) on page 5.

Another big event in recent weeks has been our staff service awards. Our mission to deliver outstanding aged care to Australians would not be possible without our wonderful staff. We've replaced all previous service badges with Opal badges – presenting over 2,300 across the business and recognising service from 5 to 40-plus years. Turn to page 11 to read the inspiring stories of some of our truly dedicated staff.

We also profile Opal's care transformation project. This significant project is at the forefront of our commitment to being a leading provider

of aged care across Australia. Bringing together advancements in computer systems, clinical practices and procedures, as well as specific staff training; the project is currently rolling out across our homes. Take a look at the article on page 7 to see the significant impact this project will have on the standard of care we provide.

Our partnership with Alzheimer's Australia continues to go from strength to strength. On page 15 you'll find our exciting news about becoming the major sponsor of the Memory Walk & Jog across New South Wales and Victoria, with plans to expand to the rest of Australia. We know the serious impact dementia has on individuals and their loved ones, many of whom are full time carers. The Memory Walk & Jog events are a great opportunity for Australians to come together and show their support for funding research to help those living with the disease.

We're asking our homes and communities to sign up to the events taking place, or support those who are taking part in an event.

For our 'Meet the Team' feature, we have an insightful Q&A with our Chairman, Professor Peter Shergold, AC. We also update you on our growth projects in New South Wales and share snapshots from events and activities that have taken place across our homes.

As I said, it really has been an exciting time and I'd like to thank you for your contribution in making our first year as Opal such a special one. I hope you enjoy this edition of Opal Moments.

Gary
Gary Barnier
Managing Director



Gary presents long service awards to staff in our homes.





June 2015 marked one year since the Opal Aged Care brand was launched. What better way to celebrate than with a party!

The Great Opal Bake Off

June 2015 marked one year since the Opal Aged Care brand was launched and what better way to celebrate than with a party. The best part of any birthday is the cake, so we launched a national cake baking competition, ‘The Great Opal Bake Off!’

The rules were simple...

- The cake had to be made in the home by Opal staff
- The cake could be any type of sponge, with any number of tiers, and decorations, piping work and colour of the baker’s choice.

The competition ran for the whole month with homes submitting photos to show the cakes being baked in the kitchen (to make sure there was no cheating!), along with the finished masterpieces, and photos with staff eating their entries.

We had 24 entries with cakes ranging from a re-creation of the Opal logo, to floral patterns from the Opal brand, a large four-tier cake, as well as many,

many cupcakes. Some had handmade decorations, others were covered in sugary treats. We even saw a very inventive construction involving a mini electric hot air balloon sitting above a cake from Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens!

The cakes were judged by Opal’s Executive Team, with points awarded for difficulty of technique, cake borders, work and neatness, choice and use of colour, as well as creativity of

design. After much deliberation, two runners-up and one winner were chosen.

Congratulations to Opal Greenfern Place and Opal Canterbury who tied as runners-up. Opal Greenfern Place baked a large oval shaped cake topped with the Opal logo and a lovely display of handmade flowers. Opal Canterbury created a multi-tier cake which included the Opal florals and logo, a detailed icing border and flowers on top.



Runners-up: Opal Canterbury’s cake (left) and Opal Greenfern Place’s cake (right).



Opal Annandale’s winning cake (top).
Opal Canterbury host a great first birthday party (bottom).



Opal Annandale’s Winning Almond Cake



A huge congratulations to the competition winners, Opal Annandale. Opal Annandale Chef, Deolinda Ramos, along with Lifestyle Coordinator, Jasmine Goggins, baked and decorated the winning cake.

Inspiration came to the home’s staff upon receiving an order of Opal floral bags. Many liked the saying on the bag, ‘Feel truly valued with Opal’, as well as the originality of the idea. After a vote it was decided the cake was going to be an Opal bag.

Three hours of preparation, baking, and decorating later, the almond cake was enjoyed by both residents and staff. A party was held, everyone sang ‘Happy Birthday’ and blew out the candles before enjoying a slice of cake.

The recipe is Chef Deolinda’s own recipe from her home country of Portugal and she has kindly shared below.

Opal Annandale’s Winning Almond Cake Recipe

Serves 50 – 60

Ingredients

- 750 grams of soft butter
- 5 cups of caster sugar
- 15 eggs
- 3 3/4 teaspoons of almond essence
- 7.5 cups of plain flour
- 15 teaspoons of baking powder
- 350 grams of ground almond meal
- 3 3/4 cups of milk

For the competition, two of these cakes were baked and served with cream in between the layers.

Method

1. Cream butter and sugar together so the mixture looks soft and pale.
2. Beat the eggs into the mixture one at a time using a mixer.
3. Add the almond essence.
4. Sift and add the flour and baking powder.
5. Add the almond meal and milk.
6. Mix well.
7. Bake in preheated oven for 50-60 minutes at 160 degrees.
8. Test if cooked using the stick method (if the stick comes out clean then the cake is cooked).

Jasmine’s decorating instructions

Almost 1kg of white store-bought fondant icing was used for Opal Annandale’s cake! Once the cake is cooked, remove from the oven and leave to cool. Roll fondant and place over cake. Leave cake in fridge overnight to firm fondant and then you can use fondant paint and stencils to decorate the cake. Fondant icing flowers were also made and painted.



Opal Roxburgh enjoying their party (top).

Opal Armadale and Opal Macquarie Place with cakes on display (bottom).



At Opal we continually strive to deliver outstanding care. We want our residents and their families to trust that their clinical needs are being met to the highest possible standards, and our staff to feel that they're doing everything they can to uphold these standards.

Transforming care for our residents

At Opal we continually strive to deliver outstanding care. We want our residents and their families to trust that their clinical needs are being met to the highest possible standards, and our staff to feel that they're doing everything they can to uphold these standards.

We've embarked upon a large-scale project to develop and embed the systems and processes across our homes that will meet our residents' high-level clinical needs, and give our staff the information, training and understanding they need to deliver this care.

The Care Transformation project has been in development for the last year, requiring the diligence and co-operation of multiple teams from across the business – particularly the ICT, Quality, and HR teams: all working toward the same goal – to ensure that our residents are at the centre of receiving outstanding care.

Updating our systems and software

Key to the project has been the introduction of new software to the homes. We've transferred all resident assessments and care plans from paper-based files onto computer where they can be more efficiently and effectively accessed.

Having our residents' records digitally stored allows for easy updates to plans and accessibility from a central point – ensuring transparency, and accurate management of every resident's care. Overall, this means that there's a reduction in paperwork and administration duties which enables staff to spend more valuable time with residents.

As well as launching a new computer system, our staff need to be fully trained and confident using it. We've invested in training our staff in the new systems, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities. We now have

in place a peer learning system which means training is provided to new staff in our homes by those who know it best.

To date, feedback on implementation of the new system has been very positive. Preliminary compliance findings, supported by two recent visits by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (AACQC) at two of our homes, show that the program has been fully adopted by staff and implemented well.

The management team has also reported that the new system provides more comprehensive documentation of care and has valuable reporting and 'alert' functions.

Clinical care policies and procedures

The Care Transformation project has a second vital component in the development and implementation of specific



policies and procedures for staff to ensure outstanding levels of care are standard practice across all our homes, and that our residents can receive the best level of clinical care possible.

The Quality Team has developed over 100 clinical policies and procedures including specialist dementia and palliative care. These policies have been developed based on research and industry best practice.

The national Quality Team has recently completed training of regional quality and education advisors. This training on Clinical Care and Lifestyle Policy and Procedure is on the new software system and the educators are now rolling out the policy and procedure manuals in parallel with the software system in the homes.

There are a number of new procedures, but a good example is a daily comprehensive clinical check by the Clinical Manager which ensures clinical issues are quickly identified and interventions put in place immediately.

A scheduling system for appointments by the Clinical Manager and senior staff is also being introduced which allows them to see what tasks are due to be carried out for each day, and for each shift, so nothing is overlooked.

These procedural improvements are a major factor in allowing us to provide the high level of clinical care that is not only required by legislation, but by our mission as a company. This commitment is further reflected by having our own governance framework to

report on clinical risk management and staff effectiveness which ensures we are accountable for delivering the very best clinical care, every day, in every home.

Living our values

A transformation project on this scale would not be complete if we didn't look at ensuring staff are delivering care in line with our company values of respect, compassion and accountability. That's why we've conducted extensive values and behaviour training for all staff across our homes as an integral part of the project.

The behaviours and values training was developed by the Human Resources team in two 'pilot' homes to see how staff connected with Opal's values and what these values meant to them. By matching specific behaviours to our individual values of respect, compassion, and accountability, employees come to understand in real terms how to translate the values into everyday behaviours and actions when delivering care to our residents.

By matching specific behaviours to our individual values of respect, compassion, and accountability, employees come to understand in real terms how to translate the values into everyday behaviours and actions when delivering care to our residents.

We're almost fully transformed

The project has now been implemented across 75% of our homes, with the full roll-out to be completed by the end of the year. It's been a huge task, requiring the combined skill and experience of several of our teams as well as the patience and understanding of the staff in our homes. They're setting the standard of care across the business and ensuring that when residents and their families come into one of our homes, they can be confident they'll receive the best possible care.





The Opal Service Awards are a very important event in Opal's calendar as we get to say thank you to our staff. This year we replaced all original badges with new, bespoke Opal badges.

Opal's Service Awards: saying thank you to our staff

At Opal we know that the care delivered to our residents is only possible through the dedication, commitment and compassion of our staff. The Service Awards are a very important event in Opal's calendar as we get to say 'thank you' to our staff. This year, we replaced all original badges with the new Opal branded badges. Opal has over 5,400 full time staff and over 43% of Opal staff have been working at Opal for 5 or more years. Over 145 staff members from across the nation celebrated between 25 and 40 years of service.



The awards included service badges for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years and were presented with an Opal certificate. This year we also presented awards and gifts to staff who have provided service for 35 or more years.

The badges have been designed and handmade for Opal. For 5-20 years service the badge contains bronze, silver, gold, or platinum coloured metal with a resin opal encased in the centre. The 25 and 30 year badges feature a genuine opal gemstone. This is a high quality A-grade opal, mined in Australia.

Our Managing Director, Gary Barnier, visited over 20 of our homes to present staff awards and said, "We treasure our staff. They deserve acknowledgement and thanks for their work, doing what we know is an incredibly hard job".

Over 2,300 staff members received long service badges across the business.

Celebrating in our homes

Throughout August, our homes hosted service awards, with many hosting great events attended by local dignitaries and members of the Opal Executive Team.

Opal Bossley Park, NSW

Opal Bossley Park had over 65 staff celebrating from 5 to 30 years of service – 17 of those staff boasting 15 to 30 years. Managing Director, Gary Barnier; General Manager, Jonathan Anderson; and Regional Manager, Robert Johnson attended from Opal. Councillor Frank Carbone, Mayor of Fairfield, presented the awards, and Assistant Priest Fr Joseph Kachappilly from the local church was also present.

Facility Manager, Mary Lomnicki, acknowledged the importance of the awards saying, "It's our chance to say thank you to the staff who make a difference every day to the lives of our residents".

Mayor Frank Carbone praised Opal for celebrating staff's dedication and



Councillor Frank Carbone, Mayor of Fairfield presents a Bossley Park staff member with her 10 year award. Below Opal Roxburgh staff proudly wear their new badges.





Irene Laycock receives her award, presented by Victoria’s General Manager Meigan Lefebure & Mayor Adem Atmaca.

thanked them for their hard work in the local community.

Jonathan Anderson, General Manager for NSW, thanked staff for their dedication and commitment and spoke about the importance of the service awards and what the badges symbolise, “Our new Opal badges have an opal design, and for 25 years plus service, an actual opal precious gemstone at the centre – this reflects how we see our staff within the organisation.”

Opal Roxburgh

Opal Roxburgh celebrated a number of long service members. Local MP Maria Vamvakinou was unable to attend the event, but made a special visit to the home in the week prior to congratulate staff.

Mayor Adem Atmaca attended the ceremony to present the awards with General Manager for Victoria,

Meigan Lefebure. Meigan said of the awards, “This is our chance to say thank you to all our staff for their hard work. We know the importance of having care delivered to our residents by the same staff, and that’s why we’re so grateful to our staff for their dedication to Opal.”

Opal Kirra Beach

Opal Kirra Beach hosted a special ceremony with Facility Manager, Heather Oliver receiving her twenty year service award. Heather began her career in 1991 as Care Coordinator with the Moran Health Group at their Tweed Heads Assisted Living Apartments before becoming a Registered Nurse.

In 1997, she was appointed as the Quality Coordinator before becoming the Facility Manager at Tweed Heads. In 2009, she was next appointed as the Education

Officer for Queensland before finally arriving as the Facility Manager at Kirra Beach in 2011. Heather feels honoured to receive the award as it represents her commitment to making a difference in the lives of the residents she has cared for over the years and the staff she has managed and mentored.

Over 2,300 employees are now wearing their service badges with pride on their Opal uniforms. We’d like to thank all our staff for the continued outstanding care they deliver to our residents every day.



Heather Oliver is presented with her 20 years service award by Managing Director, Gary Barnier.



Opal is also proud to announce that we'll be the principal sponsor and supporter of Alzheimer's Australia's Memory Walk & Jog. This will initially include events in New South Wales and Victoria and expand to other regions in Australia over the next coming years.

Coming together in the fight against dementia

At Opal, we're continually working to develop specialist care to meet our residents' needs. Opal has more than 6,000 residents across our 69 homes in Australia. A large proportion of these residents are living with a form of dementia, including Alzheimer's. Many of our homes have dedicated memory support units as we understand the growing need for specialist dementia care.

Alzheimer's Australia provides support and advocacy for the 320,000 people living with dementia in Australia, as well as the 1.2 million people who provide them with support and care. As an organisation we want to help raise awareness, to act as advocates for our residents and their families, and help fundraise for research into understanding and providing support for those living with the disease.

This was behind our decision to partner with Alzheimer's Australia

last year to roll out the largest education partnership of its kind in training all staff across the business in how to best care for people living with the disease. We're currently developing the next stage of this education partnership. This will involve a Peer Leadership Training Program to provide key staff with additional information in advanced clinical leadership skills to further educate themselves and other staff in caring for people with dementia.

Opal is also proud to announce that we'll be the principal sponsor and supporter of Alzheimer's Australia's Memory Walk & Jog. This will initially include events in New South Wales and Victoria and may expand to other regions in Australia over the coming years. This partnership is just another step for Opal as an organisation in providing support for those living with dementia. It's also part of our commitment to increase awareness of the disease and to

encourage the Australian public to get involved in raising funds to help those affected by the disease.

Our Managing Director, Gary Barnier, has spoken of the Memory Walk & Jog sponsorship saying, "We're very excited to be growing our partnership with Alzheimer's Australia. Our sponsorship of Memory Walk & Jog is another step toward fighting the dementia epidemic. We want people to come and walk, jog or run together to support Australians and their families living with the disease."

Memory Walk & Jog is our chance to come together in the race against dementia.



Australians of all ages and abilities take part in the 2014 Memory Walk & Jog.



Why get involved?

Memory Walk & Jog is our chance to work together in the race against dementia. There’s estimated to be approximately 342,800 Australians living with dementia, with 1,800 new cases in Australia every week. That’s one person every six minutes. It’s the second leading cause of death in Australia and there is no cure.¹

The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease which accounts for between 50% and 70% of all types of dementia. We want to ask Australians to come together and fight this disease.² By signing up to one of the events, or sponsoring someone who is taking part, you’ll help raise awareness of the issue and funds raised will enable Alzheimer’s Australia to continue to provide much-needed support services, education and social research.

What are the events?

There are a number of events taking place across Australia this year, with a range of distances from a 2km walk to a 10km run:

- **Walk** with your family and friends. All ages and abilities welcome!
- **Jog** to keep fit or get in shape.
- **Run** to compete or as part of your training while raising awareness and funds for a global cause.
- **DIY events:** if there’s no event taking place in your local community, you can host your own DIY Memory Walk & Jog event using the simple kit provided, and invite the local community along.
- **My Memory Walk & Jog:** create your own personal challenge by pledging to complete a certain number of kilometres and ask your family and friends to sponsor you.

How can you get involved?

We’re encouraging everyone in our homes and communities to get involved. You can take part in an organised event, sponsor someone, set your own personal challenge, or host your own DIY event. For our staff, it’s the perfect opportunity to get fit as part of our

employee wellbeing program, Opal Thrive.

Volunteering

Alzheimer’s Australia is looking for people to help out on race day. Contact Alzheimer’s Australia if you’re interested in volunteering at any of the events. memorywalk@alzheimers.org.au

Start now with Dementia Awareness Month

We’re asking people to sign up to the events as part of Dementia Awareness Month in September. If you’re interested in taking part in an event, or would like more information, please visit www.memorywalk.com.au or call 1300 076 069.



1. www.memorywalk.com.au/why-we-need-your-help
2. www.myagedcare.gov.au/health-conditions/dementia

Events are taking place all across Australia in 2015/2016

Region	Date	Location	Distance: Walk, Jog or Run
NSW			
Illawarra	Sunday 28 February 2016	Stuart Park, North Wollongong	2km, 6.5km and 7.5km
Western Sydney	Sunday 13 March 2016	Tench Reserve, Nepean River, Penrith	2km and 7km
Port Macquarie	Sunday 3 April 2016	Westport Park, Port Macquarie	2km and 6.5km
Sydney	Sunday 1 May 2016	The Bay Run starting at Leichhardt Oval #3, Lilyfield	2km and 7.5km
Albury Wodonga	Sunday 22 May 2016	Sumsion Gardens, Wodonga	1.5km, 6km and 10km
Hunter	Sunday 29 May 2016	Speers Point Park, Lake Macquarie	2km and 7.5km
VIC			
Geelong	Sunday 13 September 2015	Eastern Park, East Geelong	2.4km and 7km
Bendigo	Sunday 11 October 2015	Strathdale Park, Bendigo	4km and 8km
Mornington Peninsula	Sunday 24 January 2016	Point Nepean National Park	3.5km and 7km
Melbourne	Sunday 17 April 2016	Ruffey Lake Park, Doncaster	3.5km and 7km
ACT			
Canberra	Sunday 20 September 2015	Lennox Gardens, Yarralumla	1km, 5km and 8km
QLD			
Brisbane	Sunday 17 April 2016	University of Queensland, St Lucia	2.5km and 5km
TAS			
Hobart	Sunday 11 October 2015	The Lea Scout Centre, Kingston	5km
WA			
Albany	Sunday 20 September 2015	Middleton Beach, Albany	4km and 5km
Perth	Sunday 15 November 2015	Perry Lakes Reserve, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat	2km, 4km and 9km
SA			
Adelaide	Sunday 20 March 2016	To be announced	To be announced

In this edition we meet Opal Aged Care’s Chairman, Professor Peter Shergold, AC. Appointed Chairman in November last year, his distinguished career spans the academic, business and public service sectors, bringing more than four decades experience to the Opal Aged Care Board.

Meet Opal Aged Care Chairman, Professor Peter Shergold, AC.

Welcome to meet the team. In each edition of Opal Moments we’ll meet a member of the Opal team, find out what it’s like working in their role, and gain insights into their daily lives inside and outside of work.

Q. Tell us about a highlight of your career?

A. This would have to be my role as Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet which I held between 2003 and 2008. I had the opportunity to work on a broad range of national issues at an influential level. This was the pinnacle of my public service career.

I now have the opportunity to walk the talk. This includes translating public policy to deliver aged care to Australians in a more effective way.

Q. What is the most surprising thing about working in aged care?

A. To me it’s the commitment and dedication of staff in such a difficult industry. You see this commitment as soon as you walk through the doors of our homes.

We’re also living longer and there are more complex issues coming to the forefront. Whereas before we would see people being admitted into aged care homes when they were physically frail, memory loss is now an increasing issue. This is why we’re now seeing a growth in specialist dementia care, often termed ‘Memory Care’ in the US.

Q. What interested you in becoming the Chair for Opal?

A. Having spent time in recent years working on aged care I now have the opportunity to walk the talk. This includes thinking about

how to translate public policy to deliver aged care to Australians in a more effective way.

Q. What do you think about the education partnership between Opal and Alzheimer’s Australia?

A. It is so important. We can’t solely depend on the expertise of our clinical staff and Registered Nurses. We need everyone in our homes to better understand how their behaviours can help our residents living with dementia, and incorporate this knowledge within the culture of the home.

The partnership with Alzheimer’s Australia gives Opal the opportunity to be at the forefront of new dementia research, which can help us to gain insights into how to treat the disease and alleviate symptoms. This will put Opal at the cutting edge of specialist dementia care.



Opal Aged Care Chairman, Professor Peter Shergold, AC with Managing Director, Gary Barnier.

Q. What are your hopes for the future?

A. That we can develop a much stronger career structure for those coming into the business. This would include being at the forefront of the industry in providing structured training both in specialist areas and management.

Q. Have you been out to the homes?

A. Yes. To date we've held two Board meetings out in the homes. One at Tweed Heads in Queensland and the other at Meadowglen in Victoria. It's really important as Board members that we visit our homes and be reminded of our responsibilities.

As a Board member of a private business, of course we need to ensure that we are running an efficient and effective enterprise – we owe this responsibility to our investors. But in a business like Opal, this is where the shared values of head and heart come together. The social value of what we're doing to help ageing Australians is just as important as the commercial returns.

Q. What do you think the aged care industry will look like in the next ten years?

A. I think there are some strong emerging trends.

Choice: the industry will become more flexible as a response to the Government's commitment to consumer-directed care. We currently have this new approach being introduced in home care, but more and more we'll see this

moving into residential aged care. Residents will be given more choice in the types of care on offer, and as providers we'll have to increase the services that we make available.

Consolidation of the sector: There'll be fewer, but larger, providers in the market. There'll continue to be private and community-based organisations delivering aged care services. Each have their own strengths and attractions to the Australian public. At the end of the day, we share the same social mission, and that is delivering quality care to the ageing Australian public.

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

A. I try to keep active and fit. I walk every morning and play tennis once a week. I also enjoy skiing and reading books on history and politics.

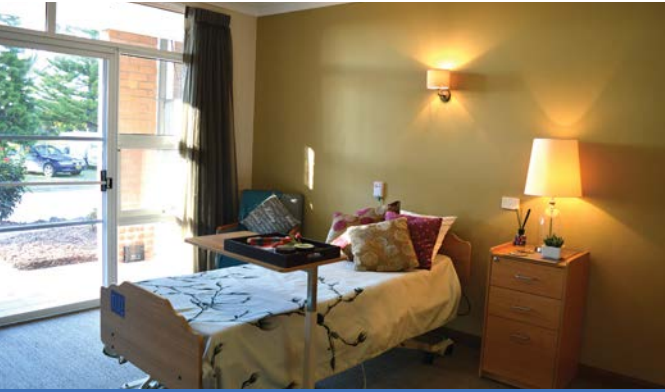
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About Professor Peter Shergold, AC.

Professor Shergold 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.

Past roles have included Chair of the Federal Government's Aged Care Sector Committee, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Chief Executive of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.





Example of a single room backing out onto the bay.

In the last three editions of Opal Moments, we've shared our growth projects: acquisitions, redevelopment of existing homes and building of new sites. This has included significant redevelopment and building three homes in New South Wales.

An update on our new homes

Denhams Beach – time for a sea change

Last month we saw the launch of Opal Denhams Beach in Batemans Bay. Formerly named Opal Edgewood Park, the home has undergone a \$5 million development project.

The home was renamed to better reflect its unique location with back rooms overlooking Denhams Beach and the bay. The beautifully refurbished home now offers 50 new rooms with many facing onto the bay, two new living rooms, and a library for residents. The rooms include both single rooms and companion rooms for couples that want to move into the home together.

This development means the home now has a variety of choice in terms of size and pricing for those in the area considering moving into residential aged care, and brings the home to a total number of 130 beds.

The home's launch last month was attended by Opal's Managing

Director, Gary Barnier; Councillor Lindsay Brown, Mayor of Eurobodalla; Councillor Liz Innes, and a number of residents who have moved into the new rooms. Councillor Lindsay Brown thanked Opal for the addition of an outstanding facility and providing more services for Eurobodalla's ageing population.

The event was also an opportunity to officially welcome new Facility Manager, Kelly Sullivan. Kelly has

recently moved to the area and brings over ten years' experience as an aged care manager, with a particular focus on rural areas.

The home also held an Open Day and invited the local community in to see the newly refurbished home. Locals enjoyed the sunny weather out on the lawn with a view of the beautiful bay, enjoyed live music from local performers, a sausage sizzle, face painting and jumping castle for the kids.



A new library for residents to enjoy.



The view from the back lawn (top).



Members of the local ukulele band, who perform each week at the home, entertain the crowds (bottom).

Cherrywood Grove continues to grow

NSW’s Central West is a growing region, with Orange one of its major provincial centres. It’s a thriving and growing town, quickly becoming the commercial and residential hub for the region. The area’s population of people aged 70 and over is increasing and means Orange will be a key centre in providing specialist aged care services.

In July, Opal Cherrywood Grove completed the first stage of refurbishment and opened a new wing with eight beds. This is just the first step in the redevelopment with an additional 63 rooms

planned to offer respite and specialist dementia care, as well as large suites for couples. The new building will officially open in November.

Facility Manager, Rebecca Allen, commented on the new opening, “It’s really exciting to see the development of the new building. It’s going to assist in the provision of not only aged care services, but of quality care to the region which is part of Opal’s mission. The team and I are looking forward to opening our doors

NSW’s Central West is a growing region, with Orange one of its major provincial centres.

to the Orange community and surrounding towns.”

Resident Jean Sellwood has been at the home for the past six months. She recently moved into one of the new rooms in the new wing and has already made her room very homely. As a lifelong embroiderer, Jean has been able to hang her embroidery on the walls and include her patchwork quilt, making the room her own.



Jean Sellwood has been able to add her own personal touches to her room.

Innovation at Opal Rutherford

In a previous edition of Opal Moments, we reported on the development of Opal Rutherford in the NSW Hunter region. This home is the largest Opal has built to date. It demonstrates innovation in aged care and will provide accommodation for 144 residents. The home will boast large suites designed for couples, singles and companion rooms, and a dedicated memory support wing and sensory garden for people needing specialist dementia care.

We’re happy to announce that Julie Hughes, who is currently Facility Manager at our Opal

Maitland home, will move to Opal Rutherford to head up the team. Julie brings over 30 years’ experience having started as an Assistant in Nursing (AIN) before becoming a Registered Nurse, and then moving on to hold roles in Infection Control, an Educator, Quality Coordinator and Deputy Director of Nursing before becoming the Facility Manager at Maitland in 2001. Julie said of her new appointment, “I’m obviously sad to be moving on from Opal Maitland, but I’m really looking forward to helping make the building a home for our new residents and staff by providing the very best care we can. I’ll still be working closely with Opal

Maitland and, with the two homes, we’re committed to providing the right level of aged care to this region.”

Members of the commercial team and Managing Director, Gary Barnier, visited the site last month to look at the progress of the home. General Manager of Commercial, Sean Bilton, said, “Opal Rutherford is the largest development Opal has undertaken to date, and I’m happy to say we’re ahead of schedule and looking forward to opening the doors to the public in December”.



Managing Director Gary Barnier and General Manager Sean Bilton of Commercial, surveying the site last month.

Opal Greenfern Celebrate Ekka

Opal Greenfern (QLD) residents celebrated Ekka (The Annual Agricultural Show of Queensland) with a fete at the home.

There were sweet treats including toffee apples, fairy floss and lolly bags as well as jewellery, scarves, pet rocks, flower bags and much more on sale.

Residents and staff spent hours making and wrapping items for the fete. It was a great morning with lots of laughter and handmade items bought on the day.



A resident peruses the goodies on display.

Ballroom dancing at Dalyston Hall

The Dalyston Hall, along with many other small country town halls, continues to hold monthly Saturday night dances. They recently held a special afternoon dance for local aged care residents joined by

residents from our Opal Seahaven (VIC) home in Gippsland. Guests were treated to a lavish afternoon tea supplied by all the ladies who dance at the hall. Dancers presented an exhibition that included the Evening 3 step,

Progressive Waltz, Quickstep, Tango, Foxtrot, and many other popular steps. It was a great social afternoon where residents met up with old friends and reminisced about the old days in the dance halls.



Liz & Theodora dancing (left). Dancer & resident Arthur Thomson (right).

Opal Murwillumbah Events

Opal Murwillumbah (NSW) has been busy! Both residents and the Lifestyle Coordinators arranged a series of events over the past couple of months.

The Biggest Morning Tea

Most of the staff and residents at Opal Murwillumbah have been affected one way or another by cancer. So they decided to host a charity event, ‘Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea’, to raise funds for research. There were competitions run in the lead up to the event,

such as the best cup and saucer set, as well as some raffles with beautiful china donated as prizes. Staff members brought in cakes for sale and the kitchen provided a wonderful morning tea for residents and families. The event was a great success, with many

commenting on how delicious the food was, how lovely the dining room had been decorated – and in the end raised \$750 for research. Thank you to those who donated items and funds for the event.



Residents enjoy the treats.

Bastille Day

In celebration of France’s National Day, the home had a day full of all things French! Everyone greeted each other with “bonjour” and there was a themed morning tea. The home’s cook and kitchen staff provided delicious pastries including chocolate éclairs. There was also a performance of La Marseillaise by Care Manager, Sue, and residents and families enjoyed the Can-Can with Wendy, Lyn and Marie from the Lifestyle Department.



An authentic Can-Can performance by the home’s staff.



A resident displays freshly baked and decorated cookies.

Cooking at Opal Belvedere

At Opal Belvedere (NSW), one of our residents’ favourite pastimes is cooking. It’s something everyone can get involved with no matter what their diagnosis or ability. Cooking can have lots of therapeutic benefits physically, cognitively, and socially.

Everyone loves getting together to socialise, learn, and reminisce about the meals they used to cook, and even discuss some of the health benefits of food. There’s always a job for people to get involved with, even if they can’t help with the preparation and mixing.

At the end, it’s satisfying to sit down together to enjoy the food that’s been cooked, as it brings everyone together.

For those that can’t physically join in the dining room, a room service is provided which delivers the food straight to them.

Opal Burpengary Gardens bloom

Over a year ago the staff at Opal Burpengary Gardens (QLD) launched a plan to improve the home’s gardens for the residents to enjoy. The gardens have now been transformed with three distinct areas that include a native Aussie garden, a sensory water feature with a pond and resident fish, as well as a Kiwi garden to reflect the high number of New Zealand staff and residents.

The final piece is an Opal logo mosaic mounted on the wall, commissioned by an artist from Wauchope, near Port Macquarie, in NSW. Residents love the new garden and are proud to show it off to visitors. Thank you to the staff for their hard work on the garden.



Opal Burpengary Gardens staff with the Opal mosaic.

Opal Armadale Fun Month

Other the past month, Opal Armadale (WA) staff and residents have been in full swing organising various events. This included a Disney character day as well as a cowboy dress up day, for which both staff and residents went all out with their costumes.

On some Fridays, residents are also treated to entertainment from the Opal Choir: a group of residents that perform at happy hour.



Opal Armadale staff go all out in their Disney costumes.

Knitting for the community



Kathleen proudly shows off the knitted bears to members of the local emergency services.

Kathleen Freeman has been an avid and talented knitter for many years. When she arrived at Quakers Hill Nursing Home (NSW) last year, she wanted to keep up her knitting and use her skills to help the local community. One evening she asked the ladies at her dining table if they could knit. They said yes, and the rest is history.

They created their knitters’ group, with Kathleen as the leader. They meet every Wednesday and Friday and knit for two hours, with the group having grown to 11 members. With their mutual love of knitting and desire to give back to the community, their friendships have blossomed over a cuppa, with clicking needles as they knit bears of all shapes and sizes.

These bears are supplied to the local emergency services and are used to provide comfort to children after being involved in an accident. To date, they’ve made 140 bears with no plans to stop. On June 2nd, Quakers Hill was honoured to have two fire trucks from Schofields Fire Brigade as well as members of NSW Police Quakers Hill as special guests to a morning tea and presentation of the bears.

The emergency services were thrilled to accept the bears and meet the knitters. They also loved the freshly baked scones cooked at the home, with cream and jam on offer! The local paper, The Blacktown Sun, sent a photographer and journalist to cover the story. Thank you to Kathleen and her knitters for all their hard work.

Happy Birthday Graziano!

There were celebrations all round at Opal Bossley Park (NSW) as resident Graziano Golotta celebrated his 104th birthday in June.

Graziano was born in Calabria, Italy, on June 27th in 1911. He worked on his parents’ farm from the age of six. In 1933 he married his wife Maria and together they made a living as farm workers until they were able to afford their own land.

They brought their family to Australia in 1950 for a better life, where they purchased land and built their own farm. Graziano said, “I am very happy at Bossley, and I’ve made lots of friends since coming to live here.” Graziano now has five generations of family in Australia who joined him to celebrate this wonderful occasion.



Graziano celebrates his 104th birthday with his family.

Animal farm comes to the city

Opal Glen Lynn (NSW) welcomed a visit from an animal farm. Residents thoroughly enjoyed the hands on and up close experience with the animals.

Resident, Edward, summarised the day, “On the 15th of July we were greeted by a collection of farm animals for us to pet. They included a goat, a lamb, rabbits, guinea pigs, ducklings, chicks, and pink piglets. Everyone enjoyed interacting with the various animals.”



Residents take good care of the furry visitors for the day.

Welcome to our new homes

With the acquisition of the nine former Aquarius homes in January, there’s been continued work with the rollout of new uniforms, signage, training, and systems to make them feel part of the Opal family.

This was completed with a series of ‘welcome’ morning and afternoon teas and BBQs attended by Managing Director, Gary Barnier, and members of the Executive Team. This gave staff and residents the chance to

meet Gary and ask any questions. Every home presented a beautiful spread with morning and afternoon teas and even the odd winter BBQ – luckily the sun came out!



Opal Anita Villa (NSW) put on a fantastic morning spread with Chef Hayley cooking everything fresh the day before.

Corporate office hosts Opal Thrive multicultural day

The Opal corporate office hosted a multicultural day. Each department brought a number of traditional dishes, but with a Thrive twist. The dishes were placed in the kitchen with the recipes displayed, including the Thrive ingredient – replacing one item with a healthier alternative. This included stews made with lean meat and no butter, gluten free sausage rolls and meatballs cooked in low fat oils, as well as vegetarian options.

The turnout was fantastic with Greek, Indian, Italian, Fijian and British dishes including stews, curries, pies and cakes. Staff in the office voted for their favourite, with the winning dish from Fiji – Fish Kokoda - raw fish cooked in lemon and lime juice.



Staff dress up for the office multicultural day.



Josh and Tarryn get ready to cut the cake.

Josh & Tarryn’s wedding party

Diversional Therapist Josh Ives decided to have a second wedding at Opal Greenfern (NSW) to share his special day with the residents he works with. Resident, Jean, gave the beautiful bride, Tarryn, away. Resident, George, was best man with resident, Ted, playing the piano.

Josh and Tarryn’s daughter, Amelia, was the flower girl. The ceremony was conducted by our volunteer, Enid. The living room was decorated in hot pink and black balloons, flowers, and even a wedding cake. Staff also dressed in black and hot pink. Congratulations, Josh and Tarryn!

Christmas in July – Ho Ho Ho!



Residents preparing decorations.

The ‘Christmas in July’ celebrations held at Opal Belvedere (NSW) evoked the atmosphere and charm of a traditional white Christmas. The dining room was covered in Christmas themed decorations, many of which were handmade, with carols sung throughout the halls. Belvedere resident, Gerald Hedrick, even dressed up as Santa.

There was trivia and a quiz, followed by a traditional Christmas lunch of turkey, roast vegetables and plum pudding, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

To complete the day’s celebrations, everyone’s favourite Christmas film, ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’, was shown.

Opal Cherrywood Grove in Orange (NSW) also held a ‘Christmas in July’ event. It was a huge success with 75 residents and family celebrating in the recently built wing. Everyone had a ball with carol-singing and a lovely three-course lunch.

Cultural days at Opal Canterbury

At Opal, we understand the importance of residents being able to celebrate their cultures. Opal Canterbury (NSW) hosts special weekly and monthly events for residents with different cultural backgrounds.

The Chinese community at Opal Canterbury make up a large percentage of the residents of the home. They come together for activities every Wednesday including mahjong, creating Chinese characters by writing and tracing with a special brush and ink, and enjoying some Chinese tea. On Fridays there’s Yum Cha with traditional Chinese utensils and table settings.

The Lebanese and Greek community at Opal Canterbury meet once a month to share morning tea with traditional Lebanese coffee as well as listening to Greek and Lebanese music, all whilst surrounded by their national flags and photos representing their culture.



Residents take part in the range of cultural activities.

Dinah’s 96th birthday

This August marks the 96th birthday of one of Opal Cherrywood Grove’s (NSW) oldest residents, Dinah Bouffler. Dinah’s birthday was celebrated well with her family taking Dinah out for a special dinner on the day. Happy birthday, Dinah!



Dinah at Opal Cherrywood Grove with her son.

ABBA concert especially for Glenn

Glenn is one of the youngest residents at Opal Salford Park (VIC), and has been there for many years. He is much loved by the staff and other residents and music brings him much joy. The staff at the home have long known that any songs by ABBA are his favourites. Lifestyle Coordinator, Julie, decided to organise an ABBA concert especially for Glenn.

The ABBA impersonators were great and serenaded Glenn before posing for photos which Glenn has now proudly displayed in his room. While ABBA may not be everyone’s first choice and residents had to endure the staff dancing and singing ‘Waterloo’ loudly for the rest of the day, everyone agreed it was worth it. From the start of the concert to the end, Glenn could not stop smiling. Facility Manager Sue Van Buuren said, “We are lucky to have him here with us.”



ABBA impersonators serenading Glenn.

Pamper day at Opal Bairnsdale



Enjoying a champagne lunch.



Janet gets a manicure.

At Opal ,we understand that carers looking after family members full-time also occasionally need a break and support.

Opal Bairnsdale (VIC) hosted a Pamper Day from the local community, for carers and their care recipients from the local community. Attendees enjoyed a champagne lunch followed by complimentary manicures as well as neck and shoulder massages, whilst care recipients took part in activities run by Opal’s Diversional Therapists.

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

South Valley (VIC)

Dear lovely people at Opal,

I don't know where to start or what to say that will truly and properly describe how grateful I am to you all for looking after my darling Mum not only in the difficult last few weeks of her life, but always. Just about everyone that came in contact with her, I found to be caring, cheerful and understanding.

Her funeral celebrating her wonderful life was beautiful. I'm sorry you couldn't all be there. For the few carers or nurses I got to know well my door is always open for a chat and coffee.

With love & sincere thanks,

Deanna.

Opal Shoalhaven (NSW)

Dear Cate and staff,

A belated thank you to you and your staff for the wonderful kindness and care shown to my father.

Although a nursing home wasn't his choice, I know he appreciated the care given by all staff members.

I personally felt very fortunate that he was in the hands of trusted and kind people. The Valley Connection was important as he never felt too far away.

Thank you again,

Fay Martin.

Hobsons Bay (VIC)

Dear Wendy & Leah,

Thank you for everything the two of you have done for us over the past couple of weeks. It has made a very difficult time much easier. We are in your debt.

The following words says it all:

Thoughtful people like you are really very special indeed.

Thanks greatly,

Alan, Melisa & Nathan Trow
Family of Jean Oliphant and James Gorman.



Our homes around the country

Queensland

Opal Abbey Gardens	07 5495 9000
Opal Ashmore	07 5510 1800
Opal Burpengary Gardens	07 3481 6100
Opal Caloundra	07 5491 5155
Opal Greenfern Place	07 3809 1400
Opal Kirra Beach	07 5536 2766
Opal Leamington	07 5571 0622
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 4337 0000
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 4015 3000
Opal Murwillumbah	02 6670 9700
Opal Norah Head	02 4396 5511
Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens	02 4980 0000
Opal Tweed Heads	07 5599 6900

Southern/Western/Country NSW

Opal Anita Villa	02 4782 6255
Opal Bathurst	02 6333 2500
Opal Cherrywood Grove	02 6361 9228
Opal Dubbo	02 6884 4277
Opal Denhams Beach	02 4412 3400
Opal Endeavour	02 4754 6000
Opal Endeavour ALA	02 4754 6000
Opal Mudgee	02 6372 3977
Opal Narrandera	02 6959 5300
Opal Shoalhaven	02 4421 5911

General Enquiries 1300 362 481
Feedback 1800 767 074

Metro NSW

Opal Annandale	02 8585 1900
Opal Austral House	02 9939 1288
Opal Belvedere	02 9489 2664
Opal Bossley Park	02 9426 1500
Opal Canterbury	02 9784 2111
Opal Cardinal Freeman	02 8799 6900
Opal Fernleigh	02 9809 3217
Opal Glen Lynn	02 9649 7746
Opal Lourdes	02 8467 3200
Opal Netherby	02 9489 0271
Opal Ocean View	02 9997 5448
Opal Palm Grove	02 9971 5389
Quakers Hill Nursing Home	02 8818 6500
Opal Seaside	02 9910 7600
Opal Stanmore	02 9519 3926
Opal Wallgrove	02 9759 2653
Opal Windward Manor	02 9370 0600

Central Victoria

Opal By The Bay	03 5976 5700
Opal Gillin Park	03 5559 0600
Opal Gracedale	03 9844 8000
Opal Hobsons Bay	03 8325 7600
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 5153 7200
Opal Lakeview	03 5179 5500
Opal Paynesville	03 5153 8400
Opal Sale	03 5142 1600
Opal Seahaven	03 5674 1700

Western Australia

Opal Applecross	08 9364 7722
Opal Armadale	08 9399 3132
Opal Bunbury Gardens	08 9726 6300
Opal Geraldton	08 9921 5010
Opal Murray River	08 9535 7466
Opal Narrogin	08 9881 2244

