

Opal moments

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Ageing is living

Acknowledgements

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Opal HealthCare acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

COVER IMAGE

At Ashmore Gardens Care Community, Beverley and Jean are a beautiful example of the friendships that blossom from new connections. Read more about Jean’s remarkable life on page 29.



Lifelong Geelong Cats fan Jean celebrated her 108th birthday in style, welcoming the players onto the field as part of a guard of honour before cheering the team on to a big win over the North Melbourne Kangaroos. See more of Jean’s big day on page 8.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Innovative employment pathways

One of the ways we have been creating new pathways into employment in our regional Care Communities is through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme.

Last October, 22 wonderful women took the opportunity to move to NSW to live, train and work with us for the next four years, so they could earn aged care qualifications and build lifelong career skills. They quickly endeared themselves to our residents and team with their desire to learn, compassion, warmth and community spirit. And in July, we were thrilled to see each one awarded a Cert III in Individual Support.

It was the most colourful graduation event I have experienced – each dressed in beautiful brightly coloured dresses and wearing handmade leis, bringing much joy to everyone with their beaming smiles and irrepressible singing.

Our new graduates were surrounded in-person and online by residents, team, representatives from our training partner Essential Skills, the government’s Aged Care Expansion team and Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, as well as friends and families. Some loved ones travelled from Fiji especially for the occasion – truly special moments indeed.

Inaugural Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards

What a joy it was to be inundated with entries for our first ever Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards. As part of our 2025 Social Impact Goals, we set ourselves a goal to have sustainable and productive edible gardens in every Care Community.

Establishing those gardens was the first step. Then we introduced our Harvest Awards. They’re intended to inspire everyone – residents and team – who wishes to get involved in gardening activities. There are so many ways to participate – be it helping to choose what to grow, going to the nursery to buy the seeds, potting and planting, watering, harvesting or suggesting recipes for our Chefs to cook up with the produce.

Not only are our residents enjoying the health and wellbeing benefits of their efforts, we’re also making a positive impact on nature by growing our own produce. You can read about our winners on page 22.

ENJOYing life

This edition is all about living well in care – friendship, socialisation, meaningful experiences and having agency in everyday life. Read on to see what we’re doing to *bring joy to those we care for*.

Warm regards

Rachel Argaman

Rachel

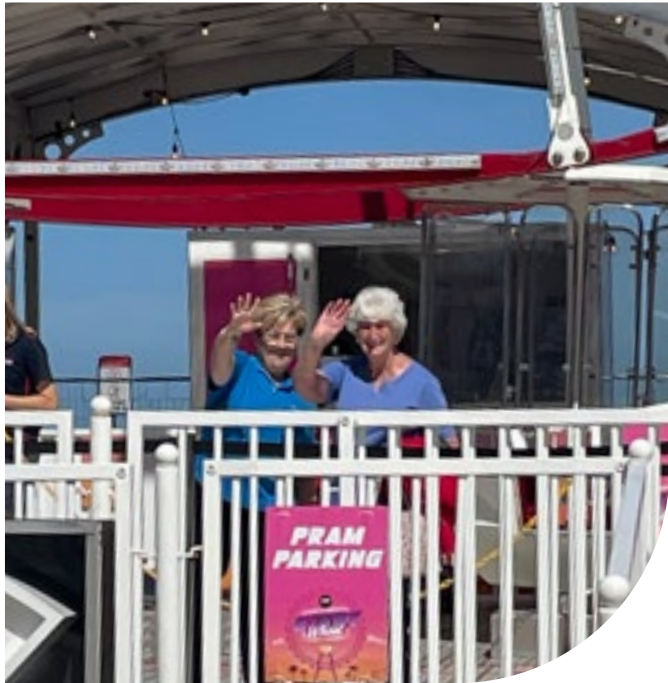
Shanu, Mereani, and Josephine celebrate graduating with a Cert III in Individual Support.

Stories from our Care Communities



TWEED RIVER CARE COMMUNITY NSW

It's the catch of the day! Brian reeled in a whopper of a flathead on one of his daily fishing ventures. Not content with merely landing the fish, 92-year-old Brian cleaned, scaled and filleted it, before cooking it up in the frypan for his fish and chips. *"It put up such a great fight, I thought it was a stingray!"* said Brian, who assures us the flathead tasted as good as it looks.



EVERARD PARK CARE COMMUNITY SA

A day at the seaside can be wonderfully invigorating, and even more so when you throw in the fun of the ferris wheel. Margaret's perfect day packed in a tram ride to Glenelg for coffee and a spin on the big wheel. *"I was so happy I felt like crying,"* said Margaret.



GLENMORE PARK CARE COMMUNITY NSW

Among her many talents, Robin loves to knit. She's an active member of Glenmore Park Care Community's knitting committee, which works lovingly to create beanies, mittens and booties for newborns, and babies born prematurely. For Robin, it takes her back to the days when she knitted for her own children. That's why using her skills to help some of the most vulnerable people in the community brings her great joy.



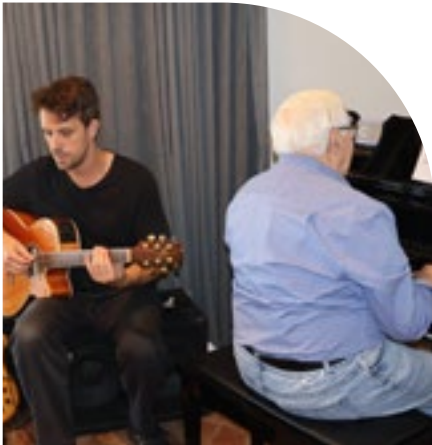
NORTH LAKES TERRACE CARE COMMUNITY QLD

It's hard to beat a unicorn ice cream, whatever the season! The smile on Jean's face says it all.



HIGHTON GARDENS CARE COMMUNITY VIC

We can 'cat'-egorically say Jean was 'feline' great after a marvellous day at the footy, taking part in the guard of honour to cheer the players onto the field! At 108, Jean (who was at the ground when the Cats won their first flag in 1925) has been supporting the proud club for more than a century. Cats' captain Patrick Dangerfield was on hand to let Jean know just how much that meant to the players. And the Cats players topped off a perfect day for Jean, with a big win against the North Melbourne Kangaroos!



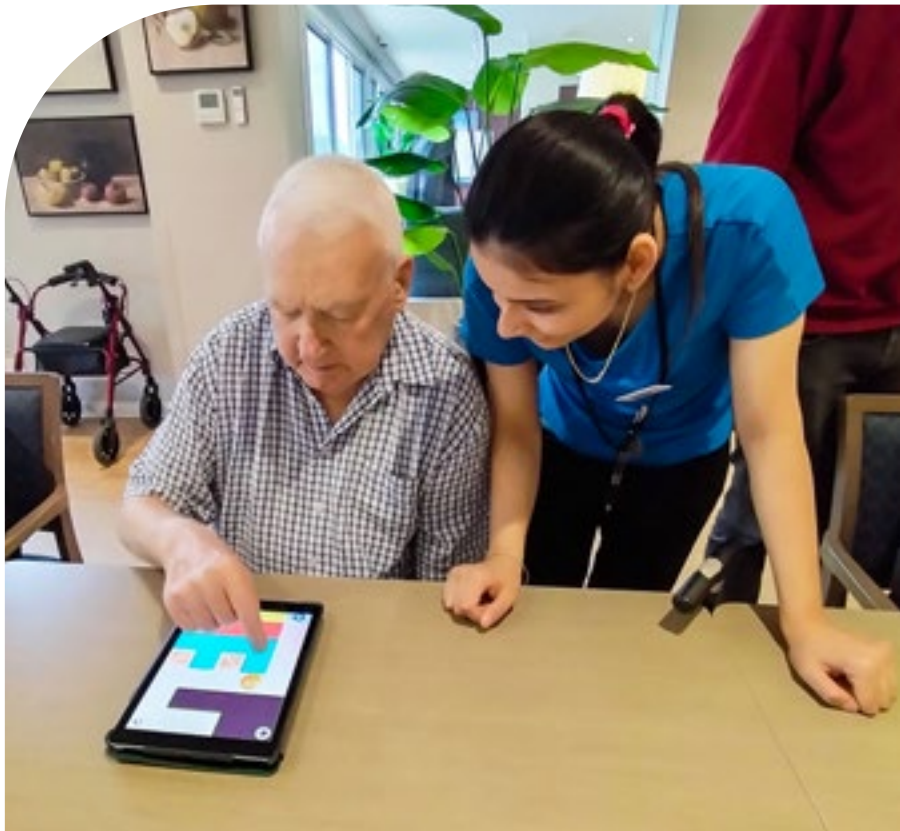
TREEBY PARKLANDS CARE COMMUNITY WA

Music brings people together, and there's no finer example than the bond resident Graham and Chef Yan have formed over their shared passion. With Graham on piano and Yan on guitar, the pair treated Treeby Parklands Care Community to a superb performance of jazz classics from the 1940s to the 1960s, with a set list including *On The Sunny Side Of The Street*, *Fly Me To The Moon*, and *Someday My Prince Will Come*. Encore, gents!

STORIES FROM OUR
CARE COMMUNITIES

DIAMOND CREEK
CARE COMMUNITY VIC

It's never too late to learn something new, and the best way to learn is to get hands-on. Ivanhoe Library paid a visit to teach our residents how to use iPads, using BrainHealth games to familiarise them with the technology. Our residents had a ball experimenting with the games and were pleasantly surprised by their skills!



ARMADALE PLACE
CARE COMMUNITY WA

When in Perth, do as Wendy does! Residents at Armadale Place headed to stunning Cottesloe Beach for fresh sea air and inspiring art from Sculpture by the Sea. Fish and chips by the beach was the perfect way to top off a beautiful day.



KAWANA WATERS
CARE COMMUNITY QLD

Like so many of our residents, Ron loves his regular visits to the Caloundra Library. Ron always leaves with a stack of books, making sure to include plenty from his beloved Western genre!



MANLY HILLSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY NSW

Beryl loves the theatre, so the chance to jump on the Manly Ferry and head into the city for a show was the perfect birthday treat. Beryl was thrilled to see the Australian Ballet perform *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* at the Capitol Theatre, a truly special day out.



KILLARNEY VALE
CARE COMMUNITY NSW

It's legs-11 at Killarney Vale Care Community where sisters Jeanette and Rita run Bingo with their friend Allen. It's fun, fast and exciting and our residents love the experience. The biggest cheers come when Allen hands out the prizes!

BUNBURY GARDENS
CARE COMMUNITY WA

Residents at Bunbury Gardens proved Ageing is Living by taking out first prize in the Southwest LiveLighter Aged Care Games organised by the Seniors Recreation Council of WA. It was all about 'having a go', with modified seated hockey, beanbag toss and skittles just some of the events up for grabs. With their first 'gold' under their belt, and the Olympic Games in Paris to keep them inspired, the sky's the limit!





Personalised Care

Meet resident Lance, who found his purpose in creating a beautiful space for all to enjoy. Resident Baheya shares her story of rediscovering her confidence through movement, and we explore how our team at Norah Head Care Community is supporting lives of meaning for residents living with dementia.

LANCE BRINGS LOVE TO A COURTYARD GARDEN

One of the first things visitors notice at Hansworth, in Melbourne's south east, is the beautiful courtyard garden. It's a living testament to the restorative power of personalised care, where the unique circumstances and needs of each resident is at the heart of their wellbeing.

When Lance and his wife Edith came to live at Hansworth (formerly BlueCross, now part of the Opal HealthCare family), they decided illness and cognitive impairment wouldn't stop them from enjoying their time together. They enthusiastically took part in Care Community life every day. However, when Edith sadly passed away, Lance found himself at a crossroads.

In the following months, Lance preferred to spend time in his room as he grieved and came to terms with his own diagnosis of dementia. As a way to support Lance through these changes, wellbeing manager Michelle created a photo book of the life he and Edith had enjoyed together at the Care Community.

"For Lance, the book was a fitting tribute to the life he and Edith had shared," says Michelle. "He gave me the biggest smile and told me he had decided to keep living."

Lance's life story helped him write the next chapter

Developing an understanding of the things that gave Lance purpose was key to helping him enjoy life again. Michelle learned Lance had an impressive track record as a gardener, including 12 years as gardening convenor at his previous home, a large retirement village.

To start, Michelle suggested that Hansworth's main courtyard could use Lance's expertise. With renewed purpose, Lance challenged himself to begin transforming the concrete square into a green oasis for residents and their families to enjoy.

"I developed a garden plan, and I had the freedom of time and space, and the support of the team to bring that plan to life," says Lance. "I'm pleased to have helped turn it into a place where people can have a bite to eat or a cuppa, spend time with their families and get out and enjoy the fresh air."

His work also gave Lance the opportunity to build on his already impressive skills.

"It's been wonderful to see the love and attention Lance brings to his work," says Michelle. "It's a perfect mirror of the affection he had for Edith. And every time a flower grows, Lance picks it and presents it to a resident or team member."

Staying active is good for body and soul

Lance was soon feeling the positive effects of his renewed physical activity on his mind and mood. He volunteered to join the Resident Advisory Committee. Coming to each meeting with a clipboard, agenda and minutes in hand, he's an influential voice and a well-respected member of the group.

And that's not all. During footy season, Collingwood fan Lance is an integral part of the tipping competition. Every Monday morning, Lance joins our admin team with his calculator, the winning teams and tallies up the results with confidence and pride. He also runs Bingo, and he walked in the Hansworth Memory Walk and Jog, helping to raise valuable funds for Dementia Australia.

For Lance's daughters Andrea and Deirdre, seeing him blossom again is a beautiful tribute to their parents' 66 years of marriage: *"He's taken his love for Mum and put it into the garden."*

"You need to be smart with concrete. You can't just dig a hole in the ground, so you need to work out how different plants react to growing in pots. I lost my first rose but I've worked it out now."

– Lance

FINDING FREEDOM IN MOVEMENT



Joni Mitchell wasn't singing about mobility but she might as well have been when she sang one of the most recognisable lyrics of the 20th century: *"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone..."*

The ability to move freely and with minimal pain is essential to many of life's joys. Going for a coffee with friends. Taking a walk in the park. Strolling through an art gallery. Strumming a guitar. And while 'quality of life' has many definitions, freedom of movement is an important one.

As we age, illness and injury can inhibit our movement, impacting our mental and emotional health. Many of our Care Communities have an in-house Wellness Centre, led by physiotherapists and offering personalised programs that support reablement, restorative care and improved mobility. In turn, supporting independent, active lives.

Person-centred care makes all the difference

Before undergoing any activity in our Wellness Centres, together with our allied health partners Healthcare Australia (HCA) and Concentric, we take the time to understand each resident's goals, preferences, and history through a comprehensive health consultation. This enables us to create individual treatment plans with the person at the centre. Regular assessments with our physiotherapists mean each person's program can be adapted as they progress, or as their goals or needs change.

Baheya's story

Baheya lives at Epping Meadows Care Community in Victoria. Before she became unwell, Baheya took pride in maintaining her home in the hills of Craigieburn, north of Melbourne. Baheya loved going out with friends, shopping and enjoying a coffee. Cooking was a great joy: preparing Lebanese feasts for her family of four children, 18 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Baheya's home is still in the family, cared for by her son. One day, Baheya aims to visit her family home and walk the six steps to the front door unaided. And her personalised reablement program means that goal is in sight.

"Baheya is making wonderful progress," says HCA physiotherapist, Aman.

"We started with range of motion and strength training exercises to free the movement in her joints and strengthen her muscles. As she gained sufficient range of movement, strength and stamina, we shifted the focus to improving her dynamic balance skills. That involves exercises like shoulder pulley, dumbbells, cycling on the exercise bike, sit-to-stand, gait training with the parallel bars and stair climbing."

For Baheya, enjoying the exercise is important and seeing progress is motivating.

"I enjoy my programs at the Wellness Centre," she says. *"It makes me feel good! When I started, I needed the help of two people and a wheelchair to go anywhere but now I can walk to the café with a frame and enjoy a coffee."*

Mobility brings confidence

Movement has given Baheya confidence to engage in the things that bring her joy. Now, she enthusiastically joins Care Community outings to cafes and restaurants with other residents.

"The services that have been provided have Mum walking again, which is amazing as she was unable to walk when she arrived," says her daughter Zeina. *"You can really see the confidence she's gained."*

Another daughter, Alham, says: *"Mum's come such a long way since starting physio sessions at the Wellness Centre. She used to have to use a sling after her fall and now she can walk with a frame. We hope one day she may be able to climb the steps and go home for the day or for an evening."*





SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE WELL WITH DEMENTIA

Nestled in a quiet street on the NSW Central Coast, Norah Head Care Community is proving a model in meaningful engagement for people living with dementia: a condition that impacts more than 420,000 Australians and their families.

The garden was calling when we paid a visit to Norah Head Care Community. Resident, Judy leads us to the gerberas that remind her of days admiring her grandmother's flowers at Wingham, in the Manning Valley.

"They're just beautiful," says Judy. She could just as easily be talking about the passionfruit vine, tomatoes, basil, or baby eggplant that grow plentifully thanks to residents like Clyde.

An ex-bricklayer and fisheries expert (or 'fish psychologist' as he cheekily claims), Clyde loves working with people. Clyde finds meaning in raking frangipani leaves, and working with maintenance officer Scott to weed and water the plants. He's proud to keep the place he calls home green and thriving.

We find the same spirit in Ken, who had *"half a yard of garden"* when he was younger. Ken helped plant Norah Head's raised garden beds that host cos and mignonette lettuce, cauliflower, sage and cabbage that chef Robyn uses in freshly made stir fries, frittata, lasagne, and casseroles that residents love.

Personalised Care

Supporting meaningful lives

Feeling misunderstood or unheard is distressing for people living with dementia and their loved ones. Conversely, it's the biggest opportunity to help people lead lives of meaning.

"Understanding a person's cognitive age is critical to designing activities and outings that matter to that person," explains general manager, Jessica.

"For instance, a person aged 80 may believe they're 30. At that stage of their life, a typical day might have involved waking up, packing lunch for the kids, then heading off to work as a teacher before coming home to mark homework. We take the time to understand the person's life story and what drove them at their age, to learn about the things that brought them joy, and we plan activities to suit."

"A person's cognitive age can change over time," adds Jessica. *"That's why building deep understanding and relationships with residents and their families is so important."*

Our team creates grab-and-go boxes for activities tailored to residents to support relevant engagement, responsively. Throughout our Care Community, you'll find small groups of residents playing cards, or creating beautiful craft. Judy, who we met earlier, built a career in hospitality so folding napkins gives her a sense of purpose.

"Dementia is fluid in nature, so you have to be just as fluid in how you engage," says Shanna, wellbeing manager.

"It's not just about caring for people, it's about helping people feel valued."
– Ally, customer support manager

Creating the right environment for residents to thrive

For most of us, a white toilet in a white-tiled bathroom presents no problem. But for a person living with dementia, it can be very different. Impacts on vision due to dementia means a lack of colour contrast could lead a person to believe the toilet doesn't exist. Thoughtful design can reduce confusion and distress, and improve quality of life.

Two years ago at Norah Head Care Community, we installed new window furnishings, carpets and furniture designed to absorb noise and reduce reflected lighting, which can cause disorientation.

Introducing multi-purpose spaces indoors and out helped create new experiences for residents. And we created appropriate spaces for those who enjoy active pursuits, while preserving quiet, cosy spaces for people who may prefer to read, or are overstimulated.



Health & Wellbeing

We showcase delicious home-grown produce at our inaugural Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards. Learn how we support friendship and connections, and be inspired by life stories of our centenarians.



PICK OF THE CROP

Enjoy the fruits (and veggies) of our first ever Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards

Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. Tomatoes, zucchinis, eggplant, carrot, radishes and fresh pumpkin. That's quite a harvest! It's just a taste of what our residents and team produced with their very own green thumbs for our inaugural Opal HealthCare Annual Harvest Awards.

The benefits of nature connection for older people, and our planet, are immense. Specifically; improved mood, increased social interaction, enhanced cognitive function and opportunities for physical activity – all of which contribute to a healthier and more fulfilling life. And for our planet, growing and eating fresh, seasonal food reduces our environmental footprint.

That's why we set a goal to have sustainable, productive kitchen gardens in every Opal HealthCare Care Community by 2025. And we're already well advanced. With gardens ready for planting in 101 Care Communities across Opal HealthCare by the end of 2023, we launched our annual Harvest Awards.

It's a real community affair, with resident committees working hand in (gardening) glove with our team, including our chefs and kitchen teams, to enable everyone to enjoy the product of their labours. The sense of achievement our residents derive from growing and sharing their own produce inspires them to keep going, keep planting and to test their skills in raising new and different varieties of edible plants.

Congratulations to the winners of our inaugural Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards!



Abundance Award

For Care Communities producing an abundance of vibrant seasonal produce.

Winner: Highton Gardens Care Community, Victoria

From a standing start, Highton Gardens Care Community produced a beautiful array of vegetables in its gardens. Tomatoes and zucchinis were grown from seed and lovingly nurtured by residents, along with broad beans, broccolini, chillis, capsicum, beans and spring onions.

“Working in the gardens has helped me make new friends with other residents and team. I like having a say on what I do where I live. It keeps me busy – I want to be active for as long as possible and these activities will help me achieve that.”
– Graeme, resident

Garden Evolution Award

Awarded to a Care Community where the edible kitchen garden has evolved to a new level over time.

Winner: Orange Grove Care Community, New South Wales

Residents Barry and Helen started with a mandarin tree. Barry sadly passed away but Helen has continued his legacy. Now along with mandarins, Orange Grove’s lemons, strawberries, spinach, carrots and tomatoes are used with great delight in the Care Community’s salads and stews.

And locals are enjoying the benefits of our labours, with an abundance of herbs shared among family members and visitors.

“I’m very satisfied with what I’m doing. It gives me great pleasure to have our garden. I’m so happy I moved into Orange Grove Care Community and that I can still enjoy gardening. It’s a big thing for me.”
– Helen, resident

Resident Engagement Award

Awarded to a Care Community with beautiful stories of residents experiencing joy, meaning, and purpose in their edible kitchen garden.

Winner: Ashmore Gardens Care Community, Queensland

Starting out with just three members, Ashmore Gardens’ garden committee has grown to include many residents, family members and team members who contribute in various ways.

It’s a supportive group, where new friendships have formed – such as that between residents John and Beverley, and Beverley’s son Gary. When John came to live at Ashmore Gardens, he was impressed by the work Beverley and Gary were doing in the garden. Encouraged to join in, John found his purpose and made two new friends in the process.

“I think it’s marvellous that we’ve been recognised by the wider community. Everyone has worked really hard to get the garden to this standard and I take my hat off to them all.”
– Stuart, resident

Food for the Soul Award

Awarded to a Care Community creating beautiful food for the soul from their edible kitchen garden harvest.

Winner: Dubbo Homestead Care Community, New South Wales

If you’re looking for the best pumpkin soup in the Central West of NSW (or possibly anywhere!), look no further than Dubbo Homestead Care Community. Their very active garden committee is led by residents Margaret, Kerry, Noel, and Tim. The size and quantity of their pumpkins is truly remarkable, producing a plentiful supply that keeps on coming.

It can get chilly in Dubbo. Chef Oswald’s pumpkin soup, already a firm favourite with residents, is wonderfully warming food for the soul. And the good news is you can taste it for yourself! Turn to page 54 for the recipe.

“You’ll never go hungry if you have a garden with fruit and vegetables. I love gardening so much, even when the extreme weather in the Central West makes me question if I should have watered them earlier or shaded them more from the sun. The questions are endless but when I see the plants flourish, it makes me feel joyful – just like winning a prize!”
– Margaret, resident

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND

How we enable friendships to thrive in care



Few things in life are as fulfilling as having somebody by your side to share a laugh, a tear or an experience with.

As we age, maintaining friendships becomes increasingly important for good health and wellbeing. Nurturing social connections and building new friendships helps older people to feel valued and find purpose in daily life. Our team encourage and support social connections of all varieties.

A loving marriage continues to bring joy

Fiore is part of our family at **Templestowe Grove Care Community** even though he doesn't live there. Our residents and team have always welcomed him with open arms – and one resident in particular has special reason to smile whenever Fiore walks through the doors.

More than seven decades ago Iolanda and Fiore said “I do” in Benevento. And they're still as smitten with each other as they were in that special moment in Italy.

Fiore joins Iolanda for lunch and dinner every day. His vibrant personality and deep affection for our residents lights up everyone's day.

“Fiore brings such a beautiful vibe,” says Laukau, wellbeing manager. “He finds residents who might be struggling to engage and he sits and chats with them, making them laugh and encouraging them.”

When asked about his beloved Iolanda, Fiore beams.

“I love her very much, and always have for over 70 years!”

Health & Wellbeing



Sharing language and culture makes Norma's life better

Meaningful Mates is a central part of life in our Care Communities, designed to nurture socialisation for residents. Our team members build personal, genuine relationships with individual residents through spending time together, getting to know one another and sharing meaningful experiences.

Norma lives at **Bossley Parkside Care Community**, where she loves spending time with her Meaningful Mate, Leanne. Connecting over their shared culture has helped Norma find new purpose.

“Respect for older people is such an important part of the Filipino culture, and Leanne loves her time with Norma as much as Norma does,” says Hamsa, wellbeing manager.

“Sharing a language means Leanne has helped Norma communicate with the rest of our team, so we can all understand what is meaningful to her. Leanne loves to make Norma smile and she's also aware of when Norma might be feeling low, so she can be there for her.”



Beryl helps new residents make friends

When you move into **Geraldton Shore Care Community** you don't need to look far to find a friend. Beryl is there from day one, working alongside our team to help residents and their families adjust to Care Community life in ways that are most meaningful for them.

“Beryl is wonderful,” says Carryn, general manager. “When people come to live with us, she makes time to sit down with them, learn more about their lives, and gives them all the best tips on enjoying life at our Care Community.”

“She's even created her own welcome guide that we include in the material we share with residents and families.”

Fellow resident Patricia attests to Beryl's generous nature. *“I was nervous when I came to live here but she eased my mind. We're now great friends!”*

Beryl is humble about the difference she makes at Geraldton Shore Care Community.

“I get a thrill out of helping others to settle in and be as happy as I am. I really love to help people.”



CELEBRATING OUR CENTENARIANS

People who have reached the milestone of 100 years have lived through extraordinary times.

Growing up in a world recovering from World War I, followed by the Great Depression, they found love, raised families and enjoyed rewarding careers that helped build the world we enjoy today. After the sorrows of World War II, they lived through austerity measures before some relief in the swinging sixties. Our centenarians ushered in the rise of the computer age, and welcomed the turn of a new century, before a pandemic turned the world upside down.

Five of our own centenarians, who bore witness to all of this and much more, share a glimpse of lives well-lived.

June, 102 and Derek, 104 Killara Glades Care Community, NSW

Derek and I were family friends as children and we married in 1943. It was raining and the taxi we travelled to the church in had red seats, so my dress was stained red.

I trained as a nurse, and military life took us so many places. Derek's role with the Australian Embassy in Washington DC took us to the US, and we lived in Indonesia when Derek was our Military Attaché with the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. I ran an orphanage and taught the children. One of my favourite things to do was count from one to 10 in the local language, but skip nine so the children could all shout "Sembilan!" And that's what they called me; I was Sembilan.

Derek received his OBE for service in Korea. Queen Elizabeth presented him with his honour in Hobart in 1954 and that was lovely, as he had organised the Queen's tour in Tasmania.

Our families have a long history of service. My father was awarded the Military Cross for his actions in the battle of Bapaume in World War I, and Derek's father served in the Navy.

Our secret to a long marriage is laughter. You have to see the funny side of things.

We have three children, 11 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren. The youngest is just one year old. She is gorgeous, but they all are.



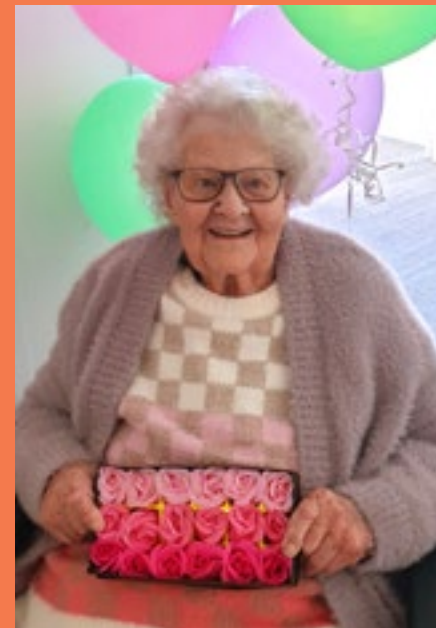
Jean, 102 Ashmore Gardens Care Community, Queensland

My favourite childhood memory is from when I was eight years old, learning to roller skate. I learned with a pillow taped to my bottom for when I fell over!

My favourite job was as Chief Clerk at Amcor. I worked there for 20 years and met some amazing people.

I'm amazed by how much technology has changed since the 1920s and how much it supports and assists everyone in life. It's really incredible.

What brings me joy? Sunshine, family, and happy, positive people!



Barbara, 103 Reynella Hillside Care Community, South Australia

I lived in England before the war – those were happy, free times. When I came to Australia I was one of the first female taxi drivers in Melbourne. I met so many wonderful people and I took great pride in my driving skills.

I still love talking to people and discovering their stories. People are so interesting. I like to hear about what's happening in their lives.

I'm proud of my beautiful extended family. This year, I'm being gifted the joy of a new great grandson. I can hardly wait!



Norma, 100 Marsden Park Care Community, NSW

I was the third of four daughters, and I came into the world weighing 14 pounds!

The Depression was the start of 10 difficult years for everyone. My parents gave us a shilling tied in a handkerchief so we could catch the tram home if it rained but we knew how hard life was for our parents, so we never used it.

When the war came, I joined the Australian Women's Army Service and was trained as a signaller. We were affectionately known as 'Wassies', and I was part of the first Signals Training Battalion.

I had a wonderful life with my husband Ian and our children. I have lovely family, friends and neighbours who visit me, take me places and make sure I want for nothing.



Enjoyment

Be inspired by Veronica's life of big flavours and big personalities, bask in a day of culture on South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula, and enjoy a delicious barbecue with friends amongst the treetops.



COOKING UP AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

Veronica's pioneering role in Australia's favourite cookbook

It may not seem the obvious place for an aspiring foodie to start their career but, for Veronica Cuskelly, her first job at the Timber Workers' Union was just right.

"I loved my time there," recalls Veronica, who lives at **Glenmore Park Care Community** in western Sydney. *"I worked with Joe Weir. He famously always wore a bow tie and served in the NSW State Parliament. He was a lovely man. Actually, everyone at the Union was lovely, and I learned so much."*

So, when Veronica decided to leave to pursue a career in food, you can understand why her mother asked: *"Why would you leave a perfectly good job?"*

Thankfully, the answer became obvious during an extraordinary career. After taking TAFE courses in cake decorating and home economics, Veronica worked with the iconic Australian company, Arnott's, designing recipes to show how its famous biscuits could be enjoyed.

"My favourite was a chocolate biscuit cake," says Veronica. *"You take Milk Coffee biscuits, add copha and cocoa, and layer the cake. On top, you add a chocolate egg and you have a Humpty Dumpty cake."*

After Arnott's, Veronica headed to Unilever – *"the best thing that ever happened to me."* This is where Veronica's career as an author got started, creating birthday cake books and classics like *Crackles and More!*

Mixing with the movers and shakers

Some of Veronica's fondest memories from that time are of the *Food Media Club*, a collection of Australia's food luminaries such as Bernard King, Margaret Fulton and Maggie Beer.

"Everyone in food is a nurturer," says Veronica. *"Those people were so supportive and so keen to help everyone else progress in their career. And they were such characters! Bernard was wonderful. I was doing more public speaking at that time and Bernard eased my nerves by constantly reminding me I could do this."*

Leaving a legacy

The Commonsense Cookery Book is an Australian icon. Since it was first published in 1914, it has been continuously in print, selling over one million copies.

Veronica is humble when asked how she feels about her role as food editor for the book's centenary edition.

"I feel very privileged," she says simply. Beyond this, one of Veronica's achievements was introducing metric measurements to modernise the classic cookbook.

And Veronica was far from finished. Working with nutritionist Nicole Senior, Veronica created a number of books that brought better food and better living to so many Australians, including *Eat and beat cholesterol*; *The healthy heart cookbook*; *Heart Food*; and the beautifully titled *Belly busting for blokes*.

Veronica's lifetime of achievements includes winning numerous prizes at the Sydney Royal Easter Show before becoming a judge there, as well as at the Penrith and Hawkesbury Shows. Bringing her story full circle, Veronica taught at East Sydney and North Sydney TAFEs – the very places she learned the skills that set her off on the most remarkable career.

So, did Mum still think Veronica made the wrong choice to throw in a perfectly good job?

"No!" laughs Veronica. *"She was very proud."*



Veronica created this beautiful wedding cake for her niece Cathy and husband Tony.



Enjoyment

WINING AND DINING IN MCLAREN VALE

A feast for all the senses

Residents in South Australia enjoyed a special day at the famous d'Arenberg Cube on the Fleurieu Peninsula, forming new bonds over fine wine, a lunch to savour and priceless art.

Having the opportunity to socialise with like-minded people is important at any age or stage of life. And it's especially rewarding for people without cognitive impairment who are living in aged care. We designed our ENJOY program to bring residents together across different Care Communities, so they can interact and make new friends, strengthen existing bonds and enjoy a day out.

It might be going to a matinee performance at the ballet. Cheering on the local football team from special box seats. Or taking in a movie.

In the case of residents from **Everard Park** and **Aldinga Beach Care Communities** and accompanying team members, it was a triple treat for the senses. Wine tasting, a fabulous meal and a special viewing of artworks by a European master, all in the one place – the d'Arenberg Cube in beautiful McLaren Vale.

Our residents got their big day off to the best possible start by tasting some of the outstanding red and white wines the region is famous for before settling down to a delicious lunch at d'Arry's Verandah Restaurant.

"I celebrated my birthday on the day we went to The Cube so it was extra special to me. The meal was amazing, and it was lovely to meet fellow residents from Aldinga Beach Care Community and swap stories. It was wonderful!"
– Eunice, resident, Everard Park Care Community

If that wasn't special enough, residents were thrilled to see an exhibition of original artworks and bronze sculptures by Salvador Dali. With more than 25 artworks from the Spanish master on show, residents were both inspired and awed by the experience.

"Our residents chatted the whole way home, discussing their experience from the day," says Anne, wellbeing officer at Everard Park Care Community. *"It was such a rewarding sound to hear while driving the bus back home!"*

ENJOY is designed to augment the day-to-day experiences that support inclusion, belonging and a sense of purpose for residents at our Care Communities.

The program makes diverse experiences available to our residents. Recent outings in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland include *Leonardo Da Vinci – 500 Years of Genius* at The Lume in Melbourne, watching a game of footy at the MCG from a corporate box, and going along to blockbuster musicals like *Beauty and the Beast* and *Wicked*.

"The day was so well organised from the time we left to the time we returned. There was something for everyone – wine tasting, art, food, scenery and history. My wife Frances and I were grateful to get the chance to do something we'd normally not do, and we enjoyed meeting residents and team members from Everard Park Care Community. It was just fantastic."
– John, resident, Aldinga Beach Care Community

Enjoyment

SERVING FLAVOUR AND FUN AT BAYVIEW TREETOPS



Enjoyment

"All our meals are cooked just like our own home-made meals used to be and every one of our meals is enjoyable."
– Janice, Resident

It's a sunny Wednesday at **Bayview Treetops Care Community** on Sydney's Northern Beaches. The barbecue is sizzling. Fresh aromas of lemon garlic chicken, rosemary pork sausage and caramelised onion fill the air, lovingly prepared under the skilful hand of chef Rinchen. The courtyard is abuzz, the laughter and chatter of residents mixed with the songs of native birds who call in daily.

The scene at Bayview Treetops Care Community demonstrates that a memorable meal is as much an experience as mere sustenance; the flavours, company, sounds, and the setting – all play their part in activating and exciting the senses.

And for residents at Bayview Treetops Care Community, the proof is in the pudding. Each year, the Australian Government assesses aged care providers across four categories in its Star Ratings system, which includes questions about food quality. Bayview Treetops scored **9.18 out of ten** for food quality, placing it top of all residential aged care providers in Metropolitan Sydney.

General manager, Geoff, says a personalised, proactive approach to understanding every resident's needs and preferences (and knowing those can change), is central to food satisfaction.

"When he's not in the kitchen or manning the barbeque, chef Rinchen meets with residents and families to listen to feedback and focus on residents who may be new to our Care Community, are experiencing weight loss, or just aren't their normal selves," says Geoff.

Food quality is essential to health and wellbeing, bringing the nutrition we all need to live well. It also supports our social health. Sharing a great meal with good friends truly is a joy in life.

"We wanted to give our residents and their families a real destination to enjoy," explains Geoff. "Our newly refurbished courtyard has become the place for people to come together over a lovely meal. We love seeing our residents enjoying our barbeques. We host happy hours here and our mobile espresso bar is a big hit, because everyone deserves a great coffee!"

"We've got the location, but we also make it fun," adds Geoff.

"Chef Rinchen brings the theatre of cooking and when the weather isn't so nice, we have a pianola so our musically-inclined residents can jump on the keys during lunch."



Safety & Security

We strap on our walking boots to learn how our team at Springwood Terrace Care Community is helping Jeanette enjoy her active life. And we look at how proactive, personalised care helps to reduce distress or discomfort in care.



JEANETTE'S BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING

From boiling a kettle for your morning cuppa to swimming with sharks and everything in between, we make choices every day that involve some level of risk. In residential aged care 'dignity of risk' enables us to support our residents to live their life, their way.

Making choices is part of enjoying a full, meaningful life. But as we age there are often more risks to consider in some of the everyday choices we make. Like rearranging furniture to make a room easier or safer to move about in. Choosing shoes that are more supportive for ageing feet. Or opting to serve underarm to preserve a sore shoulder so you can still enjoy a game of tennis.

At our Care Communities, dignity of risk means supporting our residents to live according to their unique wishes and preferences; helping them to enjoy the experiences they love while understanding and helping to manage the associated risk.

Jeanette lives at **Springwood Terrace Care Community** in Brisbane's south-east. One of the joys of her life is soaking up the sun on her daily walk to the bakery for a chat and to pick up the newspaper.

"Walking to the shops means the whole world to me", says Jeanette. "It starts my day off right, and helps me to think clearly."

Supporting Jeanette's choices

Jeanette came to live at Springwood Terrace following her diagnosis of dementia. Jeanette's son Paul saw the first signs of cognitive decline when he learned his mother was waking and getting ready for work at unusual hours. Despite this, Paul also knew Jeanette retained her fiercely independent spirit.

"Mum has always been the toughest woman I've ever known," says Paul. "It's what we love about her, and the Springwood Terrace team has gone out of their way to embrace this part of her personality."

Wellbeing manager, Deborah, explains that supporting Jeanette involved having a clear understanding of Jeanette's preferences, and making sure the right safeguards were in place.

"We knew Jeanette had been a walker her whole life, and we knew she was physically capable of it," says Deborah. "So, we performed a risk assessment, together with Jeanette and Paul, and we put a plan in place."

Deborah made an ID card with a lanyard for Jeanette, containing her name and the Care Community contact details. She and Jeanette walked the route to the shops together a number of times, while Jeanette talked Deborah through her process, which demonstrated her excellent sense of road safety.

Safety is always top of mind for Jeanette.

"She wears sensible shoes and always takes her phone with her," explains Deborah. "Jeanette always wears a hat, and if it's raining or there are roadworks, she won't go for a walk that day. When I took those first few walks with her, she had the marvellous idea of threading plaited wool into the trees, like breadcrumbs, as easy markers!"

Most days, Jeanette walks to the shop on her own. Deborah and our team conduct regular assessments and occasionally accompany her to ensure she can continue to do so safely.

Understanding the risks involved and managing them appropriately has helped to keep Jeanette's world open, and her life full.

"These walks have provided Mum with a sense of dignity and autonomy," says Paul. "She's always been active and stayed fit. I'm really happy she's able to retain that life while she's still able to."

Jeanette's always loved animals and connecting with nature on her walks.

"I've made friends with some of the magpies who fly down to greet me as I'm walking along the path," says Jeanette. "I stop and talk to them for a moment and then they fly away."

Dignity of risk forms part of a resident's care plan and is agreed in consultation with a resident's family and multidisciplinary care team.



SAFE AND SOUND

A personalised approach to supporting safe environments for everyone

Every person has the right to feel safe and secure in their home. Across our Care Communities, our team is trained to proactively support residents who show signs of stress or discomfort.

Having a thorough understanding of each resident's history, their preferences, and the activities they enjoy helps us understand what may cause distress or discomfort. With that knowledge, we strive to create an environment where every resident feels safe and secure.

The value of relationships

One way we bring our residents comfort is through Meaningful Mates – like Norma and Leanne, who we met on page 27. Having a friend for a resident to spend quality time with means we can more easily spot when a resident isn't quite themselves.

Residents who are living with cognitive impairment can struggle to communicate their needs. Distress can manifest in changed behaviours, which may involve physical or emotional reactions.

Our De-escalation Wheel provides a simple framework to help bring calm for residents with changed behaviours to act. This is essential as every resident has unique circumstances, needs, and triggers that may upset them. To learn more, visit opalhealthcare.com.au and search for 'memory care neighbourhood'. You can also find more in the Summer 2023-24 issue of Opal Moments, visit opalhealthcare.com.au and search for 'Opal Moments'.

We also work closely with resident representatives, such as family members, GPs, or legal representatives such as Enduring Power of Attorneys, to ensure decisions that impact residents' lives are made with each resident's best interests at heart.

Having the right support in place

For some residents, particularly those living with dementia or cognitive impairment, aggressive physical or sexual behaviours may need to be managed.

Person-centred behavioural support plans help us to support those residents, while retaining that all-important sense of safety.

At Opal HealthCare Care Communities, our memory care neighbourhoods are dedicated wings, specifically designed to support people living with dementia.

They offer a homely environment, with memory supports to encourage a sense of purpose, and wayfinding devices like colourful door decals which help residents identify their bedroom and other living areas. Families are encouraged to personalise their loved one's bedroom with items of significance to help them feel more secure.

Identifying and managing pain

A person in pain is more likely to become distressed. This may become heightened as we age and our clinical needs become more complex. Sound clinical care, with individualised treatment plans and regular assessments enables our team to identify and respond to any changes a resident may experience.



At **Chiswick Manor Care Community**, a safety-first approach to engaging people with cognitive decline is showing encouraging results.

Two wings are dedicated memory care neighbourhoods, with key-coded doors that open to a beautiful courtyard. For residents living with dementia, 'walking with purpose' can be prompted by agitation or boredom, so it's important they have the right space to move around.

Damien, general manager at Chiswick Manor, and our team wanted to help residents living in our memory care neighbourhood enjoy new, stimulating experiences, so they developed a proactive approach to risk management.

To support residents walking with purpose, they started by opening the doors to our memory care neighbourhood between 2 and 3pm, so they could enjoy extended walks, with team members closely supervising.

"Only a couple of residents were confident to leave our memory care neighbourhood the first time, and some residents who live in other areas of our Care Community were concerned about unpredictable behaviour," says Damien.

"We knew our approach could have positive outcomes for everyone, so we persisted. Our team are on hand at all times, putting everyone at ease. Now more residents leave our memory care neighbourhood to enjoy broader Care Community life, in a safe environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged."



Loving Community

We learn how the power of stories is connecting residents at Melville Parkside Care Community with students at Melville Senior High School. And we also meet one of our big-hearted volunteers, Glenn, who helps bring sunshine to the lives of residents at Calamvale Parklands Care Community.

TALKIN' 'BOUT OUR GENERATIONS

Students re-imagine the life stories of our elders



Storytelling has connected people for millennia, and residents at Perth's **Melville Parkside Care Community** and Melville Senior High School students are nurturing this very human tradition.

Intergenerational relationships benefit everyone. Younger people learn from the experiences of their elders, and gain a deeper understanding into the history and dynamics that have built the world they will inherit. Older people benefit from the curiosity, new perspectives and skills of young people.

Assignment accepted!

It began with a challenge for students in the Gifted and Talented English program at Melville Senior High School. They were charged with meeting some of our residents and writing a short tale based on a significant event in their lives.

The students took to the task with gusto, listening intently to the life experiences of our residents before starting to craft their stories on paper.

And there was a twist: students could write the story as biography or truth-based fiction.

The students found a rich well of material to draw from, like resident Nancy, who had bravely toured Australia in a four-seater Cessna plane with her husband.

Once the stories were complete, residents and their young friends shared afternoon tea, and the students presented their stories.

"I'm turning 100 this year so I've had a full life," says Nancy, with some understatement.

"I told the students about one memorable lunchtime in my country school where, sitting under a wattle tree, I bit down into my sandwich and spat out half a cockroach! It was so awful. One girl wrote a fictional story that ended in me turning from the blackboard to the class, with cockroach legs between my teeth!"

Joan has also lived an extraordinary life, beginning in the small West Australian town of Wiluna, moving to the mines in Fiji before returning west, to Kalgoorlie. Joan recalled working sometimes seven days a week from the age of 14 in Fiji, and enjoying bareback horse riding as a special treat.

"They're such good kids," says Joan. "They were so happy, listened so well and opened up about themselves. They did a wonderful job and worked so hard to tell our stories."

This is just Chapter One

The program with Melville Senior High School will continue throughout 2024 and beyond. Each fortnight, residents from Melville Parkside Care Community visit Melville Senior High School, with a range of activities scheduled.

Ideas include baking, gardening, theatrical performances and – just to prove ageing really is living – students will teach residents how to 'roast' an audience before a rap battle!

Importantly, while our residents have been energised by their new friendships, the students have also – gaining new perspectives on ageing and the value of older people in society.

"I've been profoundly inspired by the intergenerational connections formed between our students and the residents," says Christina, English teacher and Gifted and Talented Coordinator at Melville Senior High School.

"This initiative has fostered connection, understanding and has enriched our school's community. Our students are gaining valuable skills and compassion, while the residents are experiencing renewed vitality and joy. It's the highlight of our week when the residents visit us and the students and I are very grateful to have their presence and conversations."

The students' perspective

"It was an exciting and inspiring experience. I learned a lot!"

"It was cool and intriguing to have a snapshot into their life when they were younger."

"It was nice connecting with people in the community."

"It was inspiring. Through age comes wisdom and gratitude."



THE ENRICHING EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING

Glenn gives back at Calamvale Parklands

Volunteers form part of our social fabric across Australia. Be it fighting fires, keeping swimmers safe, or turning snags at a fundraising BBQ – people find fulfilment in contributing to society in all kinds of ways. In fact, almost 75% of Australians are involved in informal or formal volunteering*. And many choose to spend time with people living in aged care.

For volunteers at our Care Communities, such as Glenn Hill, the rewards are priceless.

Loving Community

Finding purpose, nurturing others

Glenn visits **Calamvale Parklands Care Community** almost every day. It's fair to say he's part of our family. In fact, that's how he got involved.

"I started coming to visit when my Mum, Pat, lived here," says Glenn. "She would deliver the mail in the Care Community, so everyone knew her as Postman Pat! Mum volunteered with the Uniting Church for years so I grew up with that spirit."

After Pat passed away, Glenn wanted to maintain the connections he had made with residents and team at Calamvale Parklands while his mum was alive.

"When you retire, you can get a bit lost, and you want to make a difference," says Glenn.

He took an increasingly active role in Care Community life.

"Glenn is just wonderful," says Rana, wellbeing manager. "He brings sunshine into our Care Community!"

Resident Ann agrees. *"It's always nice to have a laugh with him. It's just fun when he's around."*

Supporting person-centred care

When a resident moves into Calamvale Parklands Care Community, Glenn joins our team in spending time listening to that person, to learn about how they like to live and the things that matter to them.

"We talk about abilities, not disabilities," says Glenn. "Rather than dwelling on what a person can't do, we ask what can they do? How can we help bring meaning to that person's life?"

Glenn helps out with all kinds of activities and is on hand to drive the Care Community bus. BBQ lunches, ten-pin bowling with homespun rules and fishing trips are a particular highlight.

"Even residents who haven't been fishing before enjoy trying their hand at throwing out a line. It's a hoot, even if we don't catch anything," he says.

For men, ageing is often accompanied by a loss of social connection, which can lead to loneliness and a waning sense of purpose. Glenn's a great support

behind Calamvale Parklands' men's group, which is always active and constantly evolving.

"We pulled out a whiteboard and a metaphoric magic wand at the start of the year, and wrote down all our wishes," says Glenn. "Some of the men wanted to go to a famous pie shop, so we did that. They loved it so much we've done it three times this year!"

Enriching lives

Of course, engagement means different things to different people. One resident who isn't interested in group activities thrives on his regular games of pool with Glenn.

Glenn loves to make people laugh by calling Bingo, and he's on hand to help at significant ceremonies, like ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day. He also plays Santa, joking he needs a few pillows to get the right physique.

For our residents, it doesn't matter what suit Glenn wears.

"Glenn is such a special man," says resident, Margaret. "He has such a big heart and goes above and beyond to help everybody."

We welcome volunteers at Opal HealthCare Care Communities across Australia.



* Biddle, N., Boyer, C., Gray, M., & Jahromi, M. (2022) Volunteering in Australia: The Volunteer Perspective. Volunteering Australia.



SAKSHI'S STORY

Building a caring career
through the Opal
HealthCare Academy

Delivering the highest standard of care is essential to supporting Australia's ageing population.

That's why we launched the Opal HealthCare Academy in 2021 to help us develop our current and future team with rewarding career pathways. And Sakshi's career journey proves it's working.

Sakshi began her career as a personal care worker at Waverley Valley Care Community, in Melbourne.

Then, after qualifying as a registered nurse, Sakshi challenged herself to become a certified nurse educator. After she achieved that goal, Sakshi proved her leadership qualities by successfully mentoring another registered nurse in her journey to certified nurse educator. From there, Sakshi took on the role of clinical care coordinator, supporting residents living with dementia in Waverley Valley's memory care neighbourhood under the guidance of Opal HealthCare's dementia care leaders.

Help is at the heart of Sakshi's career journey

This experience inspired Sakshi to begin our Registered Nurse to Care Manager (RN2CM) program, with the aim of helping even more residents and team members.

"I'm so grateful to Opal HealthCare's RN2CM program for the enriching opportunity it provided me," says Sakshi. "As a new care manager, this program has significantly aided my journey. Interacting with care managers from other Care Communities enabled us to share valuable experiences, knowledge, and information."

"The program takes a fun approach, which made the learning experience truly enjoyable. And I'm so grateful to our Waverley Valley Care Community residents and team for their support."

When graduation day arrived, there were few prouder than residents Judith and Hedi. In a poignant moment for Sakshi, fellow team members, and her supporters, Judith said *"If I don't get a hug from Sakshi in the morning, the day hasn't started."*

Watch our video to learn more about our RN2CM program at <https://vimeo.com/953750971> and visit academy.opalhealthcare.com.au for more on how the Opal HealthCare Academy helps our people build rewarding careers.

SIMPLIFYING AGED CARE ON OUR WEBSITE

Navigating aged care options can be overwhelming.

On top of the stress of finding the right provider where you or your loved one can live their best life, there's the challenge of understanding the costs involved. And, as you work through your RADs and your ACATs, it can feel like you're learning a new language.

Our aim is to make aged care as simple and as clear as possible for our residents and their families.

The internet is the first place many people go to for information, so we revamped our Opal HealthCare website to make it easier for people to get the answers they need to confidently make the most informed decision.

Listening to our residents and families

We designed our **5 Steps to Aged Care** guide to help people understand what they need to do in detail, from the time they start considering aged care, to making decisions. Feedback from residents and families told us the first draft was good, but could be made even clearer. So we simplified the language in the guide, and made a video explaining the five steps. Both have been very well received.

Naturally, one of our most often asked questions is *"what will aged care cost?"* It's an important question. We upgraded our **Cost Calculator** to mirror the simplicity of online booking systems, like those you'd use for booking flights or hotels. This change means people can enter their details just once and compare all options side-by-side, reducing stress and saving time. Our Cost Calculator can be found on every Care Community page on our website.

We also wanted to showcase how we support our residents to live meaningful lives in our Care Communities, so we've given our homepage a facelift. Now it highlights every aspect of care and provides quick links to our Cuppa Q&A's series, **opalhealthcare.com.au/news/conversations-about-aged-care**, where families of our residents generously share personal insights into their journeys into care.

Scan the QR code to see our website. If you'd like to speak with one of our team about aged care, give us a **call on 1300 072 084**.



3 Questions about Sustainability

As Opal HealthCare grows to provide the vital services required to meet the needs of our ageing population in Australia, we're focused on advancing our four vital pillars of sustainability.



1. What does sustainability mean at Opal HealthCare?

Being a sustainable organisation means being resilient and adaptable as the world around us changes. The impact of Opal HealthCare on people and wider society, and the sustainability of our organisation are inextricably linked. So, our **Social Impact framework** is founded on global standard ESG principles, aligns to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is embedded in our organisational governance structure.

Our Sustainability Action Plan recognises the long-term viability of our organisation and our vision to be *first choice for older people to live their best life in care*. It comprises 10 targets and 14 initiatives through which we will deliver our 2025 Social Impact Goals by the end of next year.

3. What are some of the highlights so far in delivering the 2025 Goals?

We are making good progress against our goals. In particular our social goals, which address the way we care for our team, residents and their families. Highlights include:

Entry level employment pathways

In July we celebrated the graduation of 22 Fijian team members at regional Care Communities across New South Wales, who achieved a Certificate III in Individual Support. This qualification is required to work as a carer in residential aged care. These team members joined us from Fiji as part of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, whereby we provide accommodation, training and employment for up to four years to enable more people with the right attributes and ambitions to work in aged care.

Edible kitchen gardens for residents

These have been established in 102 Care Communities to date, to enable residents to raise fresh fruit and veggies to eat in our home cooked meals. Read more about it on page 22.

Merelesita joined us through the PALM scheme and celebrated her Cert III graduation with resident, Steve, at Kanwal Gardens Care Community.

2. Does Opal HealthCare report publicly on progress against its 2025 Social Impact Goals?

Yes. We publish an annual Social Impact Report on our website, and we print a small number of copies for our residents who prefer to read printed materials. We share our Report with our team, residents and families, partners in care, government, suppliers and the wider community.

Mental Health First Aid training

To date over 100 team members have completed this training to provide support in the workplace. We are well on our way to achieving our goal of 250.

Building Management System (BMS) pilot

This has shown a 30% reduction in power usage at Toongabbie Terrace Care Community. We are looking to implement BMS in all new builds.

33 more Care Communities go solar

The expansion of our solar program will see a total of 87 Care Communities using solar power by the end of this year, with newly acquired Care Communities under evaluation for solar as well.

Read more about our 2025 Goals and progress in our annual Social Impact Report on our website:



THE GOOD COOK

If you're after warm, comforting food for the soul, this creamy pumpkin soup made from Dubbo Homestead Care Community's finest produce is a winner.



Recipe by Chef Oswald, Dubbo Homestead Care Community,
New South Wales

CHEF OSWALD'S PUMPKIN SOUP

INGREDIENTS

700g pumpkin (Queensland Blue, Butternut or any ripe pumpkin)

1 Pink Lady apple, diced

500ml vegetable stock

1 celery stalk, diced

Half a brown onion, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, diced

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup of cream

1 cup of parmesan cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

Crusty bread

1 medium sweet potato (optional)

2 large carrots, diced (optional)

Basil leaves for garnish (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees.

2. Pour olive oil in a baking pan. Toss the diced vegetables, apple and garlic in olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place in the oven for 20 minutes.

3. In the meantime, pour a small amount of oil in a large pot on the stovetop on medium heat. Place the bouquet garni in the pot for 3-5 minutes, then remove and set aside.

4. Remove baking pan with vegetables from the oven, once cooked. Take the vegetables from the pan and transfer them to the pot you used in step 3. Blend the vegetables with a stick blender.

5. Add vegetable stock and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

6. Add cream and parmesan cheese before serving. Add salt and pepper to taste if necessary. Add basil leaves and bouquet garni for garnish.

7. Serve with crusty bread.

Serves 4-6 people.

For bouquet garni:

Tie all herbs together for the garni

1 stalk of rosemary

1 stalk of thyme

1 bay leaf



Words of thanks

Our Care Communities often receive thank you letters from families and friends expressing their gratitude for our team. Here are some letters.

**CARSELDINE GREENS
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

We could not have chosen a better place for Mum. She really enjoyed the last six months of her life here at Carseldine Greens. Mum started doing things she has never done in her life. She started going out for walks with other residents, activities in the house were amazing, team members took great care of Mum, and she enjoyed having her meals with the other residents.

**ALFRED COVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thea was so kind to Dad and other residents this morning. She always makes time for a chat, and has such a lovely, kind heart.

**MORNINGTON BAY
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

The team at Mornington Bay are fantastic. The care Mum receives is amazing, everyone is so attentive. Mum has improved and is back to her normal self, when we did think we might lose her. I can't praise the team highly enough, everyone is so approachable and helpful.

**VARSITY VIEWS
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

Thank you for your excellent care of Mum. Having regular updates really helps when we can't visit her.

**APPLECROSS SHORE
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for your help with Mum's 90th birthday. It was a huge success. The spread far exceeded my expectations and was much appreciated. More importantly, Mum enjoyed the celebrations. I was a little unsure if it might have been too much but she was so happy.

**KATOOMBA VIEWS
CARE COMMUNITY**
NEW SOUTH WALES

The music was great and all the wonderful food was amazing. We were very happy to see the team having so much fun with the residents singing and dancing. We're very happy to have our father here.

**MARSDEN PARK
CARE COMMUNITY**
NEW SOUTH WALES

I just have to compliment all of the team. They are without exception the most caring and dedicated people, who treat all the residents with kindness, respect and care. It's not an easy role but the smiling, welcoming faces are so comforting as we visit my mother-in-law almost daily. My wife and I cannot praise these wonderful people enough. The Care Community itself is amazing but it is the quality of care that fills our hearts with joy.

**OXLEY GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

I miss going up to Oxley Grove. I had become really fond of many of the residents and team. Please know how grateful I am for the seven months my Mum spent in your care. I honestly could not have been happier with your Care Community. The team were just beautiful and I'm forever grateful.

**PAYNESVILLE GARDENS
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

The team was so caring to my mother and our family. I was grateful to be able to spend as much time with my mother in her last days in the most comfortable and caring way possible. Each and every one of you were amazing during this time and I wish I could thank you all separately as you all had such personal and wonderful gifts that went to make this time very special to me.

**WAVERLEY VALLEY
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

Thank you so much for the wonderful afternoon tea you gave us yesterday. It was lovely to see Christopher out of his room and enjoying the sunshine in a space where we could all visit him together. The weather was perfect and the gardens were beautiful. The food and drinks were delicious. Chris had a really happy afternoon and enjoyed himself. Our whole family very much enjoyed it.

**MORAYFIELD GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

Thank you so much for your amazing care of our partner/ Mum/Grandma. Everyone goes above and beyond, and we appreciate it so much. We feel so confident and reassured having her in your care. Thank you for everything you do!

**BAIRNSDALE PARKLANDS
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

I just want to say a big thank you to you and the team for taking care of my Dad. Thank you especially towards the end for coming and checking on him and for making sure he was as comfortable as he could be.

**GERALDTON SHORE
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Massive thanks to everyone for your care of our Dad. You have become our extended family and friends. You have all made the past three years easier to cope with Dad becoming increasingly frail.

Our Care Communities

General enquiries 1300 048 519

NSW — Sydney Metro		
Annandale Grove Care Community	02 8585 1900	
Ashfield Terrace Care Community	02 8799 7000	
Auburn Glen Care Community	02 9643 3200	
Bankstown Terrace Care Community	02 9708 9400	
Bayview Treetops Care Community	02 9979 9066	
Belmore Place Care Community	02 9784 3100	
Blacktown Terrace Care Community	02 9852 9600	
Bossley Parkside Care Community	02 9426 1500	
Canterbury Place Care Community	02 9784 2111	
Chiswick Manor Care Community	02 9370 0600	
Glenmore Park Care Community	02 4737 5300	
Katoomba Views Care Community	02 4780 0600	
Killara Glades Care Community	02 8467 3200	
Manly Hillside Care Community	02 8925 6400	
Marsden Park Care Community	02 7231 3700	
Meadowbank Grove Care Community	02 8878 5200	
Mona Vale View Care Community	02 9910 7100	
Narrabeen Glades Care Community	02 9910 7600	
Narraweena Grove Care Community	02 8978 3100	
Quakers Hillside Care Community	02 8818 6500	
Stanmore Place Care Community	02 8594 6900	
Toongabbie Terrace Care Community	02 8848 7200	
Wahroonga Place Care Community	02 9372 3800	
Wahroonga Tallwoods Care Community	02 9847 3800	
Winston Hillside Care Community	02 9865 1800	
NSW — Central Coast, Hunter and North Coast		
Berkeley Vale Care Community	02 4337 0000	
Cameron Park Care Community	02 4944 1300	
Coffs Harbour Grange Care Community	02 6659 4800	
Kanwal Gardens Care Community	02 4393 1888	
Killarney Vale Care Community	02 4345 2700	
Maitland Grange Care Community	02 4015 3000	
Murwillumbah Greens Care Community	02 6670 9700	
Norah Head Care Community	02 4352 8900	
Raymond Terrace Gardens Care Community	02 4980 0000	
Rutherford Park Care Community	02 4015 3800	
Tingira Hills Care Community	02 4904 0100	

Tweed River Care Community	07 5590 2800
Tweed Valley Care Community	07 5599 6900
Wallarah Point Care Community	0408 265 643
NSW — Blue Mountains, Western Regional and South Coast	
Bathurst Riverview Care Community	02 6334 7000
Denhams Beach Care Community	02 4412 3400
Dubbo Homestead Care Community	02 5852 1600
Mudgee Grove Care Community	02 6370 6200
Narrandera Homestead Care Community	02 6959 5300
Orange Grove Care Community	02 6363 4300
Shoalhaven Place Care Community	02 4429 1200
Springwood Greens Care Community	02 4754 6000
Queensland	
Ashmore Gardens Care Community	07 5510 1800
Berrinba Greens Care Community	07 3809 1400
Bethania Parklands Care Community	07 3200 6888
Broadwater Grove Care Community	07 5557 7700
Burpengary Gardens Care Community	07 3481 6100
Calamvale Parklands Care Community	07 3723 0400
Caloundra Place Care Community	07 5390 0200
Carseldine Greens Care Community	07 3500 9300
Kawana Waters Care Community	07 5390 5100
Kirra Beach Care Community	07 5587 5500
Morayfield Grove Care Community	07 5495 9000
Nambour Gardens Care Community	07 5444 9700
Newstead Grand Care Community	07 3024 3500
North Lakes Terrace Care Community	07 3384 2700
Oxley Grove Care Community	07 3716 9700
Springwood Terrace Care Community	07 3722 9400
Varsity Views Care Community	07 5554 8100
South Australia — Adelaide	
Aldinga Beach Care Community	08 8550 2100
Everard Park Care Community	08 8292 7100
Gawler Hillside Care Community	08 7721 9160
Glen Osmond Grove Care Community	08 8379 1449
Joslin Manor Care Community	08 8490 2100
Reynella Hillside Care Community	08 8392 3600

Victoria — Melbourne North	
Diamond Creek Care Community	03 8432 5150
Epping Meadows Care Community	03 8405 5200
Glengowrie Care Community*	03 9358 4600
Hilltop Care Community*	03 8480 1200
Ivanhoe Care Community*	03 8846 3900
Meadow Heights Care Community	03 9303 6800
Monterey Care Community*	03 9304 5400
The Boulevard Care Community*	03 9407 3200
Westgarth Care Community*	03 9276 9276
Victoria — Melbourne East	
Ashby Care Community*	03 8850 4500
Baradine Care Community*	03 9727 7100
Box Hill Care Community*	03 9805 6900
Broughtonlea Care Community*	03 9856 0999
Croydon Grove Care Community	03 9723 8088
Highgrove Care Community*	03 9208 6500
Livingstone Gardens Care Community*	03 8846 3500
Silverwood Care Community*	03 8846 4200
Tarralla Care Community*	03 9726 2500
Templestowe Grove Care Community	03 9846 4900
The Gables Care Community*	03 9834 7000
The Mews Care Community*	03 8809 0200
Warrandyte Gardens Care Community	03 9844 8000
Victoria — Melbourne South East	
Autumdale Care Community*	03 9583 7622
Chelsea Manor Care Community*	03 9776 1111
Cresthaven Care Community*	03 9834 4900
Elly Kay Care Community*	03 8586 1400
Gardenia Care Community*	03 9776 0799
Hansworth Care Community*	03 8558 7500
Karinya Grove Care Community*	03 9947 2000
Oakleigh Care Community*	03 9575 4600
Scotchmans Creek Care Community*	03 9955 5333
Sheridan Hall Brighton Care Community*	03 9539 7600
Sheridan Hall Caulfield Care Community*	03 9528 6388
Wantirna Views Care Community	03 9847 2500
Waverley Valley Care Community	03 9887 9111

Victoria — Melbourne West	
Altona Gardens Care Community	03 8325 7600
Keilor East Manor Care Community	03 9337 7343
Riverlea Care Community*	03 9325 4733
Western Gardens Care Community*	03 8311 8888
Victoria — Geelong	
Highton Gardens Care Community	03 5223 0900
Kardinia Parkside Care Community	03 5221 5733
Victoria — Gippsland	
Bairnsdale Parklands Care Community	03 5153 7200
Inverloch Coast Care Community	03 5671 6000
Lakes Entrance Care Community	03 5179 5500
Paynesville Gardens Care Community	03 5153 8400
Sale Gardens Care Community	03 5142 1600
Victoria — Kilmore	
Willowmeade Care Community*	03 5734 3400
Victoria — Mornington Peninsula/Philip Island	
Grossard Court Care Community*	03 5951 2020
Mornington Bay Care Community	03 5958 6600
Somerville Gardens Care Community	03 5977 9922
Western Port Bay Care Community	03 8432 5100
Victoria — Warrnambool	
Warrnambool Place Care Community	03 5563 0600
Warrnambool Riverside Care Community	03 5559 0600
Western Australia	
Alfred Cove Care Community	08 6330 0400
Applecross Shore Care Community	08 6159 9800
Armadale Place Care Community	08 9234 3300
Bunbury Gardens Care Community	08 9726 6300
Carine Parkside Care Community	08 9378 5500
Geraldton Shore Care Community	08 9921 5010
Melville Parkside Care Community	08 9424 0500
Murdoch Gardens Care Community	08 6332 6200
Mandurah Coast Care Community	08 9550 2500
Treeby Parklands Care Community	08 6172 2400

**These Care Communities were formerly owned by BlueCross and are now part of the Opal HealthCare family.*

Ageing is living

When your local Care Community is supported by Opal HealthCare, you can feel confident that we're doing all we can to deliver high quality eldercare.