

Opal moments

WINTER / SPRING 2025



Ageing is living

Acknowledgements

PUBLISHER
Opal HealthCare

CONTRIBUTORS
Opal HealthCare Care Communities

GET IN TOUCH

GENERAL ENQUIRIES 1300 048 519
ADMISSION ENQUIRIES 1800 552 118
PROVIDE FEEDBACK 1800 767 074
ACCOUNT ENQUIRIES 1300 200 653
BOOK A TOUR bit.ly/OHC-tour
CAREERS bit.ly/OHC-careers
SUBMISSIONS communications@opalhealthcare.com.au

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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

Crossing the Nullarbor Plain in a 1927 Austin named Rita is just one of the highlights in the life of Elaine, who lives at Cameron Park Care Community. Read Elaine’s story on page 36.



A ‘tail’ of joy: our residents at Bankstown Terrace Care Community eagerly await visits from their canine friend Jasmine. Jasmine shares cuddles, enjoys treats and showcases classic doggy tricks like spins and shakes, to the delight of everyone. “Jasmine brightens my day,” says Cherrill.

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THE GOOD COOK

WORDS OF THANKS



For people living with dementia, mindful colouring is great for exercising fine motor skills and sparking imagination. And, as the smiles of resident Dawn and team member Girlie at Box Hill Views Care Community show, it's wonderful to colour with a friend!

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Happiness is built on relationships

One of the most important ways we can support our residents is to nurture friendships and connections that are meaningful and bring joy.

Friendships that flourish later in life are just as important as those we enjoy throughout our lives. I see the joy of connection in action at our Care Communities – residents having tea in the cafe, a shared giggle, working in the garden together, spontaneous chats, singing golden oldies around the piano, playing a game with others, taking a stroll, enjoying an outing.

There is something deeply life affirming about being part of a community. For those coming to live with us after living alone at home, it brings back the rhythm of shared life. Companionship. A sense of belonging.

Our teams work hard every day to create spaces and opportunities that spark conversations, and environments where new friendships can blossom and thrive. Our Meaningful Mates program, which matches team members with residents as their ‘buddy’, helps us to understand each individual more deeply, so that we can better support their wellbeing.

This edition of Opal Moments shares many stories of wonderful friendships, new and old, reminding us that human connection truly is at the heart of wellbeing.

Opal HealthCare Annual Harvest Awards

A most impactful initiative in recent years has been the introduction of edible kitchen gardens at every Care Community. And our second annual Harvest Awards was an extraordinary showcase of our residents’ endeavour and skills.

From deciding what to grow and shopping for seeds with our team, to planting, growing, harvesting and cooking up their produce, our residents put their talents to work and the results were outstanding. See for yourself on page 28.

New Aged Care Act and Aged Care Standards

Opal HealthCare is well prepared for the introduction of the new Aged Care Act and updated Aged Care Standards on 1 November 2025.

The new Act intends to strengthen Australia’s aged care system. It focuses on empowering older people, increasing protections, and offering more choice in care and services.

Our person-centred approach to care, underpinned by our values and processes at Opal HealthCare, already strongly aligns with the strengthened Standards, which set out the level of care residents should expect to receive.

To help explain the new Act and Standards we have included a short article on page 52 and our team has created some simple resources available on our website. We are also providing regular communication updates to team members, residents and families ahead of commencement in November.

Thank you for your support as we continually strive to improve aged care for all Australians.

Warm regards

Rachel Argaman

Rachel

Stories from our Care Communities



BURPENGARY GARDENS CARE COMMUNITY QLD

As well as brightening our walls, making art challenges our fine motor skills, stimulates creativity and, for residents like Allan, is a wonderful way of supporting and connecting with others.



ALFRED COVE CARE COMMUNITY WA

Every Sunday, residents, families and team enjoy a walk by the lake, chatting with dog walkers (and dogs!), catching up with loved ones and savouring an ice cream while listening to birdsong and taking in the views.



ALDINGA BEACH CARE COMMUNITY SA

We were thrilled to host Ride The Fleurieu as the first stop on the group's Mystery Progressive Ride. Around 70 riders rumbled in for a chat and to proudly display their motorcycles which brought back memories of their own adventuring days for some of our residents. We're already looking forward to the next visit!



WAHROONGA PLACE CARE COMMUNITY NSW

Residents including George enjoyed a wonderful day at beautiful Bobbin Head. With seagulls overhead, fresh air and boats in the dock, it was the ideal setting to relax in nature.



SURREY HILLS GARDENS CARE COMMUNITY VIC

Getting up close and personal with curious penguins is a highlight of any visit to Melbourne's SEA LIFE Aquarium, and our residents thoroughly enjoyed the experience, with coffee and cake topping off a wonderful day.



CALAMVALE PARKLANDS CARE COMMUNITY QLD

Resident Helen and her Meaningful Mate, Beena, are the best of friends. Whether it's going for a walk to enjoy the outdoors or having a chat over a cuppa, Helen and Beena love spending quality time together.

STORIES FROM OUR
CARE COMMUNITIES

**BUNBURY GARDENS
CARE COMMUNITY WA**

For the second year running, a team of 10 residents at Bunbury Gardens has taken out first prize in the SouthWest Live Lighter Aged Care Games. Designed to promote movement and competition for people living in care, events included modified seated hockey, seated ball pass and skittles. We're going for the three-peat in 2026!



**QUAKERS HILLSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY NSW**

When our garden gnomes needed freshening up, resident Miro and team member Steve happily put their hands up for the task. After a trip to Bunnings to pick the right colours, the pair wasted 'gnome' time getting onto the job!



**BERRINBA GREENS
CARE COMMUNITY QLD**

Our residents were thrilled to meet team member Rebecca's new puppy, Daisy. It was a special day for Daisy too, who enjoyed lots of love and cuddles from Kate and fellow residents.



**WARRNAMBOOL PLACE
CARE COMMUNITY VIC**

Our residents had a wonderful time enjoying the natural delights of the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. For resident Judy, the outing evoked happy memories of her previous trips to the gardens.



**EVERARD PARK
CARE COMMUNITY SA**

The Southern States Street Rodders Club delighted residents at our Care Community with their fantastic cars of yesteryear. The vintage cars covered a range of periods and styles. For Stephen, a keen model car collector, checking out this 1930 Ford coupe was a real treat.

**TREEBY PARKLANDS
CARE COMMUNITY WA**

Our Care Community fete was a rousing success, with stalls, games, dancing and musical performances for everyone in the local community to enjoy. And we were thrilled to have residents and team from Mandurah Coast and Murdoch Gardens Care Communities join us on the day.





**DIAMOND CREEK
CARE COMMUNITY VIC**

When resident Antonietta wanted to surprise son Carlo for her birthday, our team and Carlo’s employer helped make her wish come true. During the taxi ride to Montefiore Cheese, Antonietta excitedly held the birthday cake, reminiscing about the day her son was born. When Carlo opened the door, it was a huge surprise to see his mum appear. Antonietta was overjoyed, and Carlo said it was a moment he would never forget.



**NORTH LAKES TERRACE
CARE COMMUNITY QLD**

Vera celebrated her 100th birthday in fine style, with friends and family bringing gifts and well wishes throughout the day. Our team helped set up a video call so family members who couldn’t attend in person could be part of Vera’s big day. Congratulations Vera!



**JOSLIN MANOR
CARE COMMUNITY SA**

For resident Alison, this touching moment brought back memories of her childhood in the country town of Tarlee. *“I can’t believe the pony could come into my bedroom. It made me feel at home and my granddaughters thought it was lovely.”*



**BOSSLEY PARKSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY NSW**

Our residents and team come from many cultures, and our Coffee Club is a special way to connect, swap stories and learn more about each other. The coffee menu is as diverse as we are, with Turkish coffee, hot chocolate, lattes, cappuccinos, and short black Italian coffee. Resident Justo and his Meaningful Mate, Emad, love catching up over their favourite brew.



**WANTIRNA VIEWS
CARE COMMUNITY VIC**

Team members were proud to join resident Lavinia at the Memory Walk & Jog for Dementia Australia. It’s a cause that matters deeply to Lavinia, a keen jogger who still joins her running club every week for fitness and friendship.



**GAWLER HILLSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY SA**

Resident Ralph was a league ten-pin bowler for many years, so our team surprised him with an outing to the lanes with his friends and fellow residents Myrna, Gillian and Marie. For Myrna and Gillian, it was their first time ten-pin bowling and they had a blast!

Personalised Care

Visit Perth's Kings Park to enjoy a special couple's love story. Learn why staying fit and active is great for Hank's wellbeing and pop in to Box Hill Views Care Community to see how a personalised approach to dementia care makes a difference in our residents' lives.

ROSEMARY & REIJO'S LOVE STORY

Kings Park, with its beautiful gardens and sweeping views of Perth, holds cherished memories for Rosemary and her husband Reijo. Years later, it remains a special place for the couple.

Perth attracts people from all over the world, and Rosemary and Reijo's marriage is one page in the city's book of love stories. Born in Surrey in the UK, Rosemary came to Perth at age two while Reijo arrived at age 13 from Finland via Melbourne.

Having met at their local church, the couple married in 1969. After welcoming daughters Annalisa and Arell, the family travelled widely across Australia and visited Europe several times, where they found special pleasure in the trees, open fires and red wines of the Nordic countries.

But Kings Park would always be a favourite destination.

"There was a hamburger bar nearby so we'd get a burger, go to the top and see the city lights," recalls Reijo. "It was our special spot for picnics as a couple and with our girls, and we often went to the ANZAC Day dawn service."

Those memories and experiences took on deeper significance as Rosemary's health declined.

Care for quality of life

When she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in her early fifties, Rosemary started a support group for people with a similar diagnosis. Helping others has always been a part of her DNA – Rosemary spent many years helping Italian migrants learn to speak English.

When Rosemary came to live at **Murdoch Gardens Care Community** with complex care needs, our team focused on her relationship with Reijo and helping the couple maintain the activities that brought them connection and joy.

For people with limited mobility and for whom group exercise isn't appropriate, exercising upper limbs can minimise painful muscle contractions and help maintain function for as long as possible. Our team assists Rosemary with range-of-motion exercises to help her enjoy outings with Reijo. Understanding clearly what matters most to Rosemary is at the heart of how our team supports her mental wellbeing.

"A person's mental health is so important for their overall wellbeing," says general manager Amanda.

"This is especially true when a person has complex needs that impact their mobility. Rosemary loves spending time with Reijo. He visits our Care Community every day and she's so happy when they're together."

"Often, caring for a person is as much about caring for their families. It's about seeing past the stigma, challenging perceived limitations about what a person can do and seeing care as a journey where everyone is involved. Stories like Rosemary and Reijo's show why that's essential to living the best life possible."

Of all the challenges and the good things life has brought Rosemary and Reijo, continuing to enjoy something as simple as a visit to Kings Park remains profoundly meaningful.

"These are the most wonderful experiences for us," says Reijo.



THE LAWN- MOWER MAN

The grass grows quickly at Coffs Harbour on the NSW Mid North Coast, where the mix of sunshine and rain keeps lawnmowers busy. And that suits Hank perfectly.

Hank lives at **Coffs Harbour Grange Care Community**. Working with maintenance officer Glenn and our team, Hank's a key member of a crack squad that keeps our buffalo-grass lawns and gardens beautiful for fellow residents, family members and all who visit.

Keeping fit and contributing to his community has always been an essential part of Hank's life. Born in the Netherlands, Hank came to the seaside city of Wollongong with his family at age four, where he took to the outdoor life and learned to surf.

After studying accounting, Hank's entrepreneurial spirit saw him run a number of businesses including sporting goods, concrete products, and landscaping, while raising a family with wife Laurie. After a period in Queensland where he enjoyed sailing and putting his surfboard to good use, Hank moved to a farm at Nana Glen, near Coffs Harbour. Eventually, his declining health saw him move to Coffs Harbour Grange.

Personalised Care

Staying active boosts Hank's wellbeing

Staying active while living at Coffs Harbour Grange was important to Hank, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and Lewy body dementia. Our team understood that living as independently as possible was essential to Hank's care – and that his passion for lawncare gave him meaning and purpose.

For people living with dementia, regular exercise can help maintain mobility for longer, which can reduce the risk of falls. Exercise also increases blood flow to the brain, providing oxygen and nutrients that can help to slow the progression of dementia.

Our team worked to ensure Hank's safety first, analysing any risks and mitigating them, with the support of Hank's daughters. Maintenance officer, Glenn, purchased a small battery powered mower that switches off automatically if one hand is removed from the handle. And before every mow, Hank pulls on the right shoes, his hat, and sunscreen.

Glenn looks after the edging and detailed work, while Hank goes to work on the lawns.

"He does an amazing job twice a week," says Glenn. "It looks like a bowling green! And he likes to see the job done right. As he mows, Hank empties the grass into the green bins and cleans up the clippings."

"I like being outside and like to see everything tidy and a nice lawn," says Hank. "I always took pride in my lawn."

"The change in Hank has been clear," says wellbeing manager, Maria. "The exercise is good for him but he's also settled and happy, so it's been positive for his mental wellbeing too."

A community affair

As well as the benefits for Hank's health, lawnmowing day has become an event to look forward to at Coffs Harbour Grange Care Community.

"Our residents love to come outside and watch Hank and Glenn work," says Maria. "It's given them one more thing to look forward to, and to gather and socialise around. Each time, we've seen more and more people coming out for a cuppa and a chat. I bring my dogs Rosie and Romeo for a play and everyone has a wonderful time."

For Hank's daughter Kim, seeing him continue to enjoy the life he loved has brought comfort.

"Dad has always been obsessed with amazing lawns and has always prided himself on immaculate gardens, so much so that we nicknamed him "The Lawnmower Man". It makes my sisters and I very happy that the team at Coffs Harbour Grange has made that possible for him still."



SEEN, HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD

Enabling residents to live well with dementia



Set within the leafy streets of Melbourne’s eastern suburbs, Box Hill Views Care Community is showing how considered environmental changes, combined with a deep understanding of our residents’ lives, is creating better outcomes for people living with dementia.

Our environment plays a significant part in how we live our life and, for people living with dementia, it’s crucial to living well. At our Care Communities, our memory care neighbourhoods are dedicated environments that are thoughtfully designed to support residents living with dementia to live with meaning and purpose.

Walking through our memory care neighbourhood at Box Hill Views, there’s a sense of calm and peace. It’s all part of a well-considered strategy to create a supportive and enriching environment where every resident feels safe, seen, understood, and valued for who they are.

Mindful observation leads to positive change

After noticing some residents were unsettled and experiencing falls, our team at Box Hill Views, guided by our dementia care experts, took a close look at mealtimes – one of the most important social parts of the day. They identified that noise was having a greater impact than expected. From the hum of TVs and radios to the rolling wheels of meal trolleys, the layering of everyday sounds was causing confusion for some residents.

“Research shows that up to 40% of anxiety for people living with dementia can be caused by noise,” explains Simon Pedzisi, Head of Dementia Care at Opal HealthCare. “By making the space calmer and more focused, we can help residents feel more comfortable.”

Televisions and radios in empty bedrooms were turned off during meals. Chefs and catering team members were more mindful with cutlery in the kitchen, and team limited their movements through large doors that were more likely to cause noise.

Our team continued to focus on hydration for all residents, a simple but critical element of wellbeing that can affect cognition, mood and mobility. And personalised care plans ensure understanding each person’s preferences and life story informs their care.

Understanding Colin’s preferences makes all the difference

When Colin moved to Box Hill Views, he experienced frequent falls throughout the night. This was distressing for Colin and his family, and left him tired, frustrated and out of sync.

“We knew something wasn’t right,” says Ramandeep, assistant general manager. “So we spent more time really getting to know Colin – who he is, what matters to him, and how he’s lived his life.”

It turns out, Colin had never been one for early nights. A lifelong sports fan and music lover, his evenings were once filled with Elvis, Queen and football replays.

“Many residents are preparing for bed by 7pm, but not Colin – he’s a night owl,” Ramandeep says.

With these insights, our team made small but meaningful changes – offering evening engagement and enabling Colin to keep his preferred bedtime of 10pm.

The outcome? Colin’s no longer falling, he sleeps through the night and has more energy during the day. His wife Marianne has noticed a real difference, and Colin is once again enjoying his evenings his way.

Health & Wellbeing

Country boy Darryll finds plenty to like about city life. Learn why Dallas and Mary's lifelong connection to people is at the heart of their wellbeing. And marvel at the bountiful produce our residents grew for our second annual Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards.



DARRYLL THRIVES IN NEW BEGINNINGS

After a lifetime on the land and sea, Darryll's country roots run deep. A move to Adelaide was never in his plans, but living at Glen Osmond Grove Care Community has brought a new lease on life.

The port town of Wallaroo is perched on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula. It's a town that's hard to define – famed for its copper mining heritage, Wallaroo also offers abundant fishing with easy access to South Australia's interior.

The clean air and open spaces suited Darryll perfectly. After a decade working as a fisherman, he moved to work at the town's silos, processing and storing wheat, barley, peas and beans. This inspired a passion for gardening, where Darryll found success with tomatoes and fruit trees, harvesting nectarines, apricots and peaches.

"The Yates Garden Guide was my Bible," says Darryll. "Anything you wanted to grow, you'd find it in there."

But Darryll's life would soon take a new direction after a series of heart attacks.

"That knocked me around a bit," says Darryll. "I found myself in hospital, unable to return home. That's when I came to live at Glen Osmond Grove."

Finding new friendships

Moving house is a significant change for most of us; but for Darryll, moving more than 150 kilometres from a small town to a city where he had no connections was an upheaval.

"It was tough at the start," says Darryll. "Adelaide is different to the country, and I didn't know anybody."

But with the support of our team, Darryll eased into life at Glen Osmond Grove. He found energy in new experiences, connecting with others and opportunities to continue growing the fresh produce that brings him so much fulfilment.



"Forming new friendships helped me find my place," he says. "I like to get on with people wherever I go, and I've made good friends here."

Darryll's newfound social connections led him to join outings organised by our team that helped him discover the delights of Adelaide. From taking in musicals, visiting museums and enjoying scenic trips to the Adelaide Hills and the city's Christmas lights display, living at Glen Osmond Grove has unearthed exciting new experiences.

"I've seen things I'd never seen before," says Darryll. "It's been great fun. The last time I went to a botanic gardens was in the 1970s!"

You can take the boy out of the country...

When Darryll came to live at Glen Osmond Grove, wellbeing manager Annu and our team took the time to understand his life story and the things that brought him joy.

"Gardening was such an important part of Darryll's life at Wallaroo," says Annu. "So we encouraged him to continue doing that here. He grows beautiful cabbages, cauliflower and broccoli, and tomatoes, capsicum, dill, rocket and herbs that we use in our salads. It's been lovely to see him thriving."

"I value the friendships I've made and the support and encouragement I get living here," says Darryll.

"I'll always be a country boy but this is my home now and I'm happy here."



PEOPLE POWER: DALLAS AND MARY'S KEY TO WELLBEING

On a wet and windy day, resident Dallas and his wife Mary greet us at Lansdowne Gardens in Sydney's Neutral Bay with warm handshakes, easy smiles and stories of lives well-lived.

Health & Wellbeing

Social connection, including being actively involved with community and having meaningful relationships with others, is a strong determinant of wellbeing.

When we chat with Dallas and Mary about their secrets to a long, healthy life, the importance of community engagement, staying curious and serving others shines through.

When Dallas moved to Lansdowne Gardens, our team took the time to understand what mattered most to him and his family; enabling Dallas and Mary to continue to pursue lives of purpose.

A life of connection

Dallas was born and bred in Goulburn, on the Southern Tablelands of NSW, while Mary arrived via the warmer surrounds of Tully in Far North Queensland.

"He brought me a basket of fresh fruit and a lovely bunch of flowers and we've been together since," recalls Mary.

Over more than six decades of married life in Goulburn, the couple raised a family and built enduring friendships while tirelessly giving back to their community.

After serving in the Australian Air Force as a pilot, Dallas enjoyed a successful career as an accountant, including with the Travelodge group of hotels. He volunteered with the Rural Fire Service, served as an Alderman on Goulburn City Council and played an active role in church life at St Saviour's Cathedral.

In 1988, Dallas was Chairman of a committee which galvanised the community and raised \$750,000 for the cathedral's restoration. One of Dallas's fondest memories is of carrying the cross when the Archbishop of Canterbury came to Goulburn to bless the new bells and share his wisdom: *"Bells speak with a voice"*.

Mary remembers their home as a hub of activity, hosting community events and gatherings and providing a welcoming space for their children's friends.

Fresh air, exercise, clean eating and the joy of new experiences has been a way of life for the family. Dallas and Mary hiked through Austria and Switzerland and closer to home, a love of canoeing and rock climbing outdoors saw Dallas pursue his love of photography, where he won prizes for his evocative landscapes.

Always conscious of the bigger picture, Dallas and Mary founded Landcare in Goulburn, planting thousands of trees to support a healthy natural environment for generations to come. They later relocated to Mosman in Sydney to be closer to their growing family.

Contributing to Care Community life

In early 2025, Dallas moved to Lansdowne Gardens Care Community. Our team understand their Anglican faith is central to their wellbeing, and organised for Father Bob to deliver a service at Lansdowne Gardens every Monday especially for Dallas and Mary.

Dallas stays active with regular games of boules with fellow residents. Mary continues to give back to others, visiting Dallas every day and offering a sympathetic ear and a friendly face for residents who may not have loved ones nearby.

"We don't think of ourselves as old," says Mary, who cites resilience as another important factor in the couple's health.

"Life throws things at you, and sometimes they're hard to take. Those times stay with you and they'll always be there but you pick yourself up and you keep going."



Dallas with his photograph, titled 'The Derelict'. Taken on the Wollondilly River.

CELEBRATING OUR GREEN THUMBS

Our second annual Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards produced a bumper crop

Across Australia our edible gardens – and our resident gardeners – are thriving, with more than 130 entries from our Care Communities.

For many residents, edible kitchen gardens at our Care Communities bring social connection, promote movement as part of a healthy lifestyle, and evoke fond memories of tending their own gardens for pleasure and for treasured family recipes.

Gardening is excellent for mental wellbeing and our residents. The satisfaction of seeing, tasting, and sharing the produce of their labours can't be 'beet'!

Following the success of our inaugural Awards in 2024, our 2025 competition unearthed beautiful stories of residents, their families, and our team coming together to sustainably plan, plant and grow bountiful produce for all to enjoy.

Congratulations to the winners of our second annual Opal HealthCare Harvest Awards:



Garden Evolution Award

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

Winner: Denhams Beach Care Community, NSW

In 2024, Denhams Beach Care Community's resident-led gardening committee set big goals – and achieved them! After picking the best spots for garden beds and building them, residents gathered each month to lovingly plan, plant and harvest a range of vegetables.

So impressed were the judges and visitors to the Eurobodalla Agricultural Show, that our residents' tomatoes and green chillis won first prize in their categories, and their silver beet claimed second place.

"It's wonderful that we can get together with fellow residents and enjoy what we used to do when we lived in our own home. I love working in the gardens, it brings me joy!"

– Reg, resident

Abundance Award

For Care Communities producing an abundance of vibrant seasonal produce.

Winner: Springwood Greens Care Community, NSW

The Blue Mountains region is renowned for its abundance of fresh produce, and residents at Springwood Greens Care Community added to the region's stellar reputation with cucumbers, carrots, beetroot, shallots, spinach, rhubarb, snow peas, eggplants, tomatoes, lettuce, strawberries, sage, parsley, curly parsley, coriander, thyme, lemon thyme, chives and mint – to name just a few!

"I get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from seeing things grow." – Lou, resident



Resident Engagement Award

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

Winner: Orange Grove Care Community, NSW

'Community' is a way of life in the Central West region of NSW, and Orange Grove Care Community embodies this spirit of connection.

Our residents love growing fresh vegetables for the muffins we bake and deliver to local emergency services, and to help raise funds for local schools and causes such as cancer and dementia research.

"Gardening keeps me busy and active. I enjoy every bit of it and I love watching something grow from a seed."

– Bob, resident

Food for the Soul Award

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

Winner: Aldinga Beach Care Community, SA

Aldinga Beach Care Community's edible kitchen garden is a haven for community, sustainability and connection. With loving care, hard work and careful planning, our residents have created fertile gardens that are fulfilling for our gardeners and bring joy to others through delicious, nutritious meals.

Turn to page 54 to try your hand at Chef Elliot's Pork Normandy, which he cooks from scratch using residents' fresh produce.

"I love passing on my knowledge to team members, especially with tomatoes and fruit trees. Gardening means I can continue to participate in life, even when I can't move as well as I once did."

– Michael, resident





Enjoyment

Learn how beautiful friendships thrive at our Care Communities. Tune in to DJ Jill's Radio Aroha, and be inspired by the indomitable spirit of Elaine at Cameron Park Care Community.



Enjoyment

MEANINGFUL MATES ENABLES CONNECTION

Life is so much better when it's shared. Humans are a social bunch, and having somebody to share our stories, dreams, and challenges with helps us to feel included, understood and valued for who we are.

Meaningful Mates is a 'buddy' program which aims to nurture socialisation and reduce isolation for residents. Team members build personal, genuine relationships with residents to develop an understanding of what matters to them, and how they prefer to participate in life.

Lui and Fara bond over their heritage

When Lui came to live at **Sunshine Gardens Care Community** in Melbourne's western suburbs, he brought with him a lifetime of rich experiences and a love of music, food, and aiga (family).

A proud Samoan-Chinese man, Lui has spent his life in service of others. In the city of Apia, he was a head chef and restaurant owner before driving a taxi, and later running his own takeaway shop. When he moved to Australia, his love for rugby, jazz and rock 'n' roll – especially Elvis Presley and Jim Reeves – continued to bring him joy.

Following a stroke, Lui was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Communication can be challenging, but the right connections make all the difference.

Fara, wellbeing manager at Sunshine Gardens, is also Samoan-Chinese. As Lui's Meaningful Mate, their heritage has become a powerful bridge between past and present.

"We speak Samoan together, and even when Lui doesn't respond with words, I see it in his eyes – he knows he's understood," says Fara.

Lui's aiga remain active participants in his care at Sunshine Gardens. His wife Naite visits every day and the two enjoy dancing together during Happy Hour. On weekends, Lui's son arrives to cut his hair, massage his legs, and spend time simply being present. This consistency and support keeps Lui connected to his routines.

Through dance, cultural conversations, and the comfort of familiar routines, Lui remains connected. With the support of his family, Fara, and our team at Sunshine Gardens Care Community, his story is still unfolding.

Joan and Michelle's friendship rekindles a passion for art

For Joan, who lives at **Treeby Parklands Care Community** in Perth's southern suburbs, a shared culture and love of art has helped to forge a strong friendship with Michelle, from our wellbeing team.

"We had a great rapport from the start," says Michelle. "I'm from Birmingham and Joan is from South Wales, where I used to holiday, so we had plenty to chat about immediately."

Those early conversations led to the pair discovering a shared interest in art. Joan mentioned she had enjoyed some success as an artist, including having pieces displayed on the television show, Gavin and Stacey. And while she still had a sparkle in her eye when talking about art and artists (especially Monet), she said declining health had dulled her inspiration for creating.

"That got me thinking how I could bring back that joy for Joan, in a way that was meaningful for her," said Michelle. "So we identified a section of our Care Community that was unused and created a small art studio for Joan, complete with canvases, paints, brushes, an easel, oil paints and cleaning items."

"I couldn't believe Michelle did that for me," said Joan. "I was touched by her consideration."

Happily, Joan's inspiration has been renewed. She has completed one landscape and there are more on the way.





DJ JILL GETS EVERYONE GROOVIN' AT LAKES ENTRANCE

Music connects people across generations and our very own 'golden oldie' resident DJ is teaching our Care Community a thing or two about great tunes.

Music brings comfort and communicates powerful messages. It reminds us of our shared experiences and stimulates memory and enjoyment, especially in older people.

At **Lakes Entrance Care Community** in Victoria's East Gippsland, Radio Aroha is the channel of choice for our residents, families, and team members. Every Monday and Thursday at 10am resident Jill plays a collection of residents' favourite tunes she curates to boost everyone's day.

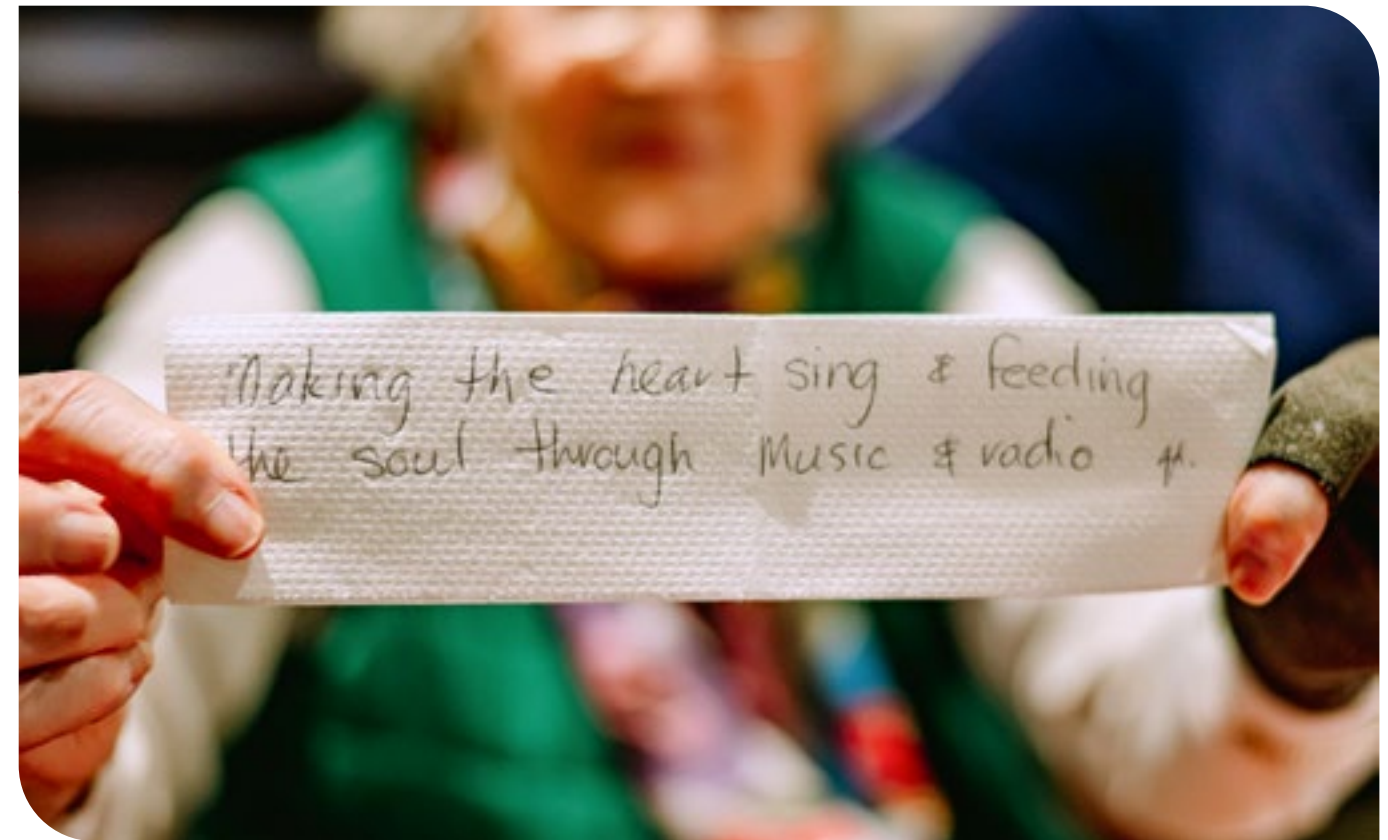
It's all about love

"Aroha is a te reo Māori word that essentially means love," explains general manager, Annelize. "It's a word that has significant meaning for us. We're passionate about life at our Care Community, and Radio Aroha captures that spirit."

The power of music runs in Jill's blood. After moving to Melbourne as a teenager, Jill took drama and music classes, before getting involved in organising concerts and performances. Jill's strong community ties through music at Lakes Entrance over 30 years have helped her build new connections at our Care Community.

"My love for music has been with me for as long as I remember," she says. "Growing up with no power, family evenings were spent singing together around the piano. I was hooked. Musicals and plays at school? You bet I was involved!"

Enjoyment



Toe-tapping into the transformative power of music

Annelize and our team were keen to help Jill keep her passion alive. So, when Jill proposed the idea of a Care Community 'channel' where residents nominate their favourite tracks to be played, our team worked with Jill to make it happen. It's become a highly anticipated event on our Care Community calendar, where residents gather to sing, dance and reminisce.

For resident Erle, Radio Aroha recalls evenings spent singing duets with his wife Roberta – an environment that encouraged the couple's youngest daughter to build a successful career as an opera singer.

"I just love music," says Erle. "It doesn't matter what it is."

Resident James, who taught himself to play piano and often played for family and friends, loves classical music, while the tunes take resident Trevor back to his days growing up on a farm, singing into his microphone.

Residents with limited mobility or those who have difficulty connecting with others have found Radio Aroha especially beneficial.

"Our residents love it, and it's been a profoundly meaningful experience for Jill," says Annelize.

"One of our residents, who preferred to stay in her bedroom, is now present every time we run Radio Aroha, moving her feet and clapping her hands. It's beautiful to see."

"When we listen to music, we share something good," says Jill.

"Something as simple as a song you haven't heard for a while can change your day. When I see people who otherwise struggle to communicate smile and tap their feet, I get excited. I feel so good sharing something that improves their lives."



Enjoyment

ELAINE'S INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES

Proving time and again that *Ageing is living*, this octogenarian is an inspiration to everyone she meets.

Enjoyment

Taking on the 1,000km Bibbulmun Track from Perth to Albany. Restoring a 1929 Austin 7 to cross the Nullarbor, then doing it again – on foot – at the age of 82! Hiking across the Gobi Desert. Helping to deliver an estimated 4,000 babies. Co-writing a book that raised \$20,000 to support Zimbabwean children afflicted with the AIDS virus.

These are just a few highlights in the amazing life of Elaine, who lives at **Cameron Park Care Community**, in NSW's Hunter region.

The eldest of four children, Elaine discovered her adventurous spirit early in life. One memorable day saw her help her father ready his horses for the local bread and milk deliveries, then horseback ride from her home in Islington to Ash Island to pick up a friend, before riding on to Raymond Terrace to see family.

A registered nurse at the former Royal Newcastle Hospital, Elaine helped bring babies into the world alongside the renowned Dr Charlotte, and cared for veterans suffering the effects of war.

After decades of serving her community, a solo trip to Peru's Machu Picchu in at age 71 rekindled Elaine's love for travel. And meeting Graham, a kindred spirit in travelling, saw her make journeys most of us can only dream of. Together, Elaine and Graham restored the Austin car (named 'Rita') that would carry them across the Nullarbor, with Elaine degreasing the engine and repairing the upholstery.

In Mongolia, the pair experienced the spectacle of Naadam, a traditional festival where hundreds of men wrestle in the open, until just one is left standing. Fermented horse milk, known as airag provided sustenance but, as Elaine recalls, the pungent taste left something to be desired.

A devout Christian, Elaine completed two pilgrim treks – from Lisbon in Portugal to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain, then from Bilbao to Santiago de Compostela. Her faith also led her to one of her most profound moments. When in Amsterdam, she had the chance to play the famous Oude Kerk Grand Organ.



"I was overwhelmed by the sight of the organ but two men at the church were so kind. They saw I was nervous and encouraged me to sit and play. I played 'What A Friend We Have In Jesus', and when I finished we sat in silence for a few moments, reflecting. I'll never forget that moment."

Back home, Elaine was recognised as Lifeline's longest serving volunteer in the region after more than 20 years of helping people in desperate need.

Continuing to live with purpose

Our team at Cameron Park Care Community support Elaine to continue to live an active and fulfilling life. She and Graham take regular drives and you'll often find her at our piano, entertaining residents and team.

Helping others has always been central to Elaine's wellbeing. With the support of our team, she accompanies our registered nurses where appropriate, assists with sewing napkins, wipes tables in our dining room and plays the role of tour guide on bus outings, pointing out the sights and sharing anecdotes with fellow residents.

To the question of how she has managed to pack so many achievements into her life, Elaine has a practical answer: *"You just get in and do it. One foot after the other. I've often felt fear, but I've always done whatever I'm afraid of, and I've felt better for it afterwards."*

"I've been lucky to meet so many wonderful people who have helped me," she says. "I've had a lovely life."

Safety & Security

Our team in Queensland and Northern NSW went the extra mile to support residents and their families during Tropical Cyclone Alfred. And see how our Men's Mob at Alfred Cove Care Community provides a safe space to form new friendships and bond over shared interests.



THE CALM IN THE STORM

Supporting our residents through Tropical Cyclone Alfred

While Tropical Cyclone Alfred swirled about the South East Queensland and Northern NSW coast, our team pulled out all stops to ensure our residents stayed safe, comfortable and well cared for.

Our Care Communities have well-practiced emergency response plans in place at all times, because preparation is key.

In an emergency such as fire, flood, or in this case a cyclone, our Opal HealthCare Emergency response team, led by our executive leadership team, is activated to support any Care Community that may be at risk.

The comfort and safety of our residents and team is always our top priority. And while we can't always predict the nature of a weather event, we have systems and processes in place to secure our buildings, ensure medication supply and clean water, enable generator power if required and reassure families through communications, as best as possible in an emergency.

These stories are just a few examples of how our Care Communities across South East Queensland and Northern NSW pulled together to reduce disruption and ensure our residents felt at-ease.

At **Kirra Beach Care Community** on the Gold Coast, team members stayed overnight to give residents comfort, keeping everyone occupied and creating a fun mood with slumber parties. Working from a temporary kitchen, our team hosted BBQs each day and helped residents communicate with their families, giving everyone peace of mind.

"Every day we called families and connected them with their loved ones," said general manager Karen. "Just being able to hear from each other was powerful. It helped families to know their loved ones were safe at our Care Community and it eased the minds of our residents, who were worried about their families."

At **Broadwater Grove Care Community**, also on the Gold Coast, clear communication with residents instilled confidence.

"In the lead up to the cyclone, we wrote short letters of reassurance to our residents to help them understand people would be securing our buildings," said general manager Cathy. "That helped ease confusion and gave residents a sense of control."

"We also put a 'Cyclone Board' in a central place where we posted updates and information about the cyclone. That helped to answer questions our residents had about the cyclone itself, and being informed eased people's anxiety."

"Every day we posted new updates, which prompted discussion among our residents who were keen to understand how the cyclone was progressing. And one of our team members was always nearby to answer questions so our residents knew we were in control, no matter what happened with the weather."

At **Tweed River Care Community** in Northern NSW, our residents and team kept the mood upbeat in the leadup to the cyclone by declaring themselves 'The Cyclone Busters' – bringing colour, smiles and laughter in an otherwise unnerving time.

Safety & Security

"Thank you for such amazing teamwork during the last four days. The way everyone pulled together and got through it was just wonderful and I can't thank them enough. A special thanks to all team who stayed overnight and came to work on their days off."

– Anthony, resident,
Broadwater Grove Care Community

"Thank you so much for all that you and your team did for residents during the cyclone. I was very impressed to hear that several team members stayed overnight."

– Family member,
Tweed Valley Care Community

"I'm very appreciative of the chef and team at Varsity Views Care Community during the cyclone and in the days after. Food is an important part of my day, and I was impressed that nothing changed around this service. There was no trouble with morning tea or afternoon tea and there was always something yummy to eat. Main meals were always on time, and they never missed a beat."

– Cheryl-Anne, resident,
Varsity Views Care Community

"Thank you to your wonderful, caring team. It's such a relief to know my precious Mum is being so well-cared for."

– Family member,
Berrinba Greens Care Community



HONOUR, BROTHERHOOD, LOVE – AND A BETTER TOMORROW

You'll spot our Men's Mob at Alfred Cove Care Community from a mile away – their bright orange shirts, their laughter and their incessant banter is infectious!

Located near the southern banks of Perth's Swan River, **Alfred Cove Care Community** is blessed with sunny skies most of the year. It's an ideal place for men of varying ages and cognitive abilities to gather for a cuppa, bond over shared interests and engage in hands-on activities that have kept men busy in Australian backyards and garages for decades.

Safety & Security

A safe space for all

As we age and our priorities and circumstances change, our social connections can diminish. This can be particularly acute for men. When we talk 'wellbeing', having something to look forward to matters, whatever our age.

Alfred Cove's Men's Mob gathers every Thursday at 10am. It's a routine our men look forward to with great anticipation.

For Alison, general manager at Alfred Cove, Men's Mob has become an essential part of the social fabric of our Care Community.

"Our men love coming together to chat and take on projects like building and staining our benches, and working with our maintenance team to keep wheelchairs rolling smoothly. And as much as they love the projects, everyone loves the camaraderie!"

Our residents lead the charge

Importantly, our Men's Mob was created and is run by a committee of residents. John, who lives at Alfred Cove with his wife Margaret, leads our Men's Mob committee. As well as deciding on projects and activities, the committee designed the Mob's eye-catching shirts and distinctive logo.

"Together, we're more than a group," says John. "We're a pride – a pride that stands for honour, brotherhood, love, and a better tomorrow."

New residents, such as former radiologist David, have been able to settle into life at Alfred Cove sooner than they expected, thanks to the warm welcome and friendships they've found in our Men's Mob.

"David initially came to Alfred Cove for respite and recently returned as a permanent resident," says wife Joanna. "The Men's Mob was one of the big drawcards. When he retired from Royal Perth Hospital, David lost a lot of his close connections with male colleagues, so he's enjoying the bonds he's now forming in the Men's Mob. Being a naturally social person, he loves participating in a group and sharing stories and worthwhile activities. Plus, he's spent his working life in sensible blue checked shirts so the crazy orange t-shirt is a first!"

A safe space where all men are welcome

Alfred Cove's Men's Mob is all about inclusivity and connection, and this value extends to other Care Communities and beyond. Once a month, residents come from **Applecross Shore** and **Melville Parkside Care Communities** to join in the fun, with barbecues a special highlight for residents to form new friendships and strengthen bonds.

Harvey, a volunteer from the Melville Community Shed, is a popular honorary member of our Men's Mob. Harvey attends regularly to offer support – and he's found the experience just as beneficial as our residents.

"Alfred Cove's Men's Mob encompasses emotional fulfilment, intellectual stimulation, and a strengthened sense of community connection," says Harvey. "Each time I visit, I leave with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of the value of human connection."

Alison says that's why Men's Mob matters.

"There's truth in the idea of 'men don't talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder,'" she says. "Men often feel isolated and lonely, and our Men's Mob is a way for our men to find their place."



Loving Community

See how our residents at Mandurah Coast Care Community support inclusivity in the Peel region. And we meet a very special volunteer who brings comfort and companionship to our residents at Ashmore Gardens Care Community.

PROUD TO BE SUPPORTING PRIDE IN PEEL

It's a sunny Thursday at Mandurah Coast Care Community and drag bingo is in full swing.

Led by performer Kimmy, it's one of our most popular events among residents, their families and our team.

Kimmy treats us to a classic ABBA medley, then everyone joins in for a rousing rendition of Neil Diamond's crowd pleaser, *Sweet Caroline*.

At Mandurah Coast in Western Australia's Peel region, drag bingo is all about inclusion. Everyone is welcome to join in the singing, to dance or tap their toes, or simply enjoy the show with loved ones.

"I love engaging with older people," says Kimmy. "It's wonderful to see everyone having fun and singing along, especially those who aren't as mobile."

"Coming here to perform for residents means they can enjoy experiences they might not usually have a chance to attend. It gives people something to look forward to."

"It's such a fun day with Kimmy," says Beryl, sister of resident David. "She's amazing and engages everyone with her personality. And the Care Community looked fantastic. David and I had a great time. I think it's so important for us all to accept all walks of life. We're all human."

A meaningful relationship with Pride in Peel

Older people who identify as LGBTQIA+ may have faced significant challenges such as social isolation, access to health services and discrimination in their daily lives. Experiencing a broad range of perspectives will help us continue to build strong, inclusive communities where everyone is valued for who they are.

"Kimmy brings something different," says resident Delys. "She's bright, intelligent and sociable, and everyone feels included. Listening to other people gives us all a better understanding of their lives, and that's important to a community."



"Inclusion makes a big difference," adds resident Dale. "Socialising with people in the wider community helps us grow for the things we strive for. It was wonderful to have family members with us, and Kimmy shows us all such respect."

Pride in Peel is a local volunteer-run community organisation, devoted to driving change that creates a safe, diverse, welcoming and inclusive community for LGBTQIA+ in the Peel region. It's a mission our Care Community believes in, and our residents are keen to play their part in making change for the better.

In 2024, we welcomed Pride in Peel to Mandurah Coast to deliver inclusive training with our team, designed to help us become strong allies. At the same time, we sponsored Pride in Peel's rainbow cruise, raising

awareness of IDAHOBIT Day (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersex Discrimination, and Transphobia). And we introduced drag bingo, which proved a hit with residents and their families.

"Our residents loved it," says general manager Katy. "They kept asking me when we could do it again!"

Fast forward to May 2025, and our residents and team were proud to represent Mandurah Coast by sponsoring Pride in Peel's Rainbow Fair Day, helping to share the message of inclusion.

"It was wonderful to be able to raise funds and show people how we're supporting our community," says Dale.



FAITH, LOVE AND CONNECTION AT ASHMORE GARDENS

For nearly a decade, Salvo’s volunteer Peter has been visiting **Ashmore Gardens Care Community**, bringing connection and companionship to our residents.

The Salvation Army has been at the heart of Australian communities for 150 years, earning affection and respect through the selfless work of volunteers like Peter.

For residents at Ashmore Gardens, on Queensland’s Gold Coast, Peter is much more than a visitor, he’s a favourite part of life.

A helping hand for all

On a typical Tuesday, Peter starts his day visiting residents living with dementia in our memory care neighbourhood. He leads a chorus of favourite songs and play games that engage the mind and activate muscles.

At lunchtime, Peter works in our dining room alongside our team assisting residents who need a little extra help. He shares a laugh and listens to those who need a friendly ear.

After lunch, Peter conducts a non-denominational service; a meaningful, prayerful and fun session where everyone is welcome to discuss Bible stories, sing hymns and join the conversation. For many residents, this is a special highlight of their week and family members often come along to join in.

“Peter has a natural way of bringing people together,” says Krissy, from our Wellbeing team. “He makes them feel special and included, and he spreads happiness everywhere he goes.”

“Peter’s a good man,” says resident Christine. “He’s a man of God. I like to see him come here, smiling and singing songs of Jesus. He’s kind and gentle and listens to everyone.”

It’s a feeling resident Agnes shares. *“I like to come along to sing with Peter and pray with my friends. He’s a good egg!”*

As well as his regular visits, Peter helps out on special occasions, joining our residents in prayer at events such as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Christmas. He often arranges visits from The Salvation Army Brass Band and Tambourine ladies which inspires and delights residents who enjoy music.

For Peter, spending time with our residents, their families and our team at Ashmore Gardens is particularly meaningful.

“I’ve been coming to Ashmore Gardens for many years and it brings me pleasure to see the people here,” he says. “I feel a part of the community and they give back to me so much more than I offer.”

A special thank you from many hearts

For team member Anita, Peter’s impact is profound.

“We’re so lucky to have Peter volunteer for us here at Ashmore Gardens,” she says. “He’s part of our family. He’s so easy to talk to and generous with his advice. I feel comfortable talking to him about anything. He’s so good to our residents and I know they all look forward to singing and joining in fun activities with Peter.”

To show their gratitude, our residents and team arranged a surprise morning tea for Peter, complete with card, cake and gift.

Peter’s response revealed the humble generosity of a man who has spent a lifetime caring for people, without thought of reward.

“I just want to help out in any way I can,” says Peter. “People just need comfort, a kind word and a reason to smile.”

We welcome volunteers at Opal HealthCare Care Communities across Australia.



IMPROVING PALLIATIVE CARE ACROSS CULTURES

An Opal HealthCare study, in partnership with the University of Newcastle, is helping us to better understand the palliative care needs and preferences of residents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Person-centred care revolves around a deep understanding of each resident and what matters most to them. Every stage of life is deeply personal, and an increased awareness of a person’s cultural heritage is vital to supporting our residents and their families as they enter palliative care.

Seek first to understand

When expressing their preferences, residents from CALD backgrounds can face extra barriers to being understood – not just in the language they speak, but in their unique cultural rituals that attend to the palliative stage of life.

For phase one of our research, we spoke with residents and families of Chinese heritage at **Canterbury Place** and **Auburn Glen Care Communities**, located in Sydney’s culturally-diverse western suburbs.

Several interesting points emerged:

- Changes in a resident’s cognitive age (for example, a resident aged 80 may believe they are 50), mean cultural factors may also have shifted. So palliative care plans and preferences should be reassessed regularly.

- Family members may have different expectations of a loved one’s palliative care journey. Conflicting views on what is best for a person can lead to distress and misunderstanding for a resident in palliative care.
- A community approach matters: it’s important to implement social care plans to reduce a sense of isolation and improve mental wellbeing for residents who don’t have a network of people who speak their language.

These insights are already factored into our care planning at our Care Communities, as part of our person-centred care approach. In the next phase of this research project, we’ll explore options for enhanced palliative care models to further improve outcomes for residents from CALD backgrounds.


“For people living with dementia, if English is a second language, they might lose the capacity to speak English. So then they might only speak their original language and they can struggle to be understood.”

– Research participant

“In some cultures, there’s a reluctance to talk about dying, and the process including the funeral and other things. They really don’t want to talk about it or open up about it in one go.”

– Research participant

Scan the QR code to read a summary of our research.



NIKKI’S 25-YEAR CAREER IN AGED CARE

Across our Care Communities, team members like Nikki have dedicated their lives to caring for older Australians.

“I’m entering my 26th year in aged care and I still love it,” says Nikki, laundry and cleaning supervisor at **Somerville Gardens Care Community**, nestled in Victoria’s picturesque Mornington Peninsula.

Heart and hustle

“I was a single mum working three jobs when I started,” says Nikki. *“Aged care gave me more hours and importantly, it gave me purpose.”*

Nikki has seen much of Victoria in her career: working at Opal HealthCare’s Warrandyte Gardens, Inverloch Coast, Phillip Island, Highton Gardens and Altona Gardens Care Communities before arriving at Somerville Gardens.

“It’s a family environment here. Everybody’s equal. A lot of our team call me Mama Bear. And our residents make my day. They deserve excellent care and a clean home. It’s about pride in your space and in yourself.”

It’s all about people

Whether it’s supporting fellow team members or caring for residents, Nikki has always put people first. Spending time with her Meaningful Mate, resident Bill, is a highlight for both.

“I always make sure Bill has his newspaper tucked into his chair,” says Nikki. *“For my birthday, he bought me six KitKats – one for every ten years! Sometimes we grab a coffee and a sausage roll across the road. He always asks: ‘How’s your morning, gorgeous?’ and I say, ‘All the better for seeing you.’”*

As a leader, Nikki’s focus on people shines through.

“I’m big on attention to detail and respect. If something could be better, I’m encouraging. Next time, it will be right.”

“I always say, ‘If you need to talk, let’s talk.’ I’m here to support my team personally, not just professionally. The culture you create is up to you. Say hello in the hallway. Share a laugh. That’s how you build a strong team.”

In aged care, no day is the same and humble heroes such as Nikki bring warmth, laughter, and a deep sense of care to our Care Communities.



3 Questions about the New Aged Care Act

The New Aged Care Act and Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards will take effect on Saturday, 1 November 2025.



1. What are the New Aged Care Act and the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards designed to achieve?

The Australian Government's New Aged Care Act ("the New Act") ensures the rights and preferences of older people are at the centre of their care, supported by a strong aged care workforce.

The Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards ("the Strengthened Standards") set out the level of care older people should expect to receive from providers while living in residential aged care, or receiving care at home.

At Opal HealthCare, we're supportive of these upcoming changes. Underpinned by our purpose, values and our approach to care, we always place our residents, their preferences and relationships at the centre of their care.

- **Changes to fees for new residents.** If you're living in permanent care before 1 November 2025, there will be no changes to your fees. For residents who enter permanent care after 1 November 2025, fees and charges will vary depending on each individual's circumstances. We always recommend seeking independent financial advice before considering residential aged care.

- **The Strengthened Standards** have been simplified from eight to seven, with a number of requirements within each Standard. The Strengthened Standards place increased emphasis on the person at the centre of care. This is aligned with our values and the way we deliver care at our Care Communities, so our residents won't see much change from day-to-day.

2. What's changing?

The New Act introduces some important changes including:

- **A new Statement of Rights** that asserts the rights of older people when accessing aged care services. This Statement will replace the Charter of Rights.
- **Registered Supporters.** Older people will be able to nominate and register one or more people of their choice to help with decision-making. These people are known as Registered Supporters. These individuals can help residents understand, make, and communicate decisions about their care, so residents can make their own decisions for longer.
- **Expanded Whistleblower protections.** The New Act will make it easier for Whistleblowers to come forward with disclosures, and to protect them when they do. People who can be Whistleblowers will include residents, family members, representatives, carers and advocates. Whistleblowers will be able to make disclosures to a wider selection of people.

3. How can I find out more about what the changes mean for me?

There are several ways to learn more about the New Act and Strengthened Standards. We'll provide our residents and families with relevant information before the changes occur, and the following is available:

- Speak with a member of our team at your Care Community, call us on **1300 362 481** or email us at **contactcentre@opalhealthcare.com.au**.
- Scan the QR code to learn more from the The Australian Government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.





CHEF ELLIOT’S HOME STYLE PORK NORMANDY WITH BUTTERY MASHED POTATOES AND STEAMED GREENS

With a tender texture, big flavours and beautiful seasonal produce, Pork Normandy is a perfect winter warmer!

Serves 4-6 people.

INGREDIENTS

For Pork Normandy:

- 1.2kg diced pork shoulder
- 2 rashers bacon
- 2 small shallots – diced
- 2 green apples – peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 50ml olive oil
- 2 sticks of celery – thinly sliced
- 6 sage leaves – julienned
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs of thyme – chopped
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs curly parsley – rough chopped
- 600ml chicken or vegetable stock
- 300ml apple cider or white wine
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 crushed garlic cloves
- 300ml thickened cream or creme fraiche
- 1 tablespoon corn flour
- 100ml water

For buttery mashed potatoes:

- 4 – 5 large Desiree potatoes
- 80g salted butter
- 100ml cream or sour cream
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- Chopped chives
- Sea salt
- White pepper to taste

For steamed green beans:

- 200g green beans
- 1 teaspoon crushed garlic
- 30ml olive oil
- Sea salt

For salad dressing:

- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- A pinch of salt

Recipe by Chef Elliot, Aldinga Beach Care Community, South Australia



METHOD

For Pork Normandy:

1. Pre-heat oven to 150 degrees
2. In a heavy-based skillet on medium heat, add olive oil, shallots, celery and crushed garlic and sauté until fragrant
3. Add bacon and cook until slightly brown and fat is released
4. Add diced pork and butter and sauté until the colour is nutty brown
5. Deglaze skillet with cider or white wine and reduce by half
6. Add sage, chopped thyme, bay leaves, Dijon mustard, sliced apples and vegetable stock and bring to a light simmer
7. Place lid on skillet and place in oven for two hours
8. Carefully put the skillet back on the stove. Add cream or creme fraiche and bring to the boil
9. Mix corn flour and water and add to skillet to thicken
10. Season with sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper and chopped parsley

For buttery mashed potatoes:

1. Cut potato into 2cm cubes
2. Place potatoes in a pot with cold water and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil then simmer for 20 minutes or until soft
3. Strain off water
4. Heat cream, onion powder and butter
5. Mash the potato and add the warmed cream mix
6. Season with sea salt ground white pepper and sprinkle with chives

For steamed green beans:

1. Cut ends off green beans and carefully place into boiling water
2. Cook beans until tender and strain off water
3. Toss with garlic, olive oil and season

Words of thanks

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

**BUNBURY GARDENS
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for your excellent care of Mum. When we got home, we could see she was glad to be home but was very happy about the care she received. This being her first respite stay, it was invaluable to us knowing we can have a break and feel good about it.

**REYNELLA HILLSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY**
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

I'm so impressed with your team. They are absolutely wonderful.

**MORAYFIELD GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

To every team member at Morayfield Grove, I would like to say thank you. Your acts of service never went unnoticed, and you're all appreciated very much. May life be kind to you all.

**GLENROY GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

I have really enjoyed my stay. Everyone has been so helpful and caring. I will be back again, even if it is just to visit to say hello and have a coffee.

BAYSWATER GARDENS
NEW SOUTH WALES

I have a deep admiration for all you and your team do day in day out and cannot thank everyone enough for making Mum's last days as peaceful and pain-free as possible.

**JOSLIN MANOR
CARE COMMUNITY**
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for Mohammed and the exceptional care he provides. He consistently shows kindness, patience, and compassion with not only my mother, but also with residents who have more challenging behaviours. He always takes the time to listen, reassure, and get to know each resident's individual needs.

**WAVERLEY VALLEY
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

We're so grateful for the care Mum receives at Waverley Valley Care Community. Your team work so hard, and are so kind and compassionate – to us, as well as to Mum!

**GLEN OSMOND GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We are so thankful for the care you all gave to our beloved father. He so enjoyed his time here and especially the jokes and banter he shared with many of you. Thank you for helping make his final days happy and peaceful.

**BERRINBA GREENS
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

Thank you to Chef Adam and our Wellbeing team for making my wish of a dozen oysters for lunch come true!

**WAHROONGA PLACE
CARE COMMUNITY**
NEW SOUTH WALES

Sujan was caring, understanding and kind to my husband and all the residents who enjoyed the bus outing. I was very happy with the outing and the care my husband received. It brought a smile to his face.

**CARINE PARKSIDE
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

To everyone involved in today's high tea, we would like to offer our huge thanks. All those who attended were impressed with the lovely variety of food, the drinks offered and the super-friendly and attentive team who made such a great effort to make sure everyone was happy. You certainly made us all feel welcome. Dad felt very pleased that 'his home' offered such a great high tea for his family.

**CALAMVALE PARKLANDS
CARE COMMUNITY**
QUEENSLAND

Calamvale Parklands was Mum's second home. We're forever grateful for the wonderful care that Mum received here. She loved staying here: she enjoyed the food, all the wonderful activities and your friendly team members.

**TREEBY PARKLANDS
CARE COMMUNITY**
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Family dinner was a wonderful time. To be given the opportunity to step back and just be present with Mum was lovely. The food, your team, the atmosphere – it was truly wonderful.

**NARRANDERA HOMESTEAD
CARE COMMUNITY**
NEW SOUTH WALES

What a lovely visit I had with my wife. I thoroughly enjoyed how talkative and happy she was and I'm looking forward to my next visit. I'm grateful for how well she is looked after by your team.

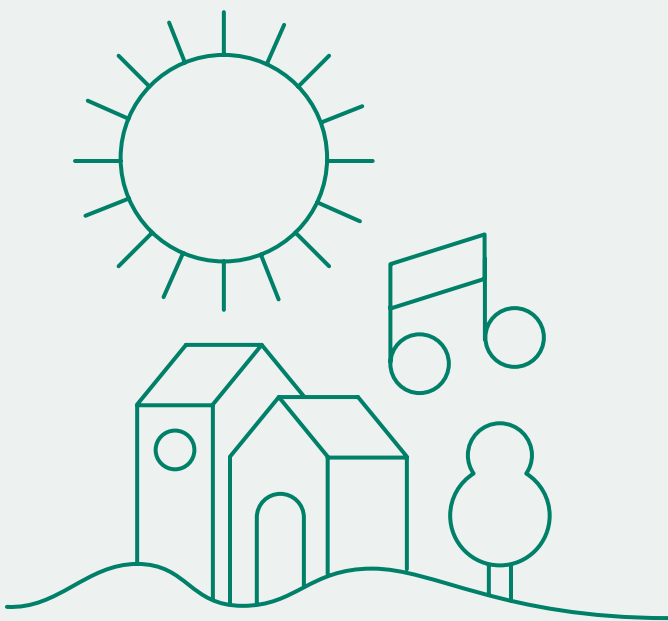
**RUTHERFORD PARK
CARE COMMUNITY**
NEW SOUTH WALES

Me and eight other ladies visited our friend Robyn at Rutherford Park Care Community to celebrate three birthdays. We had a wonderful visit. The Care Community had organised for us to have tea and coffee in one of the shared areas and a beautiful carer named Dorothy waited on us like we were royalty. Nothing was too much trouble for her.

**KEW GROVE
CARE COMMUNITY**
VICTORIA

Mum is receiving excellent, loving care. You have eased our anxiety on this journey, and we're most grateful for your involvement and the gracious, caring way that you're tending to Mum's needs. Forever grateful for your tender care of Mum, and considerate communications with us.

At Opal HealthCare, we believe *Ageing is living*. We're here to support you to live your way, each day.



Visit our website to find the right Care Community for you or your loved ones.



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.