

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hello to all,

The big news in this newsletter is that we can announce we have sold the Westmont Seniors Lifestyle Village (SLV) site at 34 Ellen McDonald Drive to another Lifestyle Village provider, Lincoln Place. This allows us to consolidate our plans and financial position and concentrate on getting our other capital projects attended to. This also means the planned lifestyle village development can potentially be completed more quickly as Lincoln Place has access to equity, resources, and tradespeople that we don't. Lincoln Place is largely continuing the original lifestyle village plan Westmont planned, and we hope to form an ongoing productive relationship with them for the future.

This means we can now concentrate on our other large capital project, the Westmont Dementia Cottages at Baranduda. Stage 2 calls for an additional 30 dementia specific beds in addition to the existing 32 and a new purpose-built Activity and Support Centre. This centre will house a new commercial kitchen and laundry, and activity, meeting, and storage spaces, mainly aimed at creating a service for those living with dementia in the community and their support. We have an agreed final plan and design, we have an approved permit and are now progressing to costing and detailed engineering, and of course trying to raise the necessary finance. This project costs in the order of \$12m, so we are looking at several financing options at present. We are also erecting a new storage shed between the Apartments and Homestead and relocating and enlarging the community gardens.

We continue to have a few occasional COVID-19 cases with staff and residents, with small outbreaks still occurring mainly in the Apartments and Cottages and whilst this is disruptive and pressurises workforce arrangements, it has been manageable. We recently lifted the requirements for mask wearing after significant feedback from residents and staff. With the warmer weather and an attempt to return to a normal routine, we are trialling non-compulsory mask wearing, as the government no longer requires this as a compulsory measure. We will continue at this stage with RAT testing for all care staff and visitors.

We are introducing a new staff Wellbeing Program in October which allows staff to annually claim a small amount against a health or wellbeing activity (there is a prescribed list of what is allowed). We have also started a new Employment Assistance Program (EAP) with Acacia, which provides better response and a better range of supports for staff.

We are currently also working on a new web page to allow management of donations to The Westmont Foundation. The foundation will fund raise for our new dementia project. Any fundraising initiatives or ideas would be greatly welcomed.

I have had a few people raise their concerns with me about the upcoming fire season. Be aware we will be practicing our fire preparedness in early November to ensure all our equipment and systems are in good shape.



**Tony Dunn – CEO**  
**Phone: 02 6043 9999**

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## APARTMENTS AND VILLAGE

Spring is an exceptional season at Westmont Aged Care Services. To walk up the avenue of crabapple trees from the Homestead to Apartments and listen to the symphony from the bees is truly amazing, let alone the visual impact of the blossoms in full bloom.

This year saw the introduction of the Westmont Villa and Apartments Resident's Committee. All residents of the Apartments and Villas were eligible to vote, and the response was overwhelming in favour of the formation of the Westmont Resident's Committee. This group's purpose is to function as a conduit to management in a voluntary capacity. The committee is made up of both Apartments and Villa residents. Since its start in March 2023, eleven issues have been put forward by residents, varying from Villa values, water tap installation to contents insurance. As a conduit to management, I believe it's working well.



Westmont also has a Social Club that has representatives from both Apartments and Villas, and they have a very active calendar, organising trade shows and training sessions for the residents. Some of the topics covered were MePACS personal alarms and defibrillator training.

We also wish to acknowledge the work of our volunteers, this group of residents assists us in so many ways. They just do what they do without looking for recognition, and without them, we would be lost. So, thank you!

**Angela Collins – Apartments and Village Manager**

**Phone: 02 6043 9832**

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## HOTEL SERVICES

As per the last newsletter, the everyday challenges of rising costs, especially in food is a never-ending story. However, over the last couple of months, we have seen costs stabilise, even though they are on the higher side of the market now. In saying that, consumables like eggs, milk, juice, flour, and sugar continue to rise in price every few weeks. This has led us to review contracts and pricing structures with our current suppliers, which has enabled better cost reductions through more competition.

The chefs and catering staff are currently working on a new menu, which will lead into summer this year. With consultation with residents, family, and staff, we hope to have this out by mid-November. This is of course governed by supplies and costs, which makes it a challenging project for the kitchen brigade to keep within budgeting constraints. As always, they will come up with an amazing, nutritious, and variety-focused menu for our residents.

Following on from Westmont's refurbishment plans, the B Wing dining room has been completed. The dining room has now been refurbished with new vinyl flooring, and the lounge areas are receiving new carpet tiles. The new flooring is easier to keep clean and promotes the ambiance of the dining area. The dining and lounge areas have also had a fresh coat of paint, which has brightened and modernised the whole room. The next refurbishment project is already in progress with the rest of the internal living areas getting a fresh coat of paint throughout.

Currently, due to our ageing IT systems, Westmont is progressing to the "cloud" due to our servers nearing full capacity. We have taken the opportunity to move to Office 365 and run from the cloud, which should produce a quicker, and a more reliable and more stable IT structure.

**Peter Ward – Hotel & IT Services Manager**

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## RESIDENTIAL CARE HAPPENINGS

Flu season has ended and we are now in the process of gaining consent for COVID-19 booster vaccinations. We comply with current recommendations that boosters be administered six months after a COVID-19 infection or six months after the last booster vaccination. Vaccinations are the most effective protection against severe illness and hospitalisation.

There has been a successful trial of staff not wearing masks, the staff are enjoying the freedom of being able to breathe freely, and the residents enjoy seeing everybody's smiling faces again. RAT testing has been reduced for staff from daily to two days per week. Staff and visitors continue to be encouraged to stay away if they have flu like symptoms. Visitors will be asked to continue to RAT before they enter the Homestead or Cottages each time they visit.

Westmont continues to recruit new RNs, and care staff. We have a sufficient number of care staff and are currently meeting the required 200 minutes per resident per day, but we continue to recruit RNs to meet the 40 minutes of RN time per resident per day.

Our permanent and respite beds remain in high demand. This reflects our 98% and above occupancy levels. Our experienced and helpful admission nursing staff, Carol and Kathryn, are available Monday to Friday to discuss accommodation needs.

We have had a large interest in our Care Traineeship Program commencing in January next year and have started the interview process. This is a fantastic pathway, not only into aged care but into a nursing career as well. Six of the eight current trainees have expressed interest in staying working at Westmont as carers while they undertake their nursing studies.

After suggestions from the residents in the Consumer Advisory Meeting, we have purchased a chicken pen, which is currently in the process of being put together in the Belvoir outdoor area. The residents are very excited about caring for the chickens and harvesting the eggs the chickens will produce.

**Laura Souquet – Director of Care and Clinical Services**

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## COMMUNITY CARE

With the hotter weather on the way, now is the time to do some planning around the house to ensure you are able to cope during periods of heatwaves. Now is a good time to check that your air conditioning system is working and identify family and friends who you can rely on to help you with doing things around the house, so you are not exposed to the extreme temperatures from 11am to 3pm. Ensure you wear loose-fitting and cool clothing and drink plenty of fluids during the day to reduce your risk of heat stress. If you show signs of heat stress, such as nausea and changes in the appearance of your skin (red, pale, or severely dry), you should seek urgent medical treatment. Westmont staff are only too happy to support you in developing a plan to cope with the warmer weather and also ensure you are ready in the event of an emergency.

Our homecare services, including Home Care Packages, are in demand and we continue to deliver services across the spectrum of domestic assistance, personal care, medication assistance, shopping for clients and taking clients shopping and to appointments. Our respite program is very flexible, allowing you to spend time in the community or at home doing a hobby you enjoy with the support of our homecare worker. We have many reports of clients enjoying fishing trips and socialising at the local coffee shop.

The Willows Centre has many exciting programs on offer. Our chair yoga and strength-based exercise programs are fun and a gentle way to improve your flexibility, core stability, and posture in a safe and supportive environment. Don't forget about our weekly men's group, walking group, and technology group. The "Technology Connects Us" program allows you to access either 'one on one support' to help you set up and use your laptop or device, or you can join the group. Our movie nights are well attended and allow participants to watch the latest releases in a comfortable armchair with lots of treats and good company.

We are continuing to experience high cancellations of services from clients. To avoid a late cancellation fee, we request that you call us at least 24 hours before your scheduled service. This allows us to contact another client to offer the service to. As COVID-19 is impacting our operations, we would appreciate it if you could be at home either in the morning or afternoon on the day you receive your service, as times may change quickly due to carers being unavailable. Wherever possible, we try to reach you to let you know if there is a change in your service time, but we ask you to be flexible with us too and encourage you to call the office after 9am to confirm your service time.

We have come across a number of online resources and apps that provide helpful hints to carers supporting a family member living with dementia. "A Guide for Family Carers: Dealing with Behaviours in People with Dementia" is a simple

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easy to read document that helps you understand why behavioural changes may be occurring and ways you can manage the behaviour. You can access it on the website: [www.dementiaresearch.org.au](http://www.dementiaresearch.org.au) Click on the 'Resources' tab, select 'Living with Dementia', then select 'A Guide for Family Carers'.

Over the Christmas break from 25th December 2023 to Sunday 7th January 2024, we are only providing essential services such as personal care, meal preparation, medication assistance, meals on wheels and essential respite care. All our services will resume full operations on Monday 8th January 2024.

**Maralee Vogel – Director Community Care**  
**Phone: 02 6043 9867**

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## HOMESTEAD ACTIVITIES

Welcome to spring!

Spring is filled with morning wheelchair strolls with our residents as the winter is now behind us.

Residents are now looking forward to the Mystery Bus trips every Tuesday and Thursday, as well as the Shopping Bus trip once a month.

Spring is also filled with senior celebrations, Happy Halloween, and armchair travel to Germany, learning about new culture and food as well as celebrating Oktoberfest.

Our trip to The Cube Wodonga was a highlight of the Seniors Week Celebration. We must not forget Wayne Davies Entertainment from Murray Conservatorium at the Homestead playing bingo music. It was an amazing morning for our residents.

Peter Denahy's live concert was also amazing entertainment! What a magical start of the season!

Our residents are looking forward to students visiting us from Catholic College Wodonga, who come from Australian Defence Force families, to exchange stories and have a friendly chat as well as play some games.

We are very lucky to have regular music entertainers visit the Homestead, who generously volunteer their time to our residents. Thank you!

Nail care is very popular among the residents, we now have new volunteers to help with this activity due to the high demand.

Residents could not wait for the talent show. The residents and staff had lots of laughs making and being entertained by all that participated.

It is so good to see smiles on the faces of our residents, as then you know you have enhanced their lives.

Keep up the good work Activities Team!



**Sue Prince – Activities Officer**  
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