

# VASEY RSL CARE NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of Vasey RSL Care

## Developments at our Ivanhoe Ex-Service Village

**One of the goals set out in our White Paper 'Continuing the Mission' is to increase our capacity to support veterans, especially the growing proportion of younger veterans in need of housing.**

In pursuit of this goal, we have been able to secure 27 brand new one-bedroom apartments in a new development in Ivanhoe in exchange for our existing 17-unit site pictured below.



This exchange will take place when the development completes in 2023.

For our Ivanhoe villagers, this will be quite a change and we will make sure that they are supported throughout the transition. Their response to this news has been very positive.

From a strategic perspective, acquiring ten additional homes for veterans/war widows/partners is a very exciting stride forward, providing state-of-the-art housing for our community.

CEO Janna Voloshin says: "I will be bringing you regular updates on our progress with these and other aspects of our goals throughout the year ahead. This will not be an easy year, with the pandemic far from over and much to do, but it will certainly be a very different year from 2020. We have a lot to look forward to."

*Images right (from top): artist's impressions of the new apartment complex showing the exterior; one of the internal courtyards; and the living area of one of the planned apartments. Each apartment has either a private balcony or terrace, access to the rooftop garden and a private car parking space in the underground car park.*



# From Our CEO

## Continuing the Mission!

Vasey RSL Care is a mission-led organisation, and as you have heard me say (many times...) we are here to 'Serve Those Who Served'.

For me, this is a way to continually assess our progress and ensure our actions are focused towards this greater goal. It is easy to get caught up in the demands of the moment, so making time to look at the bigger picture and the needs of our community is vital.

To this end, our Executive Management Team has been working hard to 'put meat onto the bones' of our strategy plan, and our Board of Directors has been meeting to guide and inform these exciting plans.

After such an intense and exhausting 2020 we are very pleased to be working towards goals and initiatives that will expand our capabilities to our community.

As you can read on page 7, a change to our Executive Management Team and new appointments have been made and we congratulate Chris and welcome Justin.

For our Ivanhoe Ex-Service Accommodation residents, there has been a major announcement (see front page) with a move to new apartments and the expansion from 17 to 27 homes planned for 2023.

While planning and implementing new initiatives is exciting, we still have a business to run. You can rest assured that we will not lose sight of our responsibilities to existing stakeholders: offering the best possible care and services to every aged care resident, home care client and ex-service accommodation resident will always be our number one priority, especially as we continue to fight the global pandemic and maintain our 'abundance of caution' approach.

## Flu & COVID-19 Vaccinations

Last year, flu vaccination rates were significantly higher than previous years as we were urged to keep our hospitals clear and ready to take COVID-19 patients.

This year is going to be a complex year with us all needing both flu and COVID-19 vaccines: we hear from the government that aged care residents and staff



are in the first phase of the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination, already in progress, and this will delay their flu vaccination.

**For everyone else, I strongly encourage you to book your flu vaccination now and get it done before it's your turn to have your COVID-19 vaccination.**

## Royal Commission Final Report

As we go to print, the final report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has been delivered and will be tabled in parliament this week. Once the report is made public, we will make it a top priority to examine its findings and understand how we must respond to this important report, in the best interests of current and future aged care residents and home care clients.

## War Widows' Guild Victoria

We are sad to report that the War Widows' Guild Victoria has made the difficult decision to wind up their organisation after decades of service to war widows and their families. We send our very best wishes to all who have been involved in the Guild and thank them for all they have done for our community.

## Duke of Edinburgh Bowls Competition

The RSL bowls teams have their fingers crossed that the competition goes ahead this year, later than usual, in May. We will again be sponsoring this competition, which sees around 1,500 RSL members vying for the honours. We wish them all the best of luck.

**Janna Voloshin**  
**Chief Executive Officer**





# Australia Day at Vasey RSL Care Bundoora

Residents at all our aged care homes took part in events to celebrate Australia Day. At Bundoora, as well as the koala-racing and singing, the traditional thong-throwing competition drew a big crowd.



Residents were showing off their skills with the thong and along came staff member, Janet, who had found a way to guarantee a win!

## Consider Your Vaccination Schedule

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, working towards a vaccine has been the focus of the immunology community worldwide. The international collaboration and speed to market has exceeded anything seen before and in just over a year from the virus reaching Australia, our vaccination program has begun. It's astounding!

### But let us not forget about the flu vaccination.

Flu (influenza) was responsible for 430 deaths in Australia in 2019, 900+ deaths in 2018 and over 1,100 deaths in 2017, our worst year in recent times.

Globally, there are an estimated one billion cases annually, 3 to 5 million severe and between 290,000 to 650,000 resulting in death, every year (WHO).

The 2020 flu season began the same way as 2019, and with no respite over the summer months, there were already 36 flu deaths by March in Australia.

And that is when the trajectory changed. There were no further flu deaths here in 2020: 8.8 million Australians had the flu vaccination, up by two million on the previous year.

The cause for the decrease in flu deaths was a result of actions taken to prevent COVID-19: more flu vaccinations, less contact with each other and improved infection control practices.

### So do we really need to get the flu vaccination this year? And isn't the COVID-19 vaccination more important?

It's going to be a tricky time, because both are important. "People should not be lulled into a false sense of complacency about the influenza virus," says TerryWhite Chemmart chief pharmacist Brenton Hart. "It is highly infectious and it is important for people to continue getting vaccinated and to plan now so they can be vaccinated for both flu and COVID-19 in a timely manner."

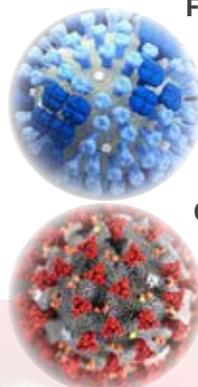
The flu vaccination cannot be received within 14 days of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. Therefore, if you are likely to be in Phase 2 of the COVID-19 rollout, starting in early May, it is highly recommended that you book your flu vaccination now for as early as possible.

#### Flu Vaccination:

Family members and those not in Aged Care – book now so you are ready for your COVID-19 vaccination from May onwards.

#### COVID-19 Vaccination:

Available soon for aged care residents and staff. Available May onwards for others.



# Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Brighton East!

**Vasey RSL Care Brighton East is our youngest aged care home: a celebration was held recently to celebrate reaching double figures.**

Barbara Goodey (pictured below) has lived at Vasey RSL Care Brighton East since its opening in February 2011, moving here from Wattle Lodge.



“When I first moved in, I thought it was unbelievable! The design, the ventilation, the natural light, how clean it was – and still is!” says Barbara.

We asked her what had changed over the last decade: “Nothing much,”

she told us. “The staff are fairly stable – we’ve had some of the same staff for ten years.”

In fact, at Brighton East, we have our longest-serving staff member who is coming up to 40 years – yes forty!

Out of the total 144 staff who work here, 87 (60%) have been with us for over five years and 42 (30%) since Vasey RSL Care Brighton East opened in February 2011.

Rom Vidmar, General Manager – Human Resources says: “How long staff choose to stay with us is one of the ways we can tell if they are satisfied with their work and happy in their role – so the fact that so many staff have reached five and ten years’ service is a very good sign that the organisation is successfully looking after its employees and its residents.”

Residential Manager, Anna Borkowska says, “I moved here with all the residents from Wattle Lodge on Bay



Street – it was so nice to come to a brand new home – and a bit strange because the building was big – it took a little while for us all to get used to it.”

Anna says that for her it is like a second home: “I love working here,” she says. “I hear such encouraging comments from families – they tell me that they feel it has such positive energy, the staff look happy and everyone is friendly.”

We asked Barbara how she had coped during the COVID-19 pandemic: “I’ve noticed there has been more use of disinfectant on flat surfaces!” she says. “We are lucky – we are relatively isolated and we have not had anyone affected.”

On the day of the anniversary, balloons festooned the entrance and residents and staff enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea including black forest gâteau!





# Vietnam Veterans Support Ex-Service Villages

Late last year, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) made a generous donation for items that will support resident wellbeing at our four villages that have community halls.

Vasey RSL Care villages at Frankston South, Cheltenham, Croydon and Geelong have Community Halls. They are used extensively for events and activities – such as the weekly Coffee Club at Cheltenham and special celebrations like zero birthdays.

## Frankston South Village

At our Frankston South village, the donation was used to buy some much-needed equipment: a steel electric jug, a hot water urn and a Ryobi wet & dry vacuum cleaner.

“We would like to thank the Vietnam Veterans Association for their kind donation,” says resident Jan Fraser.



Above, Barry can be seen demonstrating the vacuum cleaner, left, Heather the electric jug and below, Thelma the urn.

The new appliances are already making it easier to



organise refreshments and clean up afterwards.

(Thank you to Jan for the photos.)



## Cheltenham Village

At Cheltenham, the donation has been used to purchase a barbecue. It will be installed into the new ‘al fresco’ area being created just outside the hall.

Residents at Cheltenham are looking forward to the new amenities and the opportunity to socialise outdoors – something we are all encouraged to do.

## Geelong Village

At Geelong, residents asked that the donation be put towards a memorial to all those who have served, a place where they can remember those they served with and past villagers.

The memorial is currently being developed and will be installed close to the flag pole. Recent improvements have been made to this area, with lighting and a new footpath as shown here.

We will bring you an update once the memorial is in place.



## Croydon Village

Finally, at Croydon – one of our smaller villages with just 18 units – a new barbecue has been purchased for the residents’ use and you can see it here with residents (from left), Helen, Shane, Diane, Kay and Joan.



## Thank You Vietnam Veterans Association

“We have many Vietnam Veterans as well as some wives, partners and widows in our community, especially within our ex-service accommodation,” says Janna Voloshin, CEO.

“This practical support is really appreciated. Thank you to the Vietnam Veterans Association – we are very grateful for your support and friendship.”

# Frankston South: Memorial Upgrade

**Residents who have served in the ADF or allied services living at our aged care home at Frankston South are proud to have their names displayed on the Memorial Wall which has been in place for some years. At the instigation of the Residents Committee, an upgrade to the Memorial Wall was requested.**

The Memorial Wall is an important focus for residents, especially on days of remembrance: poppies are left beside the names of friends and loved ones, much like at the Australian War Memorial but on a very much smaller scale.



*The current Memorial Wall showing the plaques for residents who have served in the Australian & allied forces.*

## The New Design

A design concept for the wall was drawn up (see below) and a successful funding submission to the state government's 'Victoria Remembers' grants program provided enough to cover a large proportion of the cost. A generous donation has also been received and we are now close to reaching the funding needed to complete the project.

COVID-19 delayed the project throughout 2020, but with restrictions easing, the project has now begun in earnest. Those living, working or visiting Frankston South will have seen that something is happening...

Preparation work to install electric wiring, create the chamber for the eternal flame and prepare the wall for plasterboard and painting is now underway and with ANZAC Day not far off, the pressure is on.

Residential Manager at Frankston South, Jane Jones commented: "The Memorial is adjacent to our Library and concert hall. It is located in the main connecting hallway of the home, visible to all residents, staff and prospective new residents. We know residents find this a place to contemplate and remember, and for staff, it is an important reminder of the reason we are all here."

Guests, those having a tour of the home, visiting health care professionals, volunteers and the many individuals and groups who support our residents all travel along this hallway. They too will have the chance to remember, maybe stop for a moment, look at the displays, and appreciate the service and sacrifice made by our residents.

"We are proud of our special role in giving back to those who gave so much," says Janna Voloshin, CEO. "We can't do what they did, but we can show honour and respect. We expect all our staff to do this every day in the way they carry out their work and care for residents and clients."

## Help Us Reach Our Funding Target!

We are around \$2,000 away from our target and if you would like to make a donation, big or small, we would be delighted to have your support.

Donations can be made online – <https://www.vaseyrslcare.org.au/donation-form/> – please indicate that you would like your donation to go to 'Something else' and write 'Frankston South Memorial Wall' in the space provided. Thank you for your support!



*The Memorial will have a central panel with an eternal flame, the emblems of the three forces and the words 'Lest we forget'. To the left will be the words "Remembering Those Who Served" and honour boards for the names of residents who have served in the ADF. To the right will be a board listing Australian campaigns and further right honour boards for the names of residents who served with allied forces. The display boxes each side will feature changing displays relating to individuals who have served or commemorating important dates and anniversaries.*



# Staff with Lived Experience

**As an organisation that serves those who served, it has become increasingly clear that a senior role with veteran experience and knowledge is essential to our future plans.**



From 1 February, Projects & Contracts Coordinator, Chris Gray (pictured), has taken on the important new role of General Manager – Veteran Services.

Chris has been with Vasey RSL Care for over four years as a member of the Property Services team, but before coming to us, he had spent 27 years in the ADF, 17 serving and ten in the Reserves. His service included six overseas tours of duty, to New Guinea, Papua New Guinea, twice to East Timor, Iraq and Indonesia.

Chris is an active member of his local RSL Sub-branch and joined their Committee early last year.

He is also a keen participant in RSL Active, a health and wellbeing initiative that connects veterans via a range of activities, and which has been engaging with veterans via Zoom throughout 2020.

CEO Janna Voloshin says, "I look forward to working with Chris and having his invaluable personal experience as an asset both in our future planning and new innovations."

## Join Our Team!

Our vision is to achieve excellence in care and our highly skilled and competent teams work together to deliver services of a consistently high standard. Each staff member is valued for their unique contribution to an environment that is supportive, friendly and welcoming to all who enter our doors.

We employ a wide range of people in caring and support, management and administrative positions, at our five residential aged care homes in Brighton, Brighton East, Bundoora, Frankston South and Ivanhoe and based at our Central Office in Hawthorn.

If you are interested in finding out more about working here, full time or part time, or joining our team of volunteers, visit our website:

[www.vaseyrslcare.org.au](http://www.vaseyrslcare.org.au)

