

THE VILLAGE NEWS



ALLAMBIE HEIGHTS
Village Ltd.

Retirement Village



ALLAMBIE HEIGHTS
Village Ltd.

Residential Aged Care Facility



William Charlton Village

Retirement Village

March-April 2020

Allambie Heights Village Ltd.

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Aged Care Australia at Significant Financial Risk in 2020

In the last edition 44 of The Village News, I reported, "As 2019 came to a close, alarm bells were ringing loudly that 54% of all residential aged care facilities are operating at a financial loss". I added, "Industry analysis of Department of Health data indicates that almost 200 Operators caring for up to 50,000 older Australians are operating at a high level of financial risk. Some RACFs will close in 2020!". Well, it's happening. It's now!

In a matter of only a few months, that 54% is now 56% of residential aged care facilities operating at a financial loss and it's only going to rise unless and until the Federal Government pays up and fronts up to its responsibilities on behalf of Australia's taxpayers.

How can politicians be so removed from the inevitability of ageing? How can politicians be so dismissive of their parents and grandparents? Why is it that politicians are so disrespectful to older Australians, this is shameful!

And why is it that we who are young or younger care less that we don't and won't take the time to phone, email, write, visit our politicians and tell them what's important, what needs changing, to remind them that our vulnerable and increasingly frail elders need a little more?

Why is it that politicians are so disrespectful to older Australians, this is shameful!

We are soft, we are apathetic and if we are honest with ourselves, many of us just don't care! Lest We Forget!

Lest We Forget! Well it is abundantly clear, we do forget. Until it is ANZAC Day in April or Armistice Day in November and we can all feel good about how patriotic we all are on these two days. And we can go to the footy and stand for a minute and we might wear a poppy. What a fraud! Our elders have the other 363 or 364 days to be seen and not hidden away, to be honoured, to be respected, to be cared

for, to be listened to, to be part of the community, to be funded correctly!

The Facts

I can report from figures helpfully provided to me by Leading Age Services Australia Ltd. (LASA), that as at the end of 2019 in Australia, there were:

- 886 Operators/Providers of RACFs;
- 2,695 RACFs;
- 241,723 residents living in RACFs;
- 235,764 staff employed in RACFs;
- 116,843 older Australians receiving Home Care Packages;
- 130,263 staff working in Home Care and Home Support.

In relation to funding, the Federal Government funded:

- the RACF Industry with \$12.2 billion;
- The Home Support and Home Care Industry with \$4.4 billion.

LASA and so many of my colleagues and I are acutely aware of the financial distress that its Members and that Operators/Providers are experiencing. The figures quoted above are very large sums of money but then look again at the numbers of people receiving services and employment. And that's only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to costs.

A typical day in a RACF involves care staff and registered nurses, catering chefs and catering assistants, recreational activities staff, housekeeping/cleaning, laundry and maintenance staff, physiotherapists, podiatrists, administration and accounts staff, managers.

It involves a range of trades persons to maintain and repair accommodation and buildings, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, painters, fire safety contractors, gardeners, all who are paid by Operators/Providers. If we renovate or build, add every discipline with a qualification to the payroll.

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And then we have every type and shape of auditor and audit/regulatory processes professionally and financially and from a certification perspective. From Council, State, Federal, the Aged Care Commission for Quality and Safety, yes, we even pay them large sums of money to inspect us to give permission allowing us to operate.

Operators/Providers take all the financial responsibility and risks to build and renovate our RACFs, to take out bank loans and to repay them, no support there from the Government who have clearly demonstrated also that they do not want to be anywhere near operating a RACF and that's why only 5% or less of RACFs are operated by the Federal Department of Health.

And our staff in our RACFs are paid on Award Rates, above Award Rates and with penalty loadings which include 50% penalty rates above their basic hourly rate on a Saturday, 75% on a Sunday and 250% on a Public Holiday. And we have staffing available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Add the medical and allied health professionals coming in from outside, audiologists, optometrists, dentists, denture technicians, pharmacists, pathologists, general practitioners, psycho-geriatricians. The hairdresser and the beautician too. All generating costs, all providing services.

All of these people with one focus, our residents.

It is estimated that Governments have removed and/or reduced its funding obligations to our aged care industries by approximately \$5 billion over the past 5 years. LASA is proposing a \$670 million contribution a year to RACF funding that is needed. It might just be enough to keep some of those 56% of Operators/Providers who are in financial distress and making a loss. Can you imagine 56% of our supermarkets or the banks or the retail industry making a financial loss. Our economy would collapse.

To put it quite simply, a \$670 million injection a year, that's roughly an extra \$10 per resident per day. I am embarrassed to even have to write it. Is an older Australian worth an extra \$10 per day? Politicians, bow your head in shame!



Sean Rooney,
LASA National CEO with Ciarán

Volunteer Lunch

Management of our RACF and Company Management celebrated our wonderful dedicated team of volunteers in February at our Annual Volunteers Lunch. From our most recent to our longest serving volunteer, Renata Junker who has been making weekly visits on 2 buses each way for almost 18 years. Ciarán thanked them all for the skills, knowledge, caring and empathic engagement with residents of our RACF. Our volunteers come from our 2 retirement villages, from Lifeline and from communities on the Northern Beaches and beyond.

Volunteering at Allambie Heights Village Ltd. is strong and well. Ciarán thanked Cathy Higginson, Coordinator of Recreational Activities and Volunteers for her organisation, her creative and innovative ideas in leading the Recreational Program which was extended in 2019 to 7 days a week, 9.30am – 9.00pm.

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The Volunteers had only high praise for the delicious meal cooked by our Chefs. Ciarán referred to poor reporting by journalists over the past year of food in Australian RACFs. Our Volunteers were having none of that criticism. They know that our meals are fantastic because they eat with us and they communicated that they know too that our residents love their meals because they tell them so. Maggie Beer (who launched a welcome campaign to improve food and nutritional standards in RACFs some time ago), we're happy to invite you over to eat with our residents, any time! We've been doing it well for 13 years with Catering Industries Pty Ltd. Thank you Volunteers, you are absolutely brilliant! Any one interested in becoming a Volunteer with us will receive appropriate support and training, please contact Cathy, chigginson@alhvillage.com.au

Maggie Beer, we're happy to invite you over to eat with our residents, any time!

Can't Stop dancin', Can't Stop Singin'

The entertainment and the rhythm of our visiting troops of Happy Wanderers and Loosely Woven had our residents, staff and some relatives 'grooving and movin' to the beat (okay, that's my musical vocabulary exhausted!) over past weeks. The photos here and many more on our website say it all.

A care staff member who had just started working with us some years ago said to me when she had been working for a few days and witnessed our Recreational Activities Program, "Our residents have a better social life than me". Well, it's true. 7 days a week since 2019 of a Program over a daily 12 hour period (with the odd little break), it's a great lifestyle offering.

Our visiting entertainers love coming to us and we love seeing them making our residents feel part of the greater community of the Northern Beaches. Anyone for a dance?



'Thank you' Volunteers



Groovin' to the beat! Happy Wanderers



Renate, Ciarán, Ann, Patricia



'You dancing? You asking?

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Veronica with Loosely Woven

COVID-19

Jim Murray, Facility Manager and the entire staff of the Company initiated increased hygiene awareness some weeks ago and before communications received from the Department of Health regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19. It is wonderful when you have a Housekeeping Team who just do the right thing, they commenced cleaning handrails and door handles on their own initiative as a team. Regular handwashing required of everyone.

We have been engaging our staff, residents, relatives and volunteers in the precautions that we are asking everyone to follow in relation to maintaining excellent hygiene and regular hand washing. We have written to our relatives and volunteers and asked them to stay away from our RACF if they experience any cold or flu-like symptoms. Stay away for a period of 14 days.

It really is essential that Australians manage their fears rationally and responsibly. Recent reports of panic, bulk-buying of toilet rolls and certain food stuffs as well as staff in large numbers not turning up at a Sydney RACF are reprehensible, foolish and ignorant behaviours. We need to be better than that.

Catering Industries



Ciarán Foley, Chief Executive Officer.

Please follow the advice of the Department of Health and respect the communications to you as we update you on how you can support us. Remember, we have staff and management with excellent experience, skills, knowledge and experience. That is why residents have chosen to live with us and our staff have chosen to work at Allambie Heights Village Ltd.

An Audience with Zali Steggall MP

Our sincere thanks to our Federal Member for Warringah who joined us in a full-house audience of residents, relatives, staff, contractors and consultants on 30 January 2020 just before returning to Parliament. During the interview and at the Q&A session, Ciarán expressed the view of many RACF Operators across Australia that the Federal Government is not funding RACFs or Home Care Services adequately. Zali indicated a clear interest in this and her office has been in contact with Ciarán since to provide more details which he has done. The audience enjoyed meeting Zali and we appreciate the extended time that she provided in her busy schedule on the day.



Zali Steggall, MP with Ciarán Foley, CEO



Full House for 'An Audience with Zali'