

# THE VILLAGE NEWS



Retirement Village



Residential Aged Care Facility



Retirement Village

March 2024

Allambie Heights Village Ltd.

Issue 51

## Reflections, Four years on. COVID-19 is not going away. Fortress Allambie 645!

I recall vividly January 2020 when a number of my colleagues and I began to discuss a new word, 'COVID' and what it might mean for us. The whole world was having similar discussions, the media was covering reports every day and then it was every hour and then it was everywhere.

I recall 'going early' and arranging a meeting of my management colleagues including registered nurse managers and registered nurses in what we named, the COVID-19 Action Team. Some of the faces of the Action Team have changed since then but it has remained consistent, professional, knowledgeable, responsible and compassionate in every decision that we made and that we make now, because for our Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF), it is still a threat that we must live with and seek to protect against.

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Australia was announced on 25 January 2020.

I recall ordering our first batch of RAT tests and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and on their arrival, inviting the morning staff shift to open the RAT test kits in my office and with one of our registered nurses, to familiarise themselves in how to use them correctly. I recall the Team arranging for all our staff to do this and then we progressed to 'donning and doffing' (putting on and taking off) PPE, using facial masks correctly by covering mouth and nose and using facial shields over masks, using hand sanitisers and disposing of PPE safely. We became experts and we protected our residents and we saved lives. And we depended on each of us as staff members to do all of this correctly, we still do.

It was a difficult time and a scary time as we viewed televisions and saw how COVID-19 became a Pandemic. Some countries handled it poorly, others well but it affected everyone, it affected politics and economies. It tested us all, many people had to stop

work, children and young people had to stop attending school and college courses and our homes became places of isolation. We had to live differently, streets became empty, silence was a new sound.

I recall the Action Team in a room listening to the daily announcement of our Premier and Chief Medical Officer from which we would discuss the new instructions that we had to follow and I recall the multiple directions daily that came from a multitude of non-operational bureaucrats who overwhelmed our emails and our need to stay across everyone's message. This was a 7 day exercise and I remember when Management had to decide which staff could work and who could not because of the area they lived in or were travelling from or because they were working an additional job somewhere that might present a COVID risk to us. And I remember on a Christmas Day when a Management colleague and I had to advise that some staff had to choose and commit for a period of time if they were working with us or in another organisation and to phone them about this.

I recall when the Northern Beaches were split in to two distinct areas affecting some of our staff who were not permitted to work outside of an area.



"Fortress Allambie"

A decision to boost morale of staff, residents, visitors our wider community resulted in our creating a banner, 'Fortress Allambie, Caring for our Residents' under which our staff and sometimes our staff and residents, stood or sat under it with a sign to indicate

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how many days we had managed to remain COVID-free.

I was not sure if we could reach 10 days or 50 days. 100 days seemed a far-away hope or dream as 100s of RACFs across Australia were placed in COVID-19 Outbreak and immediate isolation conditions were instructed from our local Public Health Units (PHUs).

We managed through outstanding professionalism, knowledge, health care and sacrifice from our staff, residents, volunteers, contractors and visitors (resident families and friends) all collaborating together to keep our residents safe and well, flu-free and COVID-free for 645 days in total before a mild Outbreak. A super achievement attracting the media.



'645 Days Covid-Free'

I recall our staff having to respond to different variants of COVID and Influenza (flu) threats to our residents and all of the time, trying to normalise each hour and each day and night for our residents. As staff, we remember, the one to one contact with each resident when they had to remain in their room and we brought them all meals, entertained them, did physical exercises with them and used our own phones to connect them with their family and friends.

And I recall with a broad smile the parties that our staff arranged for our residents, the James Bond evening when we all dressed up as characters is a

'stand-out', still available as a brief video on our website, [www.alhvillage.com.au](http://www.alhvillage.com.au)

And it is for us all to recall the ultimate sacrifice by our staff when the borders closed and they could not visit their relatives overseas and some of their relatives were ill and died without the opportunity to say goodbye. I recall this too.

A program of vaccinations was rolled out across the World and residents of our RACF have benefited greatly with 6 Vaccination Clinics as at November 2023 boosting their protection.

In 2023 the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced that the COVID-Pandemic no longer constituted a public health emergency. For so many, returning to a life of normality was essential and welcomed, it was and is for our residents and our staff.



COVID-19 AGM, 2021

However, threats of COVID and Influenza remain for babies, immunosuppressed people (having a weakened immune system), some people with disability and for older persons.

Within our RACFs, these threats remain real. And we must be ever vigilant of the need to be careful when visiting a RACF or taking a resident out, to implement uses of masks when needed and hand sanitising, to use common sense and to stay away if showing symptoms of illness, however mild.

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Normalising life can go hand in hand with being safe!

My reflections of the past 4 years of COVID-19 cannot be covered adequately in a brief article.

The gratitude that I have for my staff colleagues and for the Members of our COVID-19 Action Team, former and current, is immense. We must remain strong, knowledgeable and focused in all matters in caring for our residents, visitors and for each other as staff.

I ask our residents and visitors to similarly demonstrate safety, care and support towards our staff, a very special group of people.

## Our New Retirement Village is progressing well

Thanks and appreciation to our residents who have been immensely understanding of noise and dust over past months which we normally associate with any building project. Some days have been louder than others and it is expected that by mid-April 2024, the excavation and drilling works will diminish as actual construction commences.

Richard Crookes Constructions (RCC), our builders who were appointed in October 2023 have a great reputation for quality and they specialise in retirement village construction and many other building types. Management is in regular contact with RCC including weekly Project Design Team meetings involving a range of consultants.

We are on schedule for a February/early March 2025 completion of 24 Apartments, a Community Hall containing a Wellness Centre with a Gym, Sauna and Spa in beautiful landscape architect designed gardens with views of the City skyline.

Our marketing and sales team Marketability has set up its marketing suite locally and will make contact with people who have already expressed an interest or who are interested in this beautiful new retirement

village and its offerings. Watch out for information coming soon!



The Marketability Team with Directors Gerd Wilmer; Board Chair, Richard Rosebery & CEO Ciarán Foley

## Apartments on offer in our Allambie Heights Village

We currently have beautiful apartments available to occupy in our Allambie Heights Village, Retirement Village representing outstanding value and quality. Newly renovated, our 1 and 2 bedroom spacious apartments are a 'must see'! It has been a while since we have had vacancies to offer. To arrange an appointment to view, please contact 02 9975 5800 to speak with Sharon, Ciarán or Hannah.

## The First RACF in the World, a technology leader

Since 2007, Allambie Heights Village Ltd. has been a leader in embracing technology.

We were invited by Vlepis Pty Ltd to engage in a Study in 2023 involving participants of our Retirement Villages to use a wearable sensor developed along with RMIT and the University of Sydney (UTS). The Wearable Sensor measures a person's Body Temperature and Blood Oxygenation (SPO2).

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The normal Body Temperature for a healthy adult is between 36.1 – 37.2 degrees Celsius. An increase in body temperature can be caused by an infection, a urinary tract infection (UTI), a cold etc. Blood Oxygenation (SPO2) is a vital measurement estimate of the amount of oxygenation in your blood. A healthy person should have a blood oxygenation value between 95% - 100%. Values under 90% are considered low and may mean that there is not enough oxygen in the blood which can be caused by a variety of health concerns, a heart condition, lung disease, anaemia and more.



Dr Nicholas Lonergan, Emergency Department Specialist  
In discussion with residents, families & staff

In July 2023, our Retirement Village participants wore the Sensors and the feedback and data uploaded from the Sensor, were most informative.

In late 2023, some participants of our Residential Aged Care Facility who met inclusive/exclusive criteria were invited along with family members to attend a meeting with Vlepis to hear about Study 2 also involving residents of our Retirement Villages. A number of residents of our RACF consented voluntarily to wear the sensor over a longer period than Study 1.

Study 2, involving some residents of our RACF was convened in January 2024. In so doing, Allambie

Heights Village RACF became the first RACF in the World to engage in this Vlepis technology. The information from Study 1 and 2 is being collated and the findings are awaited.

I thank our RACF registered nurses led by Rita Miao, Care Manager/RN and Management for their interest and involvement in this Vlepis Study. Our managers and the RN Team received training from Vlepis and were supported by a Vlepis registered nurse and Dr Nicholas Lonergan, an Emergency Specialist along with administrative support.

We are currently interested in Falls Sensors being developed by Vlepis and its founder Bill Dimopoulos and will update on this once we have more details to share.

## We represent the modern Australia

We continue to represent the true picture of modern Australia with our staff representing 13 Nations and our residents representing 25 Nations. In total, we have between staff and residents, a total of 28 nationalities living and working with us. What a great Australian story!



Staff Christmas Party, 2023

**Ciarán Foley**  
Chief Executive Officer.

Catering Industries

